



FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWSLETTER

July and August 2016

Dear readers,

The summer break is over and things have already been set in motion.

Given that July and August were short months this newsletter covers them both.

You can read in this issue about the annual seminar on the state of fish stocks organized by the European Commission, the fishing opportunities for the Baltic Sea proposed by the Commission and the Multiannual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna. From the European Parliament's side, you can find the events, meetings and studies to come.

At the international level, read about the United Nations meeting to address landmark Resolutions on preventing damage to deep-sea ecosystems and the last FAO/COFI meeting.

Lastly, we invite you to read up on the activities of the Advisory Councils and to not miss our calendar of events.

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European Commission

Status of European fish stocks

Like every year, the European Commission organised a Seminar on “The status of European fish stocks and on the economic situation of European fishing fleets”, where it sat down with scientific bodies, EU institutions, national administrations, Fisheries Advisory Councils and civil society (industry and NGOs) to discuss the EU's fisheries legislation.

The presentations, made by the ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea), JRC (Joint Research Centre) and STEFC (Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries) among others (view them online [here](#)) showed the situation in the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and the North-East Atlantic and nearby waters; outlined the economic structure of the fishing vessels of the EU; was an opportunity to explore in depth the present and future situation of EU fisheries.

The speakers, in summary, presented an overall decline in fishing mortalities with an increase in fish stocks fished at accordance with Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (as a general trend is stock size and exploitation) (apart from the case of the Mediterranean where it was widely accepted that innovative approaches are necessary to deal with the deteriorating situation). More specifically, emphasis was put on the need to have an ecosystem approach put into practice that would act as a tool to aid integration and promote sustainable management of human activities affecting/affected by marine environment.

crisis, market saturation and lower average first sale prices for some important species

The next part of the discussions consisted of Advisory Council representatives (Long Distance, Pelagic, North-western, South-western, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean