

Common fisheries policy (CFP)

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The Commission presents a report on Member States' efforts during 2014 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities.

To recall, under the new Common Fisheries Policy, Member States are required to prepare **an annual report on the situation of the fishing capacity of their fleets in relation to fishing opportunities**. If a Member State identifies a structural imbalance, it must submit an action plan for the segment concerned, setting out the adjustment targets, tools and a clear time frame for its implementation.

There were **more Member States action plans in 2015 than 2014**. In total, **17 Member States identified fleet segments that they consider to be imbalanced**, or showing potential signs of being imbalanced, and therefore requiring action plans. A further 5 Member States concluded that no fleet segments clearly demonstrated imbalance and did not submit action plans.

The state of fishing fleet capacity in the EU: the report notes that between January 2014 and November 2015 **the fishing capacity of the EU 28 Member States decreased by 0.8% in kilowatts (KW) and by 1.3% in gross tonnage (GT):**

- as of November 2015, 85, 065 vessels were registered in the EU fleet register with an **overall capacity of 1,627.125 GT and 6,474.617 KW**. This shows a reduction in 2015 (excluding in the outermost regions) of 0.6% in number of vessels. The fishing capacity of the EU fleet was 18.42 % below the capacity ceilings for tonnage and 11.60% below the power ceilings;
- **for the EU's outermost regions** which account for 5.4 % of the total EU fleet, during the period between January 2014 and November 2015, fleet capacity decreased by 0.1% in GT and increased by 0.9 in KW.

Furthermore, as of end December 2015, **eighteen Member States adopted a sampling plan for the verification of engine power**. As a result of 16 EU pre-contentious cases, the Commission has received all sampling plans on engine power from the Member States. The Commission is currently carrying-out audits, in order to monitor their effective implementation.

Observations and conclusions: on the basis of the reports provided by all 23 coastal Member States and of the analysis by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), the Commission makes the following observations:

- considerable progress has been made in the **quality of the national reports**. However, in order to increase the consistency of the resulting indicator values the coverage and quality of the balance indicators, especially the biological indicators, should be improved;
- **some of the indicators could not be calculated** for all fleet segments due to lack of data or, in case of economic and technical indicators, due to clustering segments together, which is done in order to protect commercial confidentiality;
- in 2014, there was an overall increase in the number of fleet segments for which Member States have identified structural overcapacity. Member States have opted for a **variety of measures to reduce capacity** including the introduction of transferable fishing concessions or permanent cessation to be supported by [the EMFF](#);
- the introduction of an ex-ante conditionality on the submission of the fleet report in line with **Commission guidelines** as part of the approval of the EMFF Operational Programme has strengthened the link between EU funding and compliance with CFP rules;

- **vessel utilisation is low.** The highest levels of inactivity can be seen in fleets of small-scale vessels, i.e. vessels measuring less than 12 m. 93% of inactive vessels were under 12m in length, while vessels between 12m and 24m accounted for 6% and vessels over 24m less than 2% of inactive vessels.

The report concludes that **overall, there has been significant progress** in recent years in efforts to achieve balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities across the EU. However, reports by the Member States reveal that for specific fleet segments, **further efforts** are needed to reduce the, especially in the Mediterranean Sea.