Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund, as regards certain provisions relating to financial management for certain Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability'

COM(2011) 484 final — 2011/0212 (COD)

(2012/C 24/19)

Rapporteur-General: **Mr SMYTH**

On 6 September and 29 September 2011 respectively, the Council and the European Parliament decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 43 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund, as regards certain provisions relating to financial management for certain Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability

COM(2011) 484 final — 2011/0212 (COD).

On 20 September 2011 the Committee Bureau instructed the Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion to prepare the Committee's work on the subject.

Given the urgent nature of the work, the European Economic and Social Committee appointed Mr SMYTH as rapporteur-general at its 475th plenary session, held on 26 and 27 October 2011 (meeting of 27 October 2011), and adopted the following opinion by 91 votes to 2 with 4 abstentions.

1. **Conclusions and recommendations**

1.1 The EESC notes the Commission's proposal to amend Regulation 1198/2006 to increase payments by applying a 10 percentage points top-up of the applicable co-financing rates for the priority axis to countries affected by the crisis and receiving assistance from the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM) or Balance of Payments (BoP) mechanism for the period that they are under these support mechanisms, but without increasing their overall allocation under the Union's cohesion policy for the programming period 2007-13.

1.2 The EESC approves the proposal.

2. **Reason**

2.1 Under the Commission's proposal, currently six countries falling under the EFSM and BoP mechanisms would be required to contribute less to projects that they co-finance in the framework of EU cohesion policy. Thus, they would have to find less national match-funding, which at a time when their domestic budgets are under considerable pressure would make a significant contribution towards getting these troubled economies back on track.

2.2 The Committee agrees that it is vital to boost prosperity and competitiveness in the Member States most hit by the crisis and therefore supports the above-mentioned proposal.

Brussels, 27 October 2011.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Staffan NILSSON