

Increase EU Support for Data Collection, Control and Enforcement

Plenary vote October 23rd 2013 on the EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

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We have identified two priority areas for amendments to the EMFF:

- Increasing financial aid for data collection, control, and enforcement; and
- Ending aid that incentivises overfishing.

This briefing focuses on why and how to increase support for data collection, control, and enforcement in the EMFF.

The success of the future Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) depends largely on how thoroughly the agreed upon measures are implemented. Several member States struggle to comply with all their data collection, control and enforcement obligations. However, meeting these obligations is an essential pre-condition for effective fisheries management. For instance, suitable data is missing for half the stocks in the north-east Atlantic and adjacent waters.¹

Currently, direct annual EU payments support the fishing sector with roughly €836 million for measures directly related to fishing and aquaculture activities, and about €156 million for fisheries partnership agreements. At the same time, funding for research and data collection as well as for control and enforcement measures is relatively low, with about €50 million allocated for each funding area per year.² The Commission proposal for the EMFF³ suggests only limited change to that spending pattern (Article 15), which means that the overall funding priorities do not reflect anticipated changes in fisheries management under the new CFP, fail to appropriately support member States in meeting their obligations, and will not ensure that public aid is predominantly used to provide public goods and services, such as research.

The Council General Approach, on the other hand, proposes at least to enable member States to shift additional funding from storage aid to control, enforcement, and data collection. However, funds available for storage aid are relatively small and there is no reason why member States should not also be able to shift aid from structural measures (Article 15(2)) into control and enforcement (Article 15(3)) and data collection activities (Article 15(4)). This would greatly support efforts to restore fish stocks to sustainable levels, potentially generating 3.53 million tons of additional landings worth €3.188 billion annually, equivalent to 32,000 full-time fishing jobs.⁴

We therefore ask members of the European Parliament to amend the EMFF proposal to:

- **Double the amount of money allocated for data collection, control and enforcement compared to the Commission's proposal.**⁵
- **Provide Member States with the flexibility to shift additional aid from structural measures (Art. 15(2)) into control and enforcement activities (Art. 15(3)) and data collection (Art. 15(4)).**⁶

¹ European Commission, COM(2013) 319 final. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/info/com_2013_319_en.pdf

² See, e.g., European Court of Auditors Special Report No 7/2007 on the control, inspection and sanction systems under the CFP, p. 11. <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/673627.PDF>

³ COM(2011) 804 final: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/com_2011_804_en.pdf

⁴ nef (2012), "Jobs Lost at Sea," http://dnwssx4l7gl7s.cloudfront.net/neffoundation/default/page/-/files/Jobs_Lost_at_Sea.pdf.

⁵ Proposed amounts are: € 954 million for control and enforcement and € 716 million for data collection.

⁶ This could easily be done by adding the word "minimum" and "maximum" to corresponding paragraphs.

Five reasons to increase funding for data collection and control and enforcement

1. Exploiting fish stocks with major data gaps gambles with our common resource

According to the Commission (COM(2013)319), half of the stocks in the north-east Atlantic and adjacent waters are not fully assessed; other regions fare worse. Yet, sound knowledge of the state of the stocks is a prerequisite for setting catch levels, and ultimately for achieving stock recovery and long-term ecological, economic, and social sustainability. The CFP requires member States to collect the relevant data in the common interest of better management, so the EMFF should provide suitable assistance to them in meeting this responsibility.

2. Ecosystem-fisheries management increases the demand for new data types

It has been more than 10 years since the EU committed to an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries⁷ and, since 2008, member States are legally bound by the principles of the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).⁸ In practice, however, implementation has been slow. Above all, member States must significantly step up their efforts to collect data for indicators of Good Environmental Status and the impacts of fishing on ecosystems. To address this challenge, a new data collection system, including for example, specialised observers on-board vessels, needs to be more ambitious in scope and consequently requires additional financial resources.

3. Better and more data—increased trust among stakeholders

The reformed CFP will move away from a centralised system of fisheries management and increase stakeholder involvement in decision-making. Better, more timely, and more transparent data can contribute to building trust among scientists, decision-makers and stakeholders, which is a vital precondition for effective management.

4. Proper implementation of the Control Regulation depends on provision of sufficient funding

In 2008-9, the EU adopted two new regulations⁹ that established a modernised system of fisheries control. These have a huge potential to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). IUU fishing depletes fish stocks, destroys marine habitats, distorts competition, puts honest fishermen at an unfair disadvantage, and weakens coastal communities within and outside the EU.¹⁰ An audit performed by the Court of Auditors in 2007 (Special Report No. 7/2007) and the impact assessment accompanying the proposal for a regulation to establish a Community Control Regulation¹¹ identified serious flaws in national inspection systems and highlighted that insufficient human and financial resources were partly responsible for these weaknesses. It is in the common interest to allocate more funds to assist member States in performing their control functions satisfactorily.

5. Measures in the common interest are of benefit to the whole sector and wider society

The proposed EMFF includes several measures that benefit single vessel owners or aim to make individual businesses more profitable. Such investments rarely benefit the public or wider coastal community. Moreover, small-scale fishermen often experience problems with accessing EU funds as the aid to individual operators is often allocated unfairly and/or to the highest bidder.¹² On the other hand, it is generally agreed that fisheries and environmental research, data collection and control and enforcement are in the collective interest of the fishing sector and wider public, as they enable sustainable fisheries management.

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⁷ Through the signing of the declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002, see also COM(2008)187.

⁸ Directive 2008/56/EC. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:164:0019:0040:EN:PDF>

⁹ Council Regulation (EC) No. 1224/2009 and Council Regulation (EC) No. 1005/2008. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:343:0001:0050:EN:PDF>

¹⁰ See for instance: Eftec (2008), *Costs of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in EU Fisheries*.

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Protecting_ocean_life/eftec_Costs_IUU_Fishing.pdf

¹¹ European Commission, *Staff Working Document accompanying the Proposal for a Council Regulation Establishing a Community Control System for Ensuring Compliance With the Rules of the Common Fisheries Policy Impact Assessment*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SEC:2008:2760:FIN:EN:PDF>.

¹² Poseidon (2010) FIGF Shadow Evaluation, see <http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/reports/fifg-2000-2006-shadow-evaluation-8589942307>.