

# **Common fisheries policy: protection of resources, the environment and consumers. Green Paper**

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**PURPOSE:** to launch a wide ranging debate with interested parties on the future of the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) **CONTENT:** the European Commission's Green Paper on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) forms an extensive, comprehensive and all encompassing analysis of the current situation regarding fisheries in Europe. It assesses the current short comings of the EU's fisheries policy, whilst at the same time offering a number of possibilities for improvements. It is designed to launch a wide-ranging debate with a view to formulating more concrete proposals on the reform of CFP at the end of this year. The Green Paper acknowledges that the objectives governing the CFP (based largely on the same objectives as the Common Agricultural Policy), are incompatible with current trends. Clearly, one of the most important shortcomings of the CFP is the continuing decline of critical fish stock within EU waters, in particular the decline of the demersal round fish stock such as cod and haddock. Other shortcomings include: - the overcapacity of the Community fleet; - management deficiencies; - environmental failings; - monitoring and control; - economic and social problems; - aquaculture; - failure in the processing industry; and a - failure in the CFP Mediterranean policies. In terms of improving conservation policy the Green Paper offers the following possibilities: - the implementation of multi-annual and ecosystem-oriented management; - the adoption of stronger technical measures; - the development of a system to track progress of the CFP towards sustainable development. On the question of defined technical measures, the Green Paper offers a number of specific options namely, the introduction and promotion of the use of selectivity devices that reduce or eliminate by-catches of non-target species; of fishing methods that have a reduced physical impact on the environment; and the closure of a given zone including the exclusion of any fishing activity in the area. Other measures proposed include negotiating a percentage of the by-catch species as part of the TACs. Concerning over capacity of the EU's Fleet, the Green Paper offers the following possibilities: the development of a fleet in line with multi-annual objectives and a halt to public funding for fleet development and or maintenance. This should be complemented by greater transparency with tighter enforcement of the rules by Member States. The Commission invites all interested parties to respond to the Green Paper by 30 September 2001.