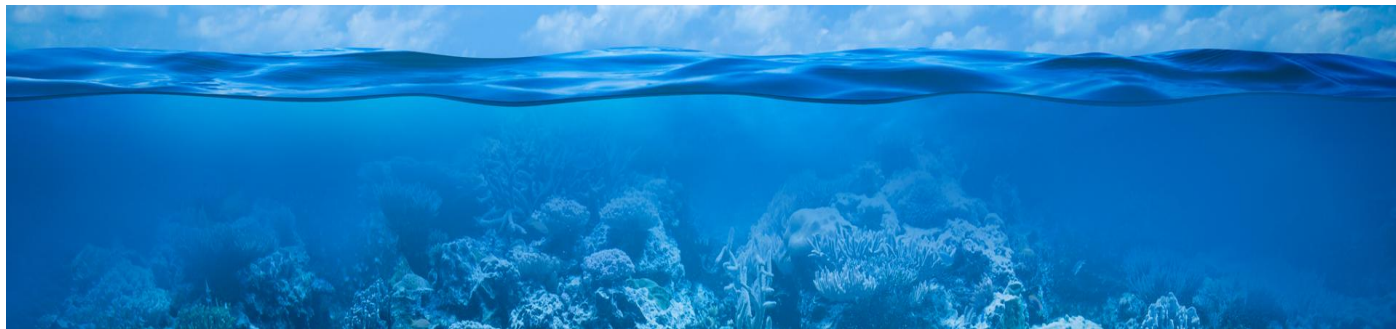


FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWSLETTER

JULY - AUGUST 2015



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Dear readers,

The first and very intensive semester of the year has come to an end and now all of us are slowly taking off on a well-earned vacation!

This month you can read about the Luxembourg Presidency priorities as presented during the July's EP Fisheries Committee. You can also read about the annual seminar on the state of fish stocks organized by the European Commission. Lastly, we invite you to read up on the post 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals, and specifically goal 14 on oceans. This last topic comes at an important time as the European Commission has launched an online public consultation with a deadline of the 15th September 2015.

Enjoy the reading and the summer holidays! See you in September with a fresh start.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Despina Symons'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'D' and 'S'.

Despina Symons
Director, EBCD

European Council



Luxembourg Presidency priorities

In this month's EP Fisheries Committee, the Luxembourg's Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Consumer Protection, President-in-office of the Council, **Mr Fernand Etgen** spoke in front of the MEPs of the Committee to present them with his country's priorities during the second semester of 2016.

In his presentation, he stressed the importance of the joint work done by the European Parliament and Council. Their main goal is the implementation of the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Internal dimension of the CFP:

Fishing opportunities for 2016: The TACs and quotas for 2016 will be based on MSY taking into account the landing obligation and mixed fisheries, guided by the basic regulation.

Multiannual plan for Baltic Sea. The Presidency plans to pick up the negotiations with the Parliament. Multiannual plans are important tools in the implementation of the new CFP.

Gathering data: Scientific knowledge requires appropriate, high quality and reliable data.

The Commission proposals on deep-sea fisheries and on banning driftnets, as well as the new regulation on technical measures, are another set of important dossiers for this Presidency.

External dimension of the CFP:

The Presidency welcomed the agreement reached with Mauritania and stated that Gabon and Tanzania are their goals for this second semester of the year.

Regarding the North of Europe, consultations on migratory species will be closely followed.

Following the discussions with the MEPs, the issues raised were:

- the criteria that will be taken into account when fixing TACs and quotas and the Presidency's position regarding MSY
- the urgent need for approving the Baltic multiannual plan
- The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) should provide the adequate resources to process the data already collected
- IUU fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing) and how does the Council intend to address this problem
- the lack of management of certain species in European waters and beyond, which may have negative effects on deep sea
- more progress needs to be made for species monitored in international waters and managed under regional bodies (RFMOs)
- on the dossier of driftnet, urged the need to take into account the coastal communities when addressing this approach of "blanket" ban.

European Commission

Seminar “State of Fish Stocks and the Economics of Fishing Fleets”



The annual seminar “State of Fish Stocks and the Economics of Fishing Fleets” organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) took place at the European Commission premises on the 14th July 2015. The event can be watched online [here](#).

Karmenu Vella, the European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, opened the session by pointing out the long-term benefits of reaching **Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)**, and suggesting that this be achieved before the proposed **2020 deadline**. Fisheries in the Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic are steadily moving towards MSY, although, he reminded, the situation in the Mediterranean remains bleak. Despite many still attributing the Mediterranean failure to poor management from developing countries, Vella noted that stocks being exploited exclusively by western nations are doing just as badly. Nevertheless, there are some stories of success, such as the recovery of bluefin tuna in this region. The Commissioner concluded by stressing the importance of delivering the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and of setting up **multiannual management plans (MAP)** based on sound scientific advice, paying particular

attention to stocks, like those in the Mediterranean, that are not yet progressing towards MSY.

Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic stocks

The presentations kicked off with a description of the state of fish stocks in **NE Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea** by the ICES ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard. Overall, the picture painted by **ICES** is a **positive** one for these regions: average fishing mortality (F) has been decreasing since early this century to meet F_{MSY} , and stock sizes have started recovering in recent years towards healthy levels. In the NE Atlantic, for example, 32 of 62 stocks were fished sustainably in 2014, compared to only 14% in 2009. There are a few exceptions, however. Many stocks in the Celtic Sea are not growing as would be expected in response to the reduced fishing mortality, which suggests that factors other than fishing are driving population size. A similar scenario is found with crustacean stocks in the North Sea, where there is speculation that species interactions, namely increased predation, is reducing spawning stock biomass (SSB) of nephrop populations. Two representative stocks which *are* growing in response to decreased fishing mortality are North Sea cod and North Sea plaice – the latter of which is now at record high levels.

Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks

Following this presentation, Massimiliano Cardinale, on behalf of the STECF Expert Group on the **Mediterranean Sea**, explained the situation in the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea. By STECF's reckoning, close to 93% of the analysed stocks are being **overfished**. Not only are the majority of stocks depleted at levels well above F_{MSY} (up to ten times above the sustainable limit, for some stocks), but in fact many, especially those in the central Mediterranean, show a trend towards increased fishing mortality, instead of away from it. The situation is

particularly alarming for demersal fish such as hake, a charismatic and economically important species which nonetheless is showing an increase in fishing mortality and a decline in both recruitment levels and spawning stock biomass. This means stocks are not producing big enough year classes to maintain their populations. With some exceptions, such as crustaceans and a few single-species fish stocks (e.g. pelagic sardines and anchovies), this appears to be the trend in the Mediterranean. Cardinale noted that the reductions in fishing effort of the last five years have been ineffective in bringing about a downturn of fishing mortality. A quick estimation shows that fishing effort must be reduced by a further 55% on average (90% in the most extreme cases) to reach F_{MSY} . Having said that, the recovery potential for Mediterranean stocks is still very high, as long-term catch rates could increase if fishing reaches MSY, and spawning stock biomass would, in time, reach previously unrecorded levels. In order to achieve this goal, good quality data is needed for the Mediterranean stocks. With regards to this issue, the STECF recommends that time series of assessments data are extended as far back as possible to integrate historical data with current figures. Also important to note is that the STECF considers each stock to belong to a distinct Geographical Sub-Area (GSA), whereas the STOCKMED project suggests bigger, clustered stocks throughout the Mediterranean – further analysis is needed to correctly define the stock units. As a matter of immediate action, the Expert Group suggests reducing fishing effort and/or catches to lower fishing mortality (urgently in the case of hake stocks), implementing a TAC system for small pelagics and management plans based on scientific evidence, plus collating historical data.

Economic Report on the EU fishing fleet

Finally, Anton Paulrud, chair of the STECF Expert Group for Annual Economic Report, presented the preliminary results of the **2015 Annual Economic Report** on the EU fishing fleet. Working on adjusted data from 2013, and with a representative sample of 16 Member States to analyse trends, the report shows that revenue in the EU's fleet is decreasing (although there is large variation), as are costs and gross value added (GVA). Revenue in 2013 added to a sum of €6.86 billion, with Spain generating the highest revenue and GVA, followed by France, UK and Italy. When it came to net profit, however (totalling €506 million), the UK came on top, while three Member States made losses (Belgium, Finland, Portugal). Paulrud reminded that profit may not always be the incentive behind commercial fishing and therefore it is not uncommon for the activity to persist even if unprofitable, especially for small scale fleets, which account for 74% of the total EU fleet in number (although only 8% in gross tonnage and 32% in engine power). As highlighted by the report trends, gross profit appears to be increasing slightly, as is net profit. The authors of the report consider economic performance in the long run as the main indicator for success, since fishing is an economic activity. In this light, the overall trend appears to be **positive for large scale** fleets and **negative for small scale** ones. Notwithstanding, there is large **variation** in economic performance throughout the EU and small fleets cannot automatically be considered to be “failing” as their objectives may not be economic.

The presentation slides can be viewed on the European Commission's [website](#).

Advisory Councils Interventions

Representatives from several Advisory Councils were then invited to speak, including the North Sea, Baltic, North-Western Waters, South-

Western Waters, Pelagic and Mediterranean ACs. Several of these bodies agreed on the need for **better scientific advice** based on good quality data, and on the need to consider ecological interactions and mixed stocks in the implementation of the MAPs. It was noted that a majority of factions within the Baltic Advisory Council are against the drastic reduction in fishing quotas advised by ICES, although they agree on the need to meet the MSY goal. The same group also made a call for the adoption of technical regulations that will facilitate fishermen's compliance with the new landing obligation.

