

UK

PRESS RELEASE

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Ocean2012 slams fishing subsidies: Consumers are paying for fish many times over

London (May 12th) —Environmental coalition OCEAN2012 has sharply criticised excessive EU fishing subsidies ahead of an EU Fisheries Council Meeting to be held in Brussels on Monday. Ministers at the meeting will debate how future subsidies should be spent and how to reach sustainable fishing limits.

"Subsidised overfishing has meant subsidised environmental and economic failure. Healthy fish stocks could mean more fishing and more jobs." said Ian Campbell, UK Coordinator for OCEAN2012, a coalition of over 160 organisations dedicated to ending overfishing in the EU. "We need to redirect our public taxes away from fuelling overfishing and towards restoring the EU's fisheries to their optimal levels, which in turn will increase their profitability."

"In EU waters 63 percent of assessed stocks in the Atlantic are overfished, 82 percent in the Mediterranean and four out of the six stocks in the Baltic. This is the result of poor decision-making based on short-term considerations. It is estimated that in the EU overfishing is costing us at least €3.2 billion a year, yet in the last five years roughly €13 billion of taxpayers' money has been spent subsidising the EU fishing sector to increase the capacity of fleets, pay for modernisation, fuel, fees and scrapping. Taxpayers and consumers should know that as things stand, they are paying for their fish many times over."

"Governments at the table in Brussels must take this opportunity to rise to the challenge and tackle Europe's overfishing crisis head on, instead of arranging yet more industry handouts at the taxpayers expense"

A briefing published by the coalition today reveals some of the ways subsidies are leading to overfishing, including:

- Between 2000 and 2008, public subsidies of €33.5 million were spent on modernising the fleet targeting endangered bluefin tuna;
- Annually about €850 million in EU subsidies is used to support structural measures, including vessel modernisation, but less than €50 million to support control and enforcement aid and less than €50 million for scientific data collection; and
- Several operators convicted of illegal fishing activities continue to benefit from EU subsidies.

Notes to the Editor:

1. To see all the OCEAN2012 impact briefings visit, <http://ocean2012.eu/publications/63-how-overfishing-impacts-you>
2. The report *Lost at sea: £2.7 billion and 100,000 jobs* outlining the cost to the EU overfishing 43 stocks, <http://www.neweconomics.org/press-releases/lost-at-sea-27-billion-and-100000-jobs>
3. Details of OCEAN2012 and its proposal for a reformed CFP can be found at www.OCEAN2012.eu
4. OCEAN2012 is an alliance of organisations dedicated to transforming European Fisheries Policy to stop overfishing, end destructive fishing practices and deliver fair and equitable use of healthy fish stocks.

OCEAN2012 was initiated, and is co-ordinated, by the Pew Environment Group, the conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a non-governmental organisation working to end overfishing in the world's oceans.

The steering group of OCEAN2012 consists of the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, Ecologistas en Acción, The Fisheries Secretariat, nef (new economics foundation), the Pew Environment Group and Seas At Risk.

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