

**FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWSLETTER**  
**DECEMBER 2013 - JANUARY 2014**



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I wish you all a very Happy 2014!

In this New Year's edition, we will firstly take stock of the very busy month of December in the European Parliament and Council of the EU, which adopted important decisions on fisheries matters and marked the end of a very challenging year, in particular with the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and the deep-sea dossier on the spotlight.

With the New Year we also now have a new CFP up and running; however some unfinished tasks remain, with the fisheries fund (EMFF) at the top of the list, a key instrument for implementing the new CFP. We will briefly take a glance at these and other challenges for EU fisheries policies in 2014 and we will see how the Greek Presidency is gearing up to advance along this front.

We will also look beyond the EU to get acquainted with key meetings this year on fisheries and marine issues at the global level.

Enjoy the reading and we look forward to a productive and prosperous New Year working together!

Despina Symons  
Director, EBCD

## December 2013 historic Parliament plenary



The **European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg 9-12 December** was a very important session for fisheries, including voting on some key dossiers for the fishing industry in particular the final green light for the CFP reform, the adoption of the EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement and the Parliament's shaping of the highly controversial deep-sea fishing regulation. Here is a snapshot of the main outcomes:

- **CFP reform:** two of the three legislative texts of the reform were given the final green light by MEPs. This was the final stage in the legislative process and the EU's new fisheries legislation has now been published and come into force as of 1 January 2014. However, not all is done. The third text – the financial instrument of the reform – the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)** is still in the air as negotiations broke down before the Christmas break.
- **EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement** – despite the controversial human rights element associated to this dossier, the European Parliament gave their OK to the new protocol (approved

with 310 votes in favour, 204 against and 49 abstentions). MEPs recognized the improvements of this protocol in sustainability terms and acknowledged with their vote that wider external policy considerations such as the Western Sahara political situation issue should not be solved through a fisheries deal.

- **Deep-sea stocks in the North-East Atlantic regulation** – the much debated and controversial deep sea dossier was on the spotlight in the last plenary of the year. As we have discussed in previous EBCD's newsletter editions, heavy lobby from NGOs took place in the run up to the vote and the industry was very active as well. All eyes were on the key amendment (number 62) that was the compromise which had been reached by the political groups in the fisheries committee a few months back that would get rid of banning bottom trawling below 600 metres. The voting session was a tense one and the compromise passed with a very thin margin, only by 16 votes (342+, 326-, 19 ab); the vote also shaped a set of balanced and responsible measures for the conservation of deep-sea ecosystems. However, the game is not over as the Council of the EU has still not adopted its position and it is not known whether the issue will be finalized during the Greek presidency.
- The **Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management** directive proposal was adopted rubberstamping the Parliament's views on this legislation that will require Member



State to draw up maritime spatial plans and integrated coastal management strategies. Discussions between the three EU institutions will now start, so not all is set yet.



**EBCD** closely followed this important Parliament session, welcoming in particular the deep-sea vote outcome amid sustainability considerations from an environmental, social and economic point of view.

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### **Fishing opportunities for 2014**

The **December Fisheries Council** reached a compromise political agreement on fishing opportunities for 2014 for the main commercial fish stocks of the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Black Sea. This time it was different than other December Council meetings: on the one hand as for the first time in years, negotiations did not last late into the night; on the other, and more importantly, because the 2014 TACs agreed on was done on the basis of scientific advice and in line with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) principle.

Commissioner Damanaki was pleased with the result as Member States are implementing the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform in advance, in particular taking the right decisions on implementing MSY, on following long term plans and on moving towards the discard ban.

### **The Atlantic, the Channel and the North Sea**

Progress towards sustainability targets: with the quotas decided during this Council, the number of stocks fished at MSY was increased by another 2 stocks (nephrops west of Scotland and in the North Sea) compared to 2013, thus bringing it up to 27 the number of stocks fished at MSY in 2014. Also with the decisions taken, other stocks are expected to join the list in 2015 (western horse mackerel, plaice in the Channel and sole in the Kattegat and Skagerrak). Therefore, 30 stocks could reach MSY level in 2015. Moreover, existing long-term management plans have been implemented and foreseen quotas were set up, also contributing to implementing the reform. There is good news on data poor stocks which have dropped from 51 stocks in 2011 to 13 stocks in 2012 and further down to 12 stocks in 2013.

