

# Common fisheries policy (CFP)

2011/0195(COD) - 02/06/2015 - Follow-up document

In accordance with the requirements of [Regulation No 1380/2013](#) on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) the Commission presents a Communication on the progress on achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and on the situation of fish stocks. The paper also sets out the principles for the Commission proposals for fishing opportunities for 2016 under the CFP.

**The key findings are as follows:**

**Northeast Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea:** substantial progress has been made in moving towards the MSY objective: currently 32 stocks (out of the MSY assessed total of 62) are being fished at or below MSY in the Atlantic EU waters, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Some key features of the trends between 2006 and 2014 in those waters are:

- the stocks number fished at MSY increased from 2 to 269 ;
- the stocks number inside safe biological limits has risen from 11 to 21;
- the stocks number with quantitative catch advice rose from 59 to 72.

Pelagic fisheries in the Atlantic, and generally demersal fisheries in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea have improved their performance. The situation in **parts of the western waters is still cause for concern**. Currently, on average many important pelagic stocks and stocks in the North and Baltic Seas are close to MSY, with **less progress in the demersal fisheries in the western EU waters**. This may be linked to consistently setting higher total allowable catches (TACs) than proposed in some of the sea basins. The Commission's new reporting methodology also seems to indicate that the trend of strong progress may be slowing down.

**Mediterranean and the Black Sea:** the Communication states that **stocks are largely overfished and/or in a bad state**, in particular stocks exploited mainly or exclusively by EU operators. Overall, of all stocks assessed in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas (EU and shared stocks together) **only 8.6 % are exploited in accordance with MSY levels**. Despite recent improvements, the number of stocks with unknown status remains large. The Commission is working on improved data collection for all relevant stocks, and has requested STECF for advice on new stocks.

- **EU fish stocks:** the EU fish stocks are mainly located in the North-Western Mediterranean (i.e. Northern Spain, Balearic Islands, Gulf of Lion, Corsica and Sardinia, Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Seas) and in the Central Mediterranean (i.e. Northern Adriatic). Based on 2013 data, **96% of the EU fish stocks are exploited at levels above MSY**. For stocks such as hake, red mullet, black-bellied anglerfish and blue whiting current fishing mortality rates have been more than six times higher than MSY. Only 4% of the EU fish stocks are exploited at levels close to MSY.
- **EU and third country stocks:** stocks shared with third countries are mainly located in the Western (i.e. Alboran Sea and Algerian coast), Central (i.e. Strait of Sicily, Malta Island, South Adriatic, and Ionian Sea) and Eastern Mediterranean Sea (i.e. Aegean Sea, Crete and Cyprus Islands, and the Levantine Sea), and in the Black Sea. Based on 2013 data, 91% of these stocks are exploited at levels well above MSY. Only 9% of these stocks are exploited at levels close to MSY. Actions are being prepared both at EU and international level for concrete measures towards MSY targets.

Partly due to the sharing of stocks with third countries, the **Black Sea** still shows challenges of governance and resource management. The Commission works with Member States and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on improvements.

**Fishing opportunities:** for 2016 these will be fixed under the objectives of the new CFP, in particular the objective of bringing the impact of fishing fleets on the stocks (fishing mortality) in the shortest feasible time frame to the levels required to allow stocks to rebuild to biomass levels that can produce MSY. In 2015/2016 the Commission intends to propose EU multiannual plans in the **Mediterranean Sea** in line with the MSY objective including deadlines: a plan for anchovy and sardine in the northern Adriatic Sea and a plan for demersal species in the north-western Mediterranean Sea.

In 2016 **the landing obligation** will come into force for determined demersal fisheries in the

North Sea, north-western and south-western Atlantic waters. A considerable number of fishermen will be affected for the first time by the landing obligation. For the fisheries concerned the fixing of the TAC shall take into account the change to reflect catches instead of landings. In practice, ICES advice should be based on catches (including catches formerly discarded that now have to be landed) and no longer on landings.

The Commission will base its proposals for the fishing opportunities on the available biological advice. Where no such advice is available, the Commission will apply the precautionary approach in line with the CFP objectives.

Member States, Advisory Councils, stakeholders and the public are invited to reflect on the policy orientations set out in the Communication, and to provide recommendations and suggestions to the Commission by 1 October 2015.