

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

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The Commission presents a report on the application of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States (Landings Regulation). This is the third assessment report submitted to the European Parliament and the Council.

To recall, the Landings Regulation requires Member States and EEA countries to submit annually statistical data on total quantities and unit values of the fishery products landed in their territory by EU and EFTA vessels. Data are to be broken down by: i) the flag state of the fishing vessels carrying out landings; ii) the 'presentation' of the products; and iii) the intended use of the products.

The report assesses the progress made by Member States and EFTA countries with respect to the provisions of the Landings Regulation, namely in terms of the completeness and quality of the data provided. Administrative data appear to be the main source of statistics on landings with almost all countries collecting logbooks, sales notes, and landing, transhipment and takeover declarations.

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

Progress made: the report concludes that almost all countries are able to rely on administrative data sources to carry out **a full census of activity**. The methods used for collecting information on fisheries are fairly consistent throughout Europe. **The widespread use of electronic reporting** and the introduction of automatic validation systems has increased confidence in data quality and allowed countries to improve their punctuality in submitting data.

Weaknesses: the weaknesses in data collection mentioned by survey respondents and the difficulties experienced by Eurostat during the data validation process show that there is still room for improvement:

- for example, longer response times and greater difficulties in performing data checks are seen for countries that **do not have centralised systems**. In these cases, checking back to decide whether outliers are to be accepted or corrected can be a complex and time-consuming process;
- on several occasions, countries submitted **corrections to the data** when errors were identified by Eurostat during its cross-checking between statistics on catches and landings. This suggests that the consistency checks being carried out at national level are insufficient;
- some countries reported having experienced delays in receiving data from their **small-scale fleet**. The data submitted were also, on occasion, incomplete;
- **delays in receiving sales notes** on landings in other Member States or non-EU countries were also mentioned.

Improvements taking place: the report indicates that several countries are currently taking steps to improve their systems:

- **Germany and France** are working on new control and validation systems, which are to be operational by mid and end-2016 respectively;

- **Cyprus** is finalising a tender to implement automatic validation, which will reduce discrepancies between different data sources. It also plans to build a centralised system linking all data source;
- **Estonia** is taking steps to introduce further automation.

Some countries use **additional tools** to verify the plausibility of the information reported by fishermen:

- the **Portuguese authorities** carry out inspections, either at sea or during landings at ports;
- **the United Kingdom** has put in place various surveillance systems in place and inspectors make regular visits to markets and merchants' premises;
- several countries also stipulated that landed fish have to be weighed on **validated scales** in order to ensure accuracy.

Questionnaire: Eurostat prepared a questionnaire to be filled in by countries before launching the 2014 data collection exercise. A **set of practical guidelines** for reporting statistics on landings was then produced, on the basis of the replies received. The guidelines give precise instructions on which landings should or should not be included, and on how they should be reported. There was felt to be a need for such guidelines in order to harmonise national practices and avoid distortions in aggregated data. Use of these guidelines should **result in better quality data**.

Recommendations: certain countries have not yet resolved some of the shortcomings highlighted in the [previous report of 2014](#). These are related namely to the **questionable quality of primary data and to validation systems** that are not (or not fully) centralised and automated. In some cases, greater difficulties seem to arise when several different organisations are responsible for the data.

The report stresses the need to:

- **link all source data** and implementing automatic consistency and plausibility checks are also essential steps for improving the reliability of data and ensuring data is submitted on time;
- ensure very close **cooperation** with the national authorities concerned to deal with issues such as Italy lacking data on fishing activities in the Eastern Central Atlantic and Western Indian Ocean;
- take further steps to **simplify the process of preparing and submitting the data** in order to help to reduce the burden on data suppliers;
- take steps to improve the **conversion factors** used to calculate the live weight of fish products.