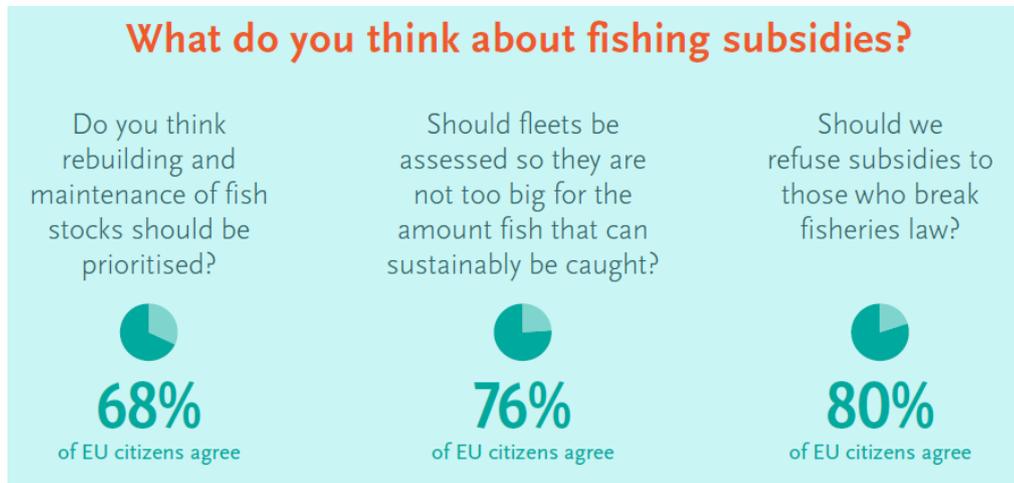


NGOs urge members of the PECH Committee to heed public opinion on positive use of EU fisheries subsidies

On July 10th the Fisheries Committee will vote on the Commission's proposal for the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)¹. This is an important opportunity to ensure that EU public funding supports only measures which contribute to the transition towards sustainable fisheries and the implementation of the Basic Regulation of the Common Fisheries Policy.

To gauge public opinion in the lead-up to the Parliament's vote on the new EMFF, Green Budget Europe asked more than 7,000 citizens in six EU member states² about their opinion on EU fisheries subsidies, via a representative survey conducted by YouGov³. Survey results clearly indicate that the public has a strong opinion on how public money should be spent in the European fisheries sector:



NGOs BirdLife Europe, Greenpeace, Oceana, OCEAN2012 and WWF strongly urge you to consider the following recommendations, which are in line with the public's opinion on how EU fisheries subsidies should be spent.

1. Public funds for public services

Each year the EU supports the fishing sector with roughly €836 million for structural measures and about €156 million for fisheries partnership agreements. Funding in the areas of research and data collection and control and enforcement measures is comparatively low, with less than €50 million allocated for each funding area per year. The proposed EMFF suggests only limited change to that spending pattern under shared management (Article 15). We therefore ask MEPs to:

- **Provide member states the flexibility to shift funds** from structural measures (specifying a maximum amount in Article 15[2]) to control and enforcement and data collection activities (specifying minimum amounts in Article 15[3] and Article 15[4]). This would adequately address the large number of data-deficient stocks in the EU, as well as the challenges surrounding the implementation of the discard ban. The

¹ COM(2011) 804 final: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

² Germany, France, UK, Poland, Italy and Spain.

³ A summary can be found at:

http://assets.ocean2012.eu/publication_documents/documents/336/original/20121011_Press_Briefing_Public_Poll.pdf Poll results can be found here: http://assets.ocean2012.eu/publication_documents/documents/334/original/subsidies%20poll.pdf

compromise amendment for Article 15 does not provide for any flexibility for member states to spend more funds on measures which crucial to manage fisheries sustainably. **We therefore urge you not to support the proposed compromise amendment for Article 15, but rather support the individual amendments 814, 818, and 820 by the Greens, or 815, 817, 819 by Rodust.**

2. No aid for maintaining overcapacity

The EU has made international commitments to abolish subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing. As recently as July 2012 the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus the Rio+20 outcome document, in which world leaders encourage States to eliminate subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing and refrain from introducing such subsidies or extending or enhancing existing ones⁴. We therefore ask MEPs to:

- support the Commission's proposal to **exclude measures** from the EMFF that have the potential to increase fishing capacity, **such as aid for engine replacement or the building of new vessels or the so-called 'fleet renewal'**;
- support the Commission's proposal to **exclude aid for temporary cessation of fishing activities**. This type of aid contributes to maintaining the status quo rather than enhancing the structural changes needed to achieve an end to overfishing.
- **NOT to support the proposed compromise amendments on Articles 32a new, 32b new, 33a new, 33b new and 39.**

3. Conditionality

At present, member states and individual operators can benefit from EU aid for fisheries policy even if they are not properly implementing relevant legislation. Access to public aid must become an incentive to implement the agreed rules properly. We therefore ask MEPs to:

- make aid to individual operators **conditional on their compliance** with the rules of the CFP, control and IUU regulations. **Support the compromise amendment for Article 12.**

Conclusion

The results of the public poll show that European citizens have a clear view on how their tax money should be spent. The majority of EU citizens want public money to be spent on policies that support the restoration of fish stocks, and do not want it spent on fisheries that have too many and too-powerful vessels for the available fish stocks. As member of the PECH committee you now have an important opportunity to reflect the public's opinion on how their taxes should be spent.

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⁴ See for instance the 2002 Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 31f; the 2005 WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration Annex D 9; and the final text of the 2012 Rio+20 conference, paragraph 173 (now endorsed by the UN General Assembly).