Giampaolo Buonfiglio, Chair of the Mediterranean Advisory Council, underscored the **inefficiency** of the EU's fishing **effort reductions** in lowering fishing mortality in the Mediterranean thus far. The Commission has plans to reduce fishing capacity and activity further, but he suggested contemplating additional measures such as the closure of sensitive areas during certain times. Key to the management success of the Mediterranean within the next years is acting in a timely manner – Buonfiglio doubts that the first MAPs for the Mediterranean will be in place soon enough and encouraged immediate adoption of **emergency measures**, at least for stocks which are on the verge of collapse. He stressed the importance of identifying these high risk stocks and any associated stocks which may be affected by species interactions, as variability within the Mediterranean makes a general diagnosis and approach inappropriate.

Views from stakeholders

Attendees took the floor to raise various issues with the speakers. A number of interventions focused on the need for better **scientific data**, to which the ICES Chair replied that there is a **bottleneck in the processing** capacity of raw data, rather than the collection of data, which is

in fact sufficient. It was also emphasised that effort should be placed on **communicating the positive message** regarding stock recovery in the Atlantic, Baltic and North Sea in order to conciliate the conscience of EU consumers. Other comments included the importance of taking into account the landing obligation when dealing with scientific recommendations, the need for updated economic data and the relevance SSB/B_{MSY} data (stock size in relation to the ideal sustainable size) to show compliance with the CFP.

Director for Policy Development and Coordination from DG-MARE, Ernesto Penas Lado, requested that the scientific advisory bodies explain the variability in **delays** from the time when **sacrifices** are first made to when **benefits** are first observed. It is important to note that this scenario is different for the Atlantic, Baltic and North Seas, where the link is between decreasing fishing mortality (F) and increasing stock size (SSB), and the Mediterranean, which is one step behind as no relationship is yet observed between reduced fishing effort and lower fishing mortality. STECF spokesman Cardinale suggested that the theoretical reduction in fishing effort is perhaps not translating into an actual reduction of fishing capacity, which would explain why F is not declining. This may lead us to rethink using effort as a management strategy and start coming up with **new solutions**. In any case, he pointed out that it is crucial to distinguish between specific and multispecific fisheries, since single-species stocks in the Mediterranean can be adequately managed by the existing TAC system, as is demonstrated by the current data.

The Commission closed the session by stressing the importance of identifying high-risk stocks in the Mediterranean and addressing the weakness of advice for this region. It is not realistic to

assume that long-term management plans will be enforced soon enough in the Mediterranean so in the meantime the Commission will trust present systems like TAC, while reminding **Member States** of their **responsibility** to take urgent action.

Bruno Martin de la Llama (bruno@martindelallama.com) is a Biological Sciences student at the University of Durham, UK, with an interest in science communication. He completed an internship with EBCD during July 2015. Prior to that, he studied in Spain, and wrote about science, technology and the environment. Bruno is now Science and Technology Editor of Palatinate, Durham's Independent Student Newspaper.

Other issues

Briefing on the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals



Overview

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 new aims that will provide the framework for agendas and political policies of UN member states over the next 15 years. They are to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expire at the end of 2015.

Establishment of post-2015 goals was agreed at the Rio+20 summit in 2012. Unlike the MDGs, the new goals were chosen by an open working group¹ with representatives from 70 countries, which also considered input from “global conversations” conducted by the UN and public surveys. The final draft with 17 suggestions was presented to the UN General Assembly in September 2014.

If the proposed SDGs are approved at the **UN summit in New York (September 2015)**, they will become applicable from January 2016, with the expected deadline in 2030.

The 17 new goals

1. End **poverty** in all its forms everywhere.
2. End **hunger**, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure **healthy lives** and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable **quality education** and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve **gender equality** and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of **water and sanitation** for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern **energy** for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable **economic growth**, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

¹ Open Working Group on SDGs (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>)

9. Build resilient **infrastructure**, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation.
10. Reduce **inequality** within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human **settlements** inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure **sustainable consumption and production** patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat **climate change** and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UNFCCC forum).
14. Conserve and sustainably use the **oceans**, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of **terrestrial ecosystems**, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive **societies** for sustainable development, provide access to **justice** for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive **institutions** at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the **global partnership** for sustainable development.

Specific targets have been proposed within each goal (169 in total), as well as indicators (304, provisionally) to show compliance once the goals have been met.

Why new goals?

The UN has called the MDGs ‘the most successful anti-poverty movement in history’. They have provided the framework for government policies to collectively address global issues such as

poverty – however, many targets were not met, and the goals were criticized for being too narrow. The SDGs build upon the MDGs by addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality, and by taking a holistic approach to development. The MDGs made no mention of human rights, nor did they consider economic development. In addition, the MDGs were assumed by many to be targets for poor countries to achieve with help from wealthier ones; all countries will have to work towards the SDGs.

