

EU Fisheries Reform: Assessment of amendments in PECH to the CFP Regulation (rapporteur: Ulrike Rodust)

This reform of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) offers Europe the opportunity to recover the well-being of its seas and dependent fishing communities and guarantee Europe's consumers a rich variety of responsibly and locally-caught fish into the future.

For decades, fishing levels have been kept too high, in total disregard of scientific advice and the limits of the ecosystem. As a consequence, the health of our seas and the long term sustainability of fish stocks are compromised by overfishing and the profitability of the fishing sector is undermined.

This reform may be the first and last opportunity for the Parliament to use its influence and thereby turn the tide for Europe's fish stocks and fishing communities. The Council's General Approach to the CFP agreed in July is currently far too weak to achieve an effective reform and reverse the damaging trends.... Parliament therefore needs a strong negotiating position with Council, which is backed by the support of the full plenary at first reading in November.

Over 2,500 amendments have been tabled in PECH Committee to the Commission's proposal for a new CFP Regulation. Assessment by our organisations of these amendments indicates the following:

Broad cross-party agreement on:

- importance of improving the environmental and social performance of the CFP, alongside economic considerations;
- three management tools in particular:
 - o capacity management and the need to balance fishing capacity with available resources;
 - o establishment of protected areas to protect fish stocks, other species and habitats;
 - o regionalised decision-making to ensure effective stakeholder participation and tailor-made solutions.

More controversial issues include:

- the timeline for the recovery of fish stocks;
- the allocation of fishing concessions (a large majority rejects transferability of concessions, but a wide variety of alternative approaches);
- detailed provisions for the elimination of discards.



Recommendations for support:

Fish stocks recovery

Governments from around the world, including EU leaders, recently agreed to intensify their efforts to recover fish populations by 2015, at the Rio Summit for Sustainability. Any delays in the target date or weakening of the commitment to recover the abundance of fish populations above levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) would already show the EU giving up on this agreement.

We recommend support for amendments which keep the 2015 target date and clearly state the aim of recovering fish stocks above MSY levels. Amendments that delay the timeline or weaken provisions by using words like “at” or “around” (instead of “above”) MSY levels should be rejected. The text should further ensure that catch limits do not exceed the scientific advice.

Support further amendments which:

- ensure that **environmental sustainability** is understood as a prerequisite for healthy and economically viable fisheries;
- establish a deadline for Member States to achieve an effective **balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities**, supporting the 2015 stock recovery target;
- ensure that the CFP measures contribute to the achievement of objectives under the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the protection of species and habitats** in line with the EU’s Habitats and Birds Directives;
- set clear timelines for the development and adoption of **regionalised multiannual plans**, building on the participation of local and regional stakeholders;
- **reject transferable fishing concessions** (TFCs) as a mandatory, single-option solution and recognise that the allocation of fishing rights is a privilege with clear obligations;
- **introduce social and environmental criteria** to rank and distribute access to fisheries resources to the advantage of those fisheries which least damage the environment and which provide the greatest benefits to coastal communities;
- aim to minimise and, where possible, **eliminate unwanted catches**, including by promoting the most **selective fishing practices** and **prohibiting discards**;
- ensure that awards of **subsidies** under the new EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund are **conditional** on Member States’ implementation of CFP requirements, including an effective balance between fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities data collection and control and enforcement, and other relevant legislation;
- ensure that the **EU’s external fisheries comply with equivalent management** objectives and standards as the EU domestic fleets.

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