

# FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWSLETTER

## MAY 2015



### European Parliament

### European Commission

### Other issues

### European Court of Justice

### JPI Oceans

### Events

May has come to an end and it has been a busy month with the European Commission launching 4 consultations regarding fisheries and organizing events such as the European Maritime Day held in Piraeus on the 27 and 28<sup>th</sup> May and the 4th stakeholders' meeting on "The marine environment and fisheries - applying the new CFP and environment policy together", which touched upon issues like the MSFD, Natura 2000, Habitat Directive and other important legislations.

In this month's EP plenary, while there were no fishing issues discussed, a debate was held regarding Japanese whaling activities in the Antarctic where MEPs voiced their opinions and remarks on this very delicate issue.

On a more general note, this month highlighted several key developments which you can read in further detail below such as the release of a joint NGO position paper on Blue growth, "Blue Manifesto"; the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Global Ocean Commission; the release of the European Court of Justice Advocate General's opinion on the controversial "cod case" and lastly; the unveiling of the JPI Oceans Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda at their 1<sup>st</sup> JPI Oceans conference that took place at the beginning of the month in Brussels.

Enjoy the reading!

*Despina Symons*  
Director, EBCD

# European Parliament

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## Voting in the PECH Committee

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Last PECH Committee took place on the 6-7 May. Find below the outcome from the voting schedule at today's EP Fisheries Committee (also find attached the agenda of the meeting):

- **Multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks:**  
MEPs adopted a formal mandate and gave the "green light" to the rapporteur MEP Walesa (PL, EPP) to start the negotiations with the EU Council; 25 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention.
- **Prohibition on driftnet fisheries:** The PECH committee decided to postpone the vote to a later date and to ask the opinion of the Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) Committee on admissibility of amendments to reject Commission proposal.
- **Untapping the potential of Research and Innovation in the Blue Economy to create Jobs and Growth:** The opinion as amended was adopted with 21 in favour, 3 and no abstentions.
- **Provisions for fishing in the GFCM** (General Fisheries Commission for the

Mediterranean) Agreement area: MEPS gave their approval on the early second reading political agreement with 20 in favour, 4 against and no abstentions.

Find the relevant documents here:  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/organes/pech/pech\\_20150506\\_0900.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/organes/pech/pech_20150506_0900.htm)

## Japanese whaling activities under the microscope of the EP

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In this month's EP plenary the issue of Japanese whaling activities in the Antarctic was discussed and all political groups and individual MEPs criticized Japan's new scientific program on whaling activities stating that the scientific aspect of this project is a facade for commercial use.

Also, a majority of MEPs asked the EU to put pressure via its Free Trade Agreements and trade measures to force Japan to ban whaling. Specifically, one MEP asked that the Commissioner for the European External Action Service, Mrs Mogherini, raise this issue at Japan's summit on the 29<sup>th</sup> May.

The Council of the European Union noted that it will plan its course depending on the outcome of the International Whaling Commission's scientific committee regarding the new scientific program that Japan has tabled. Last, it noted that depending on the outcome, an amendment might be proposed at the next annual meeting of IWC to the Annex on scientific programs regarding whaling to ensure better compliance and criteria for such projects.

You can follow the debate [here](#)

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# European Commission

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## Marine environment and fisheries – applying the new CFP and environment policy together

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On the 21<sup>st</sup> May, the 4th Workshop on "Marine environment and fisheries – applying the new CFP and environment policy together" brought together representatives from Member States, Advisory Councils and stakeholders to present their views on implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) while taking into account the new Common Fisheries Policy.

The Commission opened the meeting by giving a briefing on the work done so far regarding the definition of Good Environmental Status (GES). The manuals for the descriptors are finalised and a public consultation will take place in the upcoming weeks.

The meeting focused on the meaning of GES in regards to Descriptors especially relevant for fisheries, with emphasis on Descriptors 3: Commercial Fish and Shellfish; 4: Food Webs; 6: Seafloor Integrity and 1: Biodiversity.

The presentations focused on the challenges these Descriptors pose on the definition of GES and the implementation of the Directive, since all descriptors are interconnected. The different variables make it hard to know which levers to pull to reach GES.

Stocks are affected by age of individuals, spawning times, fishing mortality, survival of juveniles, individual size and health, predation, natural mortality... and at the same time are affected by food availability, contaminants, invasive species, eutrophication... Especially complicated are food webs, since they react rapidly to a changing pressure with complex feedbacks. All pressures should be studied together in order to address properly the descriptors and their indicators to reach GES.

Marine litter was also discussed, stressing the differences between sea basins. 80% of the waste that pollutes the oceans is generated inland.

The relevance of the precautionary approach, the role of science and its accuracy were other topics also discussed.

Participants finally stressed the importance of collaboration between the sector and NGOs.

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## EC launches public consultations

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This month the European Commission launched four public consultations related to fisheries.

**DG MARE:**

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- Public consultation on the fishing opportunities for 2016 under the Common Fisheries Policy. The deadline is 01.10.2015.

