



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

European Commission: a fisheries policy for the future

Brussels, 13 July 2011 – In its proposals for a major reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the European Commission has set out a radical approach to fisheries management in Europe. The plans will secure both fish stocks and fishermen's livelihood for the future while putting an end to overfishing and depletion of fish stocks. The reform will introduce a decentralised approach to science-based fisheries management by region and sea basin, and introduce better governance standards in the EU and on the international level through sustainable fisheries agreements.

When presenting the proposals, Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *"Action is needed now to get all our fish stocks back into a healthy state to preserve them for present and future generations. Only under this precondition can fishermen continue to fish and earn a decent living out of their activities."*

She continued: *"This means that we have to manage each stock wisely, harvesting what we can but keeping the stock healthy and productive for the future. This will bring us higher catches, a sound environment and a secure seafood supply. If we get this reform right, fishermen and coastal communities will be better off in the long run. And all Europeans will have a wider choice of fresh fish, both wild and farm produced."*

Sustainability and long-term solutions are the key points of today's proposals which set out the following elements:

- All fish stocks will have to be brought to sustainable levels by 2015, which is in line with the commitments the EU has undertaken internationally.
- An ecosystem approach will be adopted for all fisheries, with long-term management plans based on the best available scientific advice.
- The waste of food resources and the economic losses caused by throwing unwanted fish back into the sea, a practice known as "discarding", will be phased-out. Fishermen will be obliged to land all the fish that they catch.
- The proposals also include clear targets and timeframes to stop overfishing; market-based approaches such as individual tradable catch shares; support measures for small-scale fisheries; improved data collection; and strategies to promote sustainable aquaculture in Europe.
- Consumers will be able to get better information on the quality and sustainability of the products they buy.
- General policy principles and goals will be prescribed from Brussels, while Member States will have to decide and apply the most appropriate conservation measures. In addition to simplifying the process, this will favour solutions tailored to regional and local needs.

- Operators throughout the fishing sector will have to make their own economic decisions to adapt fleet size to fishing possibilities. Fishermen's organizations will play a stronger role in steering market supply and increasing fishermen's profits.
- Financial support will only be granted to environmentally-friendly initiatives contributing to smart and sustainable growth. A strict control mechanism will rule out any perverse funding of illicit activities or overcapacity.
- Within international bodies and in its relations with third countries, the EU will act abroad as it does at home and promote good governance and a sound management of the sea in the rest of the world.

Background

EU fisheries are affected by several interconnected problems. Most fish stocks are being overfished by a fishing fleet that is too large and too efficient. Catches are dipping year after year and coastal communities, which often depend on fishing, watch their economic opportunities fade away. In decision making, political leaders tend to favour short-term interests rather than long-term resource conservation; and a top-down legislative approach from Brussels has so far given the sector little incentive to behave responsibly and contribute to a sustainable use of resources.

In April 2009, a Green Paper analysed the shortcomings of the current policy and opened a public consultation which lasted until the end of 2010. Input to the consultation and conclusions from several stakeholder events fed into the preparation of today's reform package, which consists of the following components:

- A legislative proposal for a new Regulation setting out the main rules of the CFP
- A legislative proposal for a new Market Policy
- A Communication on the external dimension of the CFP.
- An overarching communication explaining the links between the above

This new package is being submitted to the European Parliament and Council for adoption under the ordinary legislative procedure (co-decision). The Commission aims for adoption and entry into force of the new framework by 1 January 2013.

Later this year the Commission plans to put forward a new funding mechanism for fisheries and maritime policy, in line with the Multi-Annual Financial Framework.

For more information:

- Further details of the proposals can be found in [Memo/11/503](#)
- The policy documents and other information can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.htm

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