

EUR 5.5 million allocated to aid sardine fleet

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA) sent two draft orders to the purse seine fleet catching sardine in the Northwest of the Bay of Biscay and the Gulf of Cadiz in order to compensate for the fishery closure.

The central government expects both draft orders can provide aid to shipowners and crew members after the temporary and voluntary suspension of the fishing activity set on 20 September.

According to the Ministry, the sector will be supplied with a total of EUR 5.5 million and 195 boats with an estimated number of 1,936 crew members will be able to be included within the new regulation.

Given the official records of the General Secretariat of Fisheries, those ships that have fished in the Northwest Bay of Biscay, ICES zone VIII c and waters of Portugal and Gulf of Cadiz, ICES zone IX will benefit from this aid if it is found they significantly depend on the sardine. This dependence is shown by landing 25 per cent or more of the total catch, or by having values that are 25 per cent or higher of the total catch value traded, based on the total aggregates in the 2007-2014 period.

The estimate of the aid shipowners will be granted will be made on the basis of a scale arranged in the draft, which will range depending on the tonnage of the vessel.

For the crew members, the aid will be EUR 41.35 per day the ship remains stopped.

Grants will be given for a period of 20 to 45 consecutive days between 1 October and 30 November this year.

The purse Seine Shipowners' Association of Galicia (ACERGA) argues that the rule set by the General Secretariat of Fisheries to establish the dependence on sardine for fishing vessels is unfair.

"From our association 40 ships are left out. It is clear that Galicia is always the most seriously harmed," ACERGA representative Andrés García told *La Opinion*.

"We have already made it clear in Madrid that all vessels depend on sardines because although they have not caught that percentage, they have caught other species that cannot be captured now and this will make the quota be more quickly extinguished, as in the case of horse mackerel," he added.

ACERGA includes most purse seiners of the community - 130 ships of the 154 that make up the census.

Source : <http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=71805> (03/10/2014)