The UN’s main concern with the MDGs was uneven progress across regions and countries, as ‘the poorest and most vulnerable people are being left behind’. The MDG 2015 Report² highlights the major shortcomings of the MDG programme:

- **Gender inequality** persists.
- **Big gaps** exist between the **poorest and richest** households, and between rural and urban areas.
- **Climate change** and **environmental degradation** undermine progress achieved, and poor people suffer the most.
- **Conflicts** remain the biggest threat to human development.
- Millions of poor people still live in **poverty and hunger**, without access to basic services.

An emphasis will be placed on collecting critical data for evidence-based policymaking. Real-time data collection will also be necessary to monitor the development agenda and deliver effective decisions. The MDG Report stresses the strong political commitment and increased resources required to meet this data demand.

² The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml>)

Drawing up the final agenda: Post-2015 process

The process of arriving at the post 2015 development agenda³ has been Member State-led with broad participation from Major Groups and other civil society stakeholders.

- 19 - 21 Jan | Post-2015 - Stock-taking & Stakeholder Preparatory Forum
- 17 - 20 Feb | Declaration
- 23 - 27 Mar 2015 | Sustainable Development Goals and Targets
- 21 - 24 Apr 2015 | Means of implementation and global partnership
- 18 - 22 May | Follow-up and review
- 22 - 25 June | Negotiations for the Outcome Document
- **20 - 31 July | Intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome document**

Targets of Sustainable Development Goal #14

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

- 14.1 by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine **pollution** of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
- 14.2 by 2020, sustainably **manage and protect** marine and coastal **ecosystems** to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans
- 14.3 minimise and address the impacts of ocean **acidification**, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

- 14.4 by 2020, **effectively regulate harvesting**, and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, to **restore fish stocks** in the shortest time feasible at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
- 14.5 by 2020, **conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas**, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information
- 14.6 by 2020, **prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies** which **contribute** to overcapacity and **overfishing**, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to **IUU fishing**, and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognising that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation
- 14.7 by 2030 increase the **economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs** from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
- 14.8 increase **scientific knowledge**, develop **research capacities** and transfer **marine technology** taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of

³ Post-2015 Process
(<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/post2015>)

developing countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs

- 14.9 provide access of **small-scale artisanal fishers** to marine resources and markets,
- 14.10 ensure the **full implementation of international law**, as reflected in UNCLOS for states parties to it, including, where applicable, existing regional and international regimes for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by their parties

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Science

Positive state of ICES fish stocks presented to European Commission



Today, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) delivered an overview of the status of a host of fish and

shellfish stocks across the Northeast Atlantic for which the organization has provided advice on this year.

The Chair of ICES Advisory Committee, Eskild Kirkegaard, presented the information at a seminar in Brussels organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE). Encompassing around 150 stocks, the general picture is of a reduction in the exploitation level in accordance with the advice provided by ICES and in line with management objectives for sustainable fisheries. "Over the last ten to fifteen years, we have seen a general decline in fishing mortality in the Northeast Atlantic and the Baltic Sea," explained Kirkegaard. "The stocks have reacted positively to the reduced exploitation and we're observing growing trends in stock sizes for most of the commercially important stocks."

For the majority of stocks, it has been observed that fishing mortality has decreased to a level consistent with Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) – meaning levels that are not only sustainable but will also deliver high long term yields.

An example of this trend is reflected in the status of North Sea cod for which advice was recently issued, where a downturn in fishing mortality and an upturn in Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) was noted. North Sea plaice, which is now at record high levels is a comparable example.

The current stock and exploitation status of all ICES stocks can be viewed on the ICES website.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, and the Baltic Sea. ICES advises international commissions and governments on marine policy and management issues related to the impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems and the management of the exploitation of living marine

resources. ICES is working towards integrated ecosystem assessments and integrated advice, delivered at the regional seas level. For more information, visit www.ices.dk.

Source information: ICES Press release



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Upcoming EVENTS

September 2015			
16 Sept	NWWAC	General Assembly	Edinburgh, United Kingdom
6-7 Sept	Anfaco	VII Worldwide Tuna Conference "Vigo 2015"	Vigo, Spain
16-17 September	LDAC	CFP: The External Dimension as a Driver for Change	Las Palmas, Spain
21-25 Sept	NAFO	Annual Meeting	Canada
22-23 Sept	NSAC	Executive Committee Meeting & General Assembly	
22-23 Sept	EP	Pech Committee	Brussels Belgium
25-27 Sept	UN	United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda	New York, USA
28-30 Sept	UN	Oceans and Law of the Sea Resolution	New York, USA

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