

Common fisheries policy (CFP)

2011/0195(COD) - 10/01/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted a report by Ulrike RODUST (S&D, DE) on proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy.

The committee recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Scope: the Common Fisheries Policy should also cover:

- the conservation of marine biological resources and the management of fisheries targeting them;
- the social and economic viability of fishing activities, the promotion of employment in, and the development of, coastal communities and the specific problems of small scale and artisanal fishing and aquaculture.

The CFP should also cover structural measures and the management of the fleet capacity.

Maximum sustainable yield (MSY): one of the Commission's objectives is to ensure, by 2015, that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield. The report supports this objective but stipulates that that CFP should ensure that, by 2015, fishing mortality rates **are set at** levels that should allow fish stocks to recover, by 2020 at the latest, above levels that are capable of producing the maximum sustainable yield and allow all recovered stocks to be maintained at these levels.

Multiannual plans shall provide for adaptations of the fishing mortality rate. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall establish multiannual plans that follow scientific advice from STECF and ICES and that include conservation measures to maintain or restore fish stocks above levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield. These plans should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Specific objectives: Members clarify that the CFP should in particular:

- prevent, minimise and as far as possible eliminate unwanted catches;
- ensure that all catches of harvested and regulated stocks are landed, taking the best scientific advice into account, and avoiding the creation of new markets or expanding existing ones;
- provide conditions for efficient environmentally sustainable fishing activities in the Union;
- promote an equitable distribution of marine resources in order to contribute to a fair standard of living and social standards for those who depend on fishing activities;
- ensure systematic, harmonised, regular and reliable data collection and transparent data management and address the issues arising from data-poor stock management;
- promote small-scale coastal fishing activities.

Governance: the amendments insist on the fact that the Common Fisheries Policy shall apply the following principles of good governance: (i) the need to take a **decentralised and regionalised approach** to fisheries management; (ii) the appropriate involvement of stakeholders, in particular of Advisory Councils and social partners, at all stages - from conception to implementation – of the measures; (iii) the need to carry out environmental and strategic impact assessments.

Measures for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources may include the following:

- establishing targets for the sustainable exploitation and conservation of stocks and for the protection of the marine environment from the impact of fishing activities;
- establishing incentives to promote more selective fishing and fishing methods having a low impact on the marine ecosystem and fishery resources, including preferential access to national fishing opportunities and incentives of an economic nature;
- conducting pilot projects on alternative types of fishing management techniques and gears that increase selectivity or minimise the impact of fishing activities on the marine environment;
- adopting measures which help Member States to meet requirements under environmental legislation.

Avoidance and minimisation of unwanted catches: the amended text stipulates that before the introduction of the obligation to land all catches in the respective fishery:

- Member States shall, where necessary, conduct **pilot projects**, based on the best available scientific advice and taking into account the opinions of the competent Regional Advisory Councils, with the aim of fully exploring all practicable methods for the avoidance, minimisation and elimination of unwanted catches in a fishery;
- the Union shall provide financial support for the design and implementation of pilot projects, as well as for the **use of selective gears** in order to reduce unwanted and unauthorised catches.
- Members also propose rules to ease the impact of the landing rule on operators, including, *inter alia*, *de minimis* exceptions for small-volume by-catches if they cannot be processed on land, and an exemption for by-catches with a high survival rate after discarding at sea.

Establishment of fish stock recovery areas: in order to secure the conservation of living aquatic resources and marine ecosystems, and as part of a precautionary approach, the report suggests that Member States should establish a **coherent network of fish stock recovery areas** in which all fishing activities are prohibited, including, in particular, areas important for fish reproduction.

Transferable fishing concessions: the report proposes to **delete the provision** which provides for the establishment by each Member State of transferable concession systems. **Each Member State should be allowed to choose its method of allocating the fishing opportunities assigned to it**, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. In this way, Member States will remain free to establish – or not to establish – a system of transferable fishing concessions.

Reducing overcapacity: Members propose that the Commission should undertake fleet assessments in order to obtain credible results concerning the precise level of overcapacity at Union level, thus making it possible to propose appropriate and targeted instruments for its reduction.

If the assessment shows a discrepancy between their fishing capacity and their fishing opportunities, the Member States shall within a year adopt a detailed programme, including a binding timetable, for any necessary adjustment of the fishing capacity of their fleets in terms of vessel numbers and characteristics with the objective of achieving a stable and enduring balance between their fishing capacity and their fishing opportunities.

Science base for fishery management: despite the obligation of Member States to provide scientific data on their fisheries, many Member States have failed to do so. Member States that do not comply with this obligation should identify which fisheries they have failed to analyse. Failure by a Member State to comply with the data collection requirements shall result in the withdrawal of public aid and the subsequent imposition of additional penalties by the Commission.

International fisheries organisation: with a view to ensuring the sustainable exploitation and management of maritime biological resources, the Union shall promote the effective implementation of international fisheries instruments and regulations, participate in and support the activities of international organisations dealing with fisheries. In particular the Union shall:

- actively support, promote and contribute to the development of the best available scientific knowledge;
- promote measures to ensure that fishery resources are maintained;
- promote the establishment and strengthening of RFMO compliance committees, periodical independent performance reviews and appropriate remedial actions, including dissuasive and effective penalties, which need to be applied in a transparent and non discriminatory fashion;
- improve the policy coherence of Union initiatives, with particular regard to environmental, development and trade activities;
- promote and support, in all international spheres, the necessary action to eradicate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, ensuring, to this end, that no IUU fisheries products
- encourage and take an active part in joint international efforts to combat piracy at sea;
- ensure that fishing activities outside Union waters are based on the same principles and standards as those applicable in Union waters, while promoting the application by the RFMOs of the same principles and standards as are applied in Union waters.

Sustainable fisheries agreements: with a view to strengthening the competitiveness of the Union fishery and aquaculture sector, the report insists on the need to **ensure reciprocity in trade with third countries** in order to guarantee market conditions equal to those within the European Union, not only in terms of fishery sustainability, but also of health controls.

Whether these products originate in the Union or in third countries, the Common Market Organisation for fishery and aquaculture products should enable consumers to make better informed choices based on **traceability**.

Lastly, Members propose to include provisions making imports of fisheries and aquaculture products, subject to **compliance with internationally recognised social and environmental standards**.