

Submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States

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The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States. It remarks that fishing industries in Member States across the EU are very diverse in terms of the areas fished, the species caught and the composition of fishing fleets (including size of vessels and fishing methods). Methodologies employed for data collection reflect this diversity in the industry, so comparing situations in different Member States is challenging.

With regard to the **main findings**, the Commission states that the overall quantity and value of landings saw a fall across most Member States from 2007 by around 11% and 17% respectively. The largest falls from 2007 were recorded for the Netherlands (308 thousand tonnes), Germany (83 thousand tonnes) and Denmark (79 thousand tonnes). Among Member States, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and France recorded the highest values for landings. However, in terms of volume, Denmark recorded the highest landings. These are accounted for by the Danish industrial fishery's large catches of relatively low value pelagic fish.

Both Norway and Iceland recorded higher volumes of landings than any Member State, again with the majority of landings comprising just two pelagic species (43% and 63% respectively).

Across the EU as a whole, most species caught in terms of volume were pelagic (herring, sprats, blue whiting and sand eels etc.) with the only demersal species within the 10 highest volumes being cod. However, the higher-volume pelagic species tend to be of far lower value than the demersal. Nephrops (Norway lobster) is the species with the highest total value in 2008, and the next four highest-ranked species in terms of value are all demersal.

For some Member States, significant quantities of landings were reported under generic species codes. For Ireland, Greece and Italy this represented more than 5 percent of their landings. For Spain, the volumes recorded under generic codes were large, but amounted to a relatively small (less than 2%) proportion of their recorded landings. This is most probably indicative of the diverse nature of the Spanish fishing industry. The use of generic codes by Italy and Greece may also be an indicator of the diversity of landings, but also a result of the data collection methods and artisanal nature of much of their fleets.

Conclusions and recommendations: the report notes that the majority of Member States provided a detailed account of their methodologies, describing their data sources and quality checks employed. The great majority of data supplied to Eurostat are collected under mechanisms introduced for control and enforcement purposes. Eurostat relies mainly on fishermen in the first instance and on national authorities for ensuring the accuracy and quality of data.

Member States report no particular differences in methodology for information supplied to the Commission services (DG MARE and Eurostat). The reuse of data for statistical purposes ensures that there is little additional cost burden on the fishing industry. To minimise the burden on Member States providing reports to the Commission, there is increasingly close cooperation between DG MARE and DG ESTAT through the joint development of information technology solutions for data collection and dissemination.

Accurate species identification, particularly for more minor species, is an ongoing problem, as is use of generic codes for species. Eurostat is introducing new automated validation systems for data which will help to address this issue. Further investigation into the reporting of substantial quantities of fish under generic codes by some Member States is warranted.

The various administrative data sources may be cross-checked against each other for consistency. When these data sources are used in an integrated way, they can provide a comprehensive and consistent view of fishing activities. Further confidence in data quality is provided by cross-checks from surveillance activities. The increasing use of electronic methods of data collection has improved both the timeliness and accuracy of information. Work to implement systems in line with changing European requirements is ongoing in many Member States.

Lastly, the reduction in frequency of reports reduces the workload for Member States. The data continue to be a valuable source of information for formulation of policy and management of markets within the CFP framework.