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EAPO's OBSERVATIONS TO THE GREEN PAPER ON
"THE EUROPEAN TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE"¹

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) which represents within the fishing sector around 10,000 community vessels landing approximately 4.8 million tons of fish with a worth of 2.3 billions of euros, wish to make it known its opinion on the Green Paper in relation to the "European transparency Initiative" published by the Commission on the 3rd May last.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The EAPO completely shares the aim to improve and promote transparency within the Community scope and the three main elements mentioned in the Green Paper, i.e., transparency and interest representation (lobbying), feedback on application of the minimum standards for consultation and disclosure of beneficiaries of community funds. The EAPO considers that the representation of the interest groups should be the objective of transparency and control by national and community authorities who should ensure to know better who the interest groups (or lobby groups) represent in each activity branch.

However, it is worthlessness for the interest groups to be represented at each activity level if their opinions or most of them are not to be taken into account in spite of being consulted by the Commission. Given its experience in the fishing sector, the EAPO believes it is necessary to find out a procedure which makes the principle of good governance efficient in terms of "greater involvement also means greater responsibility".²

In this sense, a greater involvement of the industry should not mean greater consultation only because increasing the number of consultations will be of little efficiency if groups' opinions are not taken into account in most cases. Consequently, the EAPO considers that a procedure should be opened allowing for the efficiency of consultations made by the Commission to the interest groups to be monitored in a transparent manner.

¹ SEC (2005) 1.300

² Commission's White Paper on European Governance

3. **REPLIES TO QUESTIONS IN THE GREEN PAPER**

To make it simpler, questions are reproduced below followed by the EAPO's replies to each of them:

C) Section: "Disclosure of beneficiaries of community funds"

Question:

Do you agree that it is desirable to introduce, at Community level, an obligation for Member States to make available information on beneficiaries of EU funds under shared management ?

Reply:

On this question, the EAPO understand that the principle of subsidiarity should govern and that each Member State' traditions and culture shall be respected as regards revealing information on beneficiaries of Community funds.

4. **CONCLUSIONS**

The EAPO shares the Commission's idea about getting the European institutions closer to citizens. To this end, transparency and information should be key elements to achieve this objective. However, effectiveness shall be also taken into account when citizens are consulted. We think that all of us should try and avoid the existing feeling within a number of sectors that we are listened to but not taken into account. This creates frustration and discouragement and it is not good for the construction of the European Union.

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