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The right instruments for ambitious goals

Last year, the political agenda in terms of Fisheries Policy was dominated by the debate surrounding the European Fisheries Fund.

In order to make sure that the ambitious goals of the new Common Fisheries Policy (for example, the preservation and sustainable management of fish stocks, environmental protection, economic-development potential within the fisheries sector, development of coastal areas) are translated from noble words into firm actions, the instruments required for this need to be adapted.

In the PSE Group's opinion, the European Fisheries Fund is undoubtedly one of the most important, if not the most important, of these instruments.

The contribution made by the PSE Group to the debate within the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament has resulted in significant improvements being made to the Commission proposal. Our contribution is generating awareness and in-depth knowledge of the situation affecting the fisheries sector in due consideration of the complex social, ecological and economic relations.

The PSE Group's contributions have included finding better solutions in the following areas:

- modernisation of the fishing fleet, including concerns over hygiene and safety;
- aquaculture;
- restructuring;
- enhanced development of coastal areas (from the sustainable perspective).

Since cooperation between the institutions has worked so effectively in this case within the Fisheries Committee, there are rightly optimistic expectations as regards the actual political negotiations necessary in order to achieve the long-term goals, as determined by politicians and the fisheries sector. As Socialists, we are confident that these goals will be achieved on a common basis.

Therefore, it should also be possible to achieve a realistic and balanced result for the 2007-2013 Financial Perspective. Without such an outcome, efforts that have involved such a tremendous amount of time and effort within discussions at the European Parliament on the European Fisheries Fund will have been in vain.

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