All information can be found [here](#).

- Public consultation on Development of multi-annual plans for the management of demersal fisheries in western EU waters. The deadline is 11.09.2015.

All information can be found [here](#).

- Public consultation on an EU ecolabel for fishery & aquaculture products. The deadline is the 31.07.2015.

All information can be found [here](#).

- Public consultation on a Regulation establishing a multiannual plan for the management of Northern Adriatic Sea small pelagic fisheries. The deadline is 11.09.2015.

All information can be found [here](#).

#### **DG Environment:**

- Public consultation as part of the 'fitness check' for EU nature legislation (Birds Directive, Habitats Directive). The deadline is the 24.07.2015.

All information can be found [here](#).

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## **Other issues**

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### **NGOs' Blue Manifesto**

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A number of NGOs (BirdLife International, ClientEarth, Seas at Risk, Greenpeace, Oceana, WWF) published a manifest, Blue Manifesto, pointing out the priorities and urgent actions that the European Commission must take to ensure the safety of Europe's seas.



*Picture by Rafts.co.uk*

According to the paper, these NGOs urge the new European Commission to prioritise the following goals:

1. Ensure Good Environmental Status by 2020 through a strong implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
2. Complete an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas by 2020, with the implementation of the Natura 2000 network (Birds and Habitats Directives) as the basis, in line with the requirements of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy;
3. End overfishing and allow for the recovery of fish stocks, while minimising the impact of fishing on the wider marine environment through full and timely implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy;



4. Ensure a sustainable blue economy that protects and maintains the diversity, productivity, resilience, and core functions of marine ecosystems through effective and integrated ocean governance under the Integrated Maritime Policy; and
5. Strengthen international fisheries and maritime governance, including in relation to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, the conservation of endangered species, and the protection of the high seas.

[You can read it here.](#)

## 5th Meeting of the Global Ocean Commission



On Sunday, 17 May, José María Figueres (Costa Rica), Global Ocean Commission (GOC) Co-Chair, opened the Fifth Meeting of the Global Ocean Commission (GOC 5).

GOC Executive Secretary Simon Reddy presented on progress made since the June 2014 launch of the report 'From Decline to Recovery: A Rescue Package for the Global Ocean.' He highlighted significant support received, including, media coverage consisting of, inter alia, over 30 million social media impressions, as well as the delivery of a global petition containing over 288,000 signatures to the UN, calling for a new international agreement to protect the high seas. He invited Commissioners to provide input and

support in order to continue the momentum through the next seven months of the GOC mandate. In ensuing discussions, one Commissioner lauded the value of focusing on a small number of priorities and the “remarkable commitment” of the Secretariat, noting that positive progress has been made by the GOC in multilateral systems. The Commissioner raised the challenge of mobilizing people globally and expressed concern over the lack of significant traction in emerging economies, noting the need for political champions. Another Commissioner asked how the GOC can actively engage the UN system and the private sector to further mobilize action to fulfil the GOC mandate. One Commissioner underscored the value of a coordinating mechanism within the UN system to integrate the efforts and progress made in various institutions. A Commissioner suggested coordination with the chemicals processes, specifically in the priority area of plastics, to help gain momentum. Commissioners strategized on opportunities presented by upcoming forums to generate high-level engagement, specifically by developing countries, and to strengthen political leadership. Opportunities to engage the African Union and further engage coastal countries in Africa were discussed. Focusing on the second “Our Oceans Conference” taking place in Chile in October 2015, one Commissioner underscored that the agenda needs to incorporate the voice of developing nations. A participant shared efforts to address the connection between oceans and climate change, indicating that these special issues will attract the interest of developing countries. One Commissioner noted that the task of moving from process to outcomes and engaging champions to raise the profile of oceans issues on the international agenda is a longterm journey.

*Source: Global Ocean Commission Bulletin is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) , publishers of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin ©*

*This report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in collaboration with the Global Ocean Commission summarizes the presentations and discussions during the meeting. GOC 5 was held under the Chatham House Rule and this report therefore does not identify the speakers during the discussion sessions.*

[You can read the report here.](#)

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## European Court of Justice

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### ECJ Advocate General Opinion on “cod” case

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The opinion of the European Court of Justice’s Advocate General on the multiannual cod plan in the Atlantic and North Sea was published. He supports the European Parliament’s position that the Council cannot split the proposal and therefore the adoption of the plan in 2012 "was adopted on the wrong legal basis".

According to the Advocate General's opinion, "Articles 9 and 12 of the Cod Plan as respectively replaced and amended by the contested regulation do not simply implement choices made by the EU legislature, but rather define the framework for fixing and allocating fishing opportunities in certain specific circumstances. That is why it is my belief that the contested regulation was adopted on the wrong legal basis

and that, in hiving those provisions off from the rest of the Commission’s proposal, the Council acted unlawfully."

Keep in mind that the Advocate General’s opinion is not binding on the Court, whilst the Court’s judgment is expected later this year.