Focusing on TAC and quota figures in 2014 (compared to 2013), a large increase of 145% for Irish Sea herring, an increase of 86% for megrims of North and North-West Spain, an increase of 29% for Greenland cod and an increase of 87% for mackerel icefish were decided on, to name a few. Whereas around 50 TACs remain unchanged from 2013.

However, for those stocks in the North Sea shared with Norway, only provisional quotas could be set, since negotiations are still ongoing. The Council set preliminary quotas for many stocks so fishermen could continue fishing cod, mackerel,

blue whiting and others in early 2014. Particularly tricky is the situation for mackerel as negotiations with Iceland and Faroe Islands have not advanced as we all wished.

Commercial stocks	Baltic Sea ICES: IIb-cd, 22-32	North Sea & Skagerrak / Kattegat & Eastern Channel ICES: IIIa, IV & VIb	West Scotland & Rockall Sea ICES: VI	Irish Sea ICES: VIIa	West Ireland ICES: VIIb,c, h-k	Celtic Sea & Western Channel ICES: VIIe-g	Bay of Biscay ICES: VIIa,b-d, e	Iberian Peninsula ICES: VIIc, IX, X	Faroe Islands ICES: Vb	Arctic-East ICES: I, II	Arctic-North Western ICES: Vb, XII, XIV
Albacore											
Anchovy		1	1		1	2	1	1			
Anglerfish		1	1		1	1	1	1			
Blue whiting		1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bluefin tuna					1	1	1	1			
Brill	1										
Capelin										1	1
Cod	2	2	1	1	1	1			2	1	1
Conger											
Chub mackerel	1										
Dab	1										
Flounder	1										
Haddock		1	2	1	1	1			1	1	1
Hake	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Greenland Halibut		1	1	1	1	1				1	1
Herring	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Horse mackerel											
Ling											
Mackerel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Megrim											
Norway pout	1	1		1	1	1					
Plaice	1	1		1	1	1					
Pouting											
Red fish										1	1
Saithe		1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1
Saquin		1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1
Sandeels		1	1	1	1	1					
Saibroms									1		
Sole		1				1	1	1			
Eleasmobranchs											
Sprat	1	1									
Swordfish											
Turbot	1										
Whiting		1	1	1	1	1					
Stocks outside/inside	*3/11	*7/16	*5/8	*4/6	*4/8	*7/8	*8/5	*7/6	*3/5	*3/9	*7/7
	Outside safe biological limits	Within safe biological limits	No assessment								

Green groups said the results from the meeting showed improvement, but more needed to be done on the sustainability front. Some criticized Ministers for not following scientific advice, such as for haddock in the Irish Sea, whiting and nephrops in the Bay of Biscay or common sole and plaice in the English Channel.

The reactions from the Member States were mixed, but mainly rather positive, especially from the Spanish as well as the Scottish and UK sides.

## The Black Sea

Ministers rejected the Commission proposal for a 15 % cut for turbot and voted on a roll-over in the EU total allowable catches (TACs) in the Black Sea for turbot and sprat. Control, monitoring and data collection measures will be reinforced, and management approaches at the regional level developed.

The full list of agreed fishing opportunities can be seen [here](#).

During the meeting, **Baltic Fisheries Ministers** also signed the BALTFISH Memorandum of Understanding, formalising the regional structure that has developed in the Baltic Sea region since 2009 and which will play a crucial role in implementing the new regionalised CFP in this area.

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## EU 2014 outlook & Greek Presidency programme

The end of 2013 marks the end of the Lithuanian presidency and the start of the Greek one for the first semester of 2014. The next one in turn is Italy, thus 2014 will see a Mediterranean touch.

