Multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks

2016/0238(COD) - 04/07/2018 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2018/973 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, specifying details of the implementation of the landing obligation in the North Sea and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 676/2007 and (EC) No 1342/2008.

CONTENT: the Regulation establishes a **new multi-annual management plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea**. These demersal stocks include roundfish, flatfish and cartilaginous fish species, Norway lobsters (*Nephrops norvegicus*) and northern prawns (*Pandalus borealis*) that live and feed near the seabed. The Regulation shall also apply to by-catches caught in the North Sea when fishing for the stocks listed in the plan.

The objective of the plan is:

- to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and in particular to achieve and maintain the **maximum sustainable yield** (MSY) for the stocks concerned, by implementing the landing obligation for demersal stocks subject to catch limits,
- to promote a **fair standard of living** for those who depend on fishing activities, taking into account coastal fishing and socio-economic aspects, and
- to implement the **ecosystem approach** to fisheries management.

The plan shall include objectives, quantifiable targeted objectives with clear timeframes, conservation reference points, safeguard measures and technical measures to avoid and reduce unwanted catches.

The Regulation sets out the target fishing mortality (‘F’) that corresponds to the objective of reaching and maintaining MSY as ranges of values which are consistent with achieving MSY (FMSY). Those ranges, based on the **best available scientific advice**, are necessary in order to provide the flexibility to take account of developments in scientific advice, to contribute to the implementation of the landing obligation and to take into account the characteristics of mixed fisheries.

When scientific advice indicates that recreational fisheries have a significant impact on the fishing mortality of a particular stock, the Council shall take them into account and may limit recreational fisheries when fixing fishing opportunities in order to avoid exceeding the total target of fishing mortality.

In addition, the new rules strengthen regional cooperation by giving Member States, and thus local fishing communities, a voice on important issues through joint recommendations.

The Commission may adopt **delegated acts** adapting the geographical distribution of the stocks provided for in the plan if scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) indicates a change in the geographical distribution of the stocks concerned. On the basis of scientific advice, the Commission may also submit a proposal to amend the list of stocks.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 5.8.2018.