#### Background

The issue at hand is the court case (Case C-124/13) on the multiannual cod plan in the Atlantic and North Sea. In December 2012, the Council adopted part of this plan, i.e. the articles containing rules for fixing the catch limits, single-handedly. It claimed that these fall under its exclusive competence under Article 43(3) TFEU which provides that the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, is to adopt measures on the fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities. As a consequence, this legal basis excluded the Parliament from taking part in the adoption of the act.

The European Parliament, as well as the European Commission, however claims that these multiannual fisheries management plans in their entirety make policy choices which should be decided under co-decision, i.e. according to Article 43(2) TFEU. Other multiannual fishery plans have been blocked by the Council due to this conflict. The Parliament demands to be fully associated in its co-legislator role to the establishment of the multi-annual fishery plans, which are a key element of the Common Fisheries Policy, and urgently needed. (*Source: EP Press Service*)

[You can read the ECJ Advocate General’s opinion here.](#)

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## JPI Oceans Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda

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The first copies of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda were handed over to Norwegian State Secretary Dilek Ayhan, Belgian State Secretary Bart Tommelein and, Director General of DG Research and Innovation Robert-Jan Smits.

The official hand over took place at the First JPI Oceans conference on 7 May in Brussels. The conference was opened by the Chair of the JPI Oceans Management Board, Caron Montgomery. At the event, Belgian State Secretary Bart Tommelein presented himself as a man of the ocean, born by the sea and still living at the sea. The State Secretary highlighted the role of Belgium in the initiative and especially looked forward to joint initiatives on marine spatial planning. Norwegian State Secretary Dilek Ayhan underlined the potential and complexity of the oceans. "Therefore nations need to cooperate to maximize this oceans potential." She presented JPI Oceans as a part of the solution in order to achieve a stronger cooperation between nations. The session was concluded by Director General Robert-Jan Smits who highlighted that the JPI Oceans Vision document and the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda have made a significant contribution to the Blue Growth agenda of the European Commission and that now it is time to focus on its implementation.



The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, which was officially launched at the conference, presents ten Strategic Areas, developed and agreed by JPI Oceans (with the support of the FP7 CSA Oceans project), as priorities for marine and maritime research in Europe. As it moves into an implementation phase, the Member Countries of JPI Oceans will create actions within these ten Strategic Areas to align the European marine and maritime landscape.

The Research and Innovation Agenda was developed through an extensive stakeholder consultation which involved a series of workshops targeting different stakeholder groups, a questionnaire to the funding bodies of JPI Oceans' Member Countries, and an open web consultation. The ten strategic areas are:

1. Exploring Deep Sea Resources
2. Technology and Sensor Developments
3. Science Support to Coastal and Maritime Planning and Management
4. Linking Oceans, Human Health and Wellbeing
5. Interdisciplinary Research for Good Environmental Status
6. Observing, Modelling and Predicting Oceans State and Processes

7. Climate Change Impact on Physical and Biological Ocean Processes
8. Effects of Ocean Acidification on Marine Ecosystems
9. Food Security and Safety Driving Innovation in a Changing World
10. Use of Marine Biological Resources through Development and Application of Biotechnology

New actions will add to the four existing Pilot Actions which are already running. These Pilot Actions are designed to test new tools of cooperation. The four Pilot Actions are:

- Multi-use of infrastructures for monitoring
- Ecological aspects of micro-plastics in the marine environment
- Ecological aspects of deep-sea mining
- Intercalibration for the EU Water Framework Directive

All conference presentations can be consulted on the following page. The report can be viewed [here](#).

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# Upcoming EVENTS

## June 2015

01-02 Jun	Council of the European Union	Agriculture and Fisheries Council	Brussels, Belgium
01-02 Jun	ICES	ICES Aquaculture dialogue	Bergen, Norway
02-03 Jun	Nordic House	Growth in Blue Bio-economy	Faroes Islands
03-06 Jun		Blue Week	Portugal
03-05 Jun	The Economist	World Ocean Summit 2015	Cascais, Portugal
6 Jun	SWWAC	ExCom +GA	Santander, Spain
8 Jun	UN	World Oceans Day "Realising the potential of our oceans and coasts"	London, UK
08-12 Jun	UN	25 Meeting of States Parties to Unclos	New York, USA
08-11 Jun	EP	Plenary	Strasbourg, France
10-12 Jun		Water & Fish International Conference	Belgrade, Serbia
15-19 Jun	BSSC	10th Baltic Sea Science Congress	Riga, Latvia
15 Jun	NSAC	Executive Committee	Edinburgh, United Kingdom
16-17 Jun	EP	Pech Committee	Brussels, Belgium
21-27 Jun	ISGA	The International Symposium on Genetics in Aquaculture XII	Santiago de Compostela, Spain

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25-26 Jun	Monaco Blue Initiative	6 <sup>th</sup> Edition of MBI “Feeding and fueling the world through sustainable aquaculture?”	Yacht Club, Monaco
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