But before looking at what the Greek presidency will aim to do, its worth to look back to 2013 and to see the **key challenges and developments EU fisheries will have in 2014**: a lot happened during the last months of 2013, in particular the final green light to the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). As of January 2014 we have a new reformed CFP in place, with the associated challenges of changing the way EU fisheries policies are implemented. In particular preparing for the discard ban and a regionalised implementation are at the top of the list for fisheries administrations, the sector and other stakeholders. However, with the fisheries fund that will financially support the new CFP – the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund – in yet another deadlock between the EU institutions as negotiations collapsed late December, the start of implementation is hampered. Besides, the reformed CFP also created new Advisory Councils, such as the Advisory Council for Aquaculture (AAC) and the Markets Advisory Council (MAC) which will need a lot of work to be

shaped up in the course of 2014. Thus the start of 2014 looks busy and tricky and overall 2014 can be seen as a year of preparing, adapting and kicking off in implementing the new CFP. In addition, there are other dossiers that will need completion in the legislative process in 2014, particularly the deep-sea file and the Maritime Spatial Planning –Integrated Coastal Zone Management (MSP- ICZM) directive proposal.

So within this setting, what will the **Greek presidency** do?

On a general note, the Greeks have identified Sea Policies as a thematic area that will run horizontally through the other three Greek Presidency's priorities, in particular mainstreaming sea and maritime affairs in the growth/job/cohesion agenda as well as migration and borders priority. With this sea/maritime cross-cutting thematic area they aim to redefine and re-launch the **EU Maritime Policy** in all its aspects and aim to adopt a text on Maritime Policy/Strategy at the June 2014 European Council, highlighting security and growth.

Focusing on **fisheries**, not surprisingly, the Greek presidency will have to take over the unfinished tasks:

- finalizing the EMFF dossier is their number one priority – they will have to take the lead in solving the row that took place at the end of December after the 3 EU institutions became locked in a dispute over how funding should be procured. The Greek presidency must now work for an agreement before the end of April, which will be the last Parliament plenary session before the EU Parliament elections;

- begin the reform package's effective implementation, in particular focusing on the discard ban and the multi-annual plans;
- reaching an agreement on the MSP-ICZM dossier in trilogue negotiations;
- taking up and shaping the Council's position on the deep sea dossier following the compromise reached by the Parliament in December.

All of this will have to be condensed in a 4 month period, as the European Parliament will be in full electoral process after the month of April and reaching political agreements on the above dossiers will be impossible.





A tentative snapshot of the Greek Presidency's Council programme for fisheries and maritime related affairs includes:

**January** – no Fisheries Council, probably as the EMFF trilogues must pick up again amid to reaching a much needed compromise on it.

**February** – the first official Fisheries Council will take place on the 17-18 February, mainly focusing on finalizing the first reading on the discard ban "**Omnibus Regulation**" of the CFP. A Maritime Policy Director's meeting is also scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> in Athens (to be confirmed) and a conference on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic/Ionian region is planned for 7<sup>th</sup> in Athens.

**March** – no fisheries issues planned so far in March's Council.

**April** – the Fisheries Council in Luxembourg 14-15 April will discuss the multi annual management plans, the road so far and the road ahead. There will also be a meeting of General Directors for Fisheries on 11 April in Athens.

**May** – will find the fisheries sector very busy, both with an informal and a formal Fisheries Council, on the 5-6 May and 19-20 May, respectively. During this month an informal Maritime Ministerial Council will also take place on 6 May in Athens.

**June** – on the last month of the Greek Presidency, there will be a Fisheries Council in Luxembourg on 16-17 June, where the Commission will present its proposal for the fishing opportunities for 2015.

**Events:** there will be two important conferences organised under the Greek presidency – a conference on "**Research and Innovation to foster the competitiveness of the European agri-food and seafood sectors**" in Athens 10-11 March and an **International fishing capacity conference** in Thessaloniki, Greece 13-14 March.

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## 2014: Key events for fisheries and marine issues at global level

**2014** will be an important year at the global level, with important decisions being made on marine and fisheries issues at various fora. Herebelow is a snapshot of some of the important events and developments taking place this year:



- **FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI):** the **guidelines for Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries (SSF)** are expected to be adopted at the COFI meeting taking place in June in Rome.
- **UN General Assembly/UNCLOS:** UN discussions on **marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction** (or the high seas) are taking place. The **UN Ad-hoc Working Group** dealing with this is expected to continue the work and meet twice in 2014 (April and June). These discussions have big implications for fisheries.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** **CBD COP 12** (the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD) will take place in Korea October 2014 and the **CBD's Subsidiary Body on**

**Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA)** will take place in Montreal, Canada in June 2014. Both will continue their work on marine related issues.

- **International Fishing Capacity Conference:** European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, will host an international conference on sustainable fishing capacity management in Thessaloniki, Greece, in March 2014. The conference will aim to intensify efforts to addressing overcapacity at a global level.
- **Global Oceans Action Summit:** The Netherlands, in close cooperation with FAO, the World Bank and other partners, is organizing the **Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth**, to be held in The Hague in April 2014. The Summit will focus on healthy oceans as essential for global food security, livelihoods and economic growth.
- **Marine Protected Areas:** the next **IUCN World Parks Congress** will take place in November 2014 in Sydney, Australia. This is the biggest event dealing with protected areas, held every 10 years.
- **CITES<sup>1</sup>:** 2014 will see the implementation of some of the decisions taken at last year's 16th CITES Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Bangkok, including

the CITES listing of commercial species of sharks and rays.

**EBCD** will actively participate in these developments and in several of the meetings. You can stay updated of upcoming events via our website's calendar [here](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora



Date	Organisation	Title	Location
<b>January 2014</b>			
09-Jan	EC	Implementation of Chapter 6 of the IUU regulations regarding non-cooperating countries	Brussels, Belgium
15-Jan	ICES	<a href="#">9th annual ICES- RACs (MIRAC) meeting</a>	Copenhagen, Denmark
16-Jan	EFCA	Seminar on the practical application of the new provisions of the CFP in the Joint Deployment Plans	Dubrovnik, Croatia
16-Jan	EC	Seminar on the Revision of the Data Control Regulations	Brussels, Belgium
17-Jan	EC	<a href="#">Info day 2014 Horizon 2020 calls for proposals – Societal Challenge 2 and LEIT Biotechnology</a>	Brussels, Belgium
20/31-Jan	SPRFMO	Compliance and Technical Committee and 2nd Commission meeting	Manta, Ecuador
22-Jan	Inter RAC-NGO	Coordination Meeting	Brussels, Belgium
22/23-Jan	EP	<a href="#">Fisheries Committee</a>	Brussels, Belgium
29/31-Jan	FAO/CITES	<a href="#">Regional consultative workshop on capacity assessments for the implementation of new CITES listings of sharks and manta rays</a>	Casablanca, Morocco
30-Jan	EC	<a href="#">Sustainable development of the blue economy of the Black Sea</a>	Bucharest, Romania
<b>February 2014</b>			



03-Feb	FAO/GFCM/SSF	<a href="#">First Working Group on Marine Protected Areas</a>	Montenegro
3/7-Feb	FAO/SSF	<a href="#">Resumed Session of the Technical Consultation on International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries</a>	Rome, Italy
04-Feb		<b>International Conference "Innovations in feeding technologies and commercial fish" farming</b>	All-Russia Exhibition Centre, Moscow
4/9-Feb	PELRAC	<b>Executive Committee, Discards Working Group I and II, MyFISH project</b>	The Netherlands
5/6-Feb	AQUAFIMA and AQUABEST	<a href="#">Joint Final Conference of AQUAFIMA and AQUABEST project</a>	Mariehamn, Åland Islands
6/7-Feb	EC	<a href="#">EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region</a>	Athens, Greece
9/10-Feb		<a href="#">14th Fish International</a>	Bremen, Germany
10/11-Feb	EP	<a href="#">Fisheries Committee</a>	Brussels, Belgium
11-Feb	EC	<a href="#">12th Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG) meeting</a>	Brussels, Belgium
17-Feb	EC	<a href="#">Atlantic strategy: Workshop on directly managed funds and operational programmes</a>	Brussels, Belgium
17/18-Feb	EU Council	<b>Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers' Council</b>	Brussels, Belgium
19/21-Feb	FAO/CITES	<a href="#">Fourth Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop</a>	San José, Costa Rica
24/26-Feb	Economist	<a href="#">World Ocean Summit 2014</a>	San Francisco, USA
24/28-Feb	FAO/COFI	<a href="#">Sub-Committee on Fish Trade - 14th Session</a>	Bergen, Norway
25-Feb	NSRAC	<b>Executive Committee</b>	London, UK
26-Feb	EC	<a href="#">European seminar on regionalization and knowledge for fisheries (DG Research)</a>	Brussels, Belgium