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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Accompanying document to the

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

**establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate
illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing**

SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**{COM(2007) 602 final
SEC(2007) 1310
SEC(2007) 1313}**

The Impact assessment report on the commission's proposal for a community new strategy to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing presents possible options designed to improve the efficiency of the policy of the Community in order to curb Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and minimise its environmental and socio-economic impacts.

The report highlights the important damages caused by IUU fishing on the marine environment and on the economic situation of the fishing industry (both within and outside the Community). It provides data on the scale of the problem and clarifies which drivers are encouraging operators to carry out IUU fishing.

The report summarizes the main results achieved so far by the Community in its policy against IUU fishing, since the adoption of its Action Plan on the matter in 2002. It sets out which are the current challenges that the Community needs to address to improve the efficiency of its action (prevent the importation into the Community of fisheries products stemming from IUU fishing; discourage fishing operators and States from supporting or engaging in IUU fishing, notably via the use of "Flags of non-compliance"; improve compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy within Community waters).

The report analyses the efficiency and impacts of four options for future action by the Community:

- (1) Continue the current policy and focus on implementation and enforcement of existing framework only, without tabling new regulatory proposals;
- (2) Focus on fishing activities outside the EC only (through international and RFMOs actions);
- (3) Pursue a case by case approach, specific to stocks and areas subject to important IUU fishing;
- (4) Develop a comprehensive package, comprising both regulatory measures and political principles guiding the EC policy, which would cover both EC and external waters, complete the current framework and ensure better compliance with applicable rules, as well as allow the EC to adopt unilateral ambitious measures when multilateral measures fall short of EC expectations.

The report suggests that the latest option would be the only one able to address effectively the current challenges of the Community to increase the efficiency of its action against IUU fishing. Its comprehensive scope would allow to cover the current loopholes which affect the Community system and encourage the continuation of IUU fishing. This options supports far-reaching measures in all areas concerned (certification scheme for imports; possibility for the Community to implement unilateral measures towards States or fishing vessels engaging or supporting IUU fishing; approximation of maximum levels of sanctions in relation to serious infringements to CFP rules). This option would entail important changes and possibly some costs, notably related to the commercial dimension of the approach promoted, and would require accompanying measures for some developing countries. It appears however that the ambitious approach promoted via this option would be the only one commensurate with the scale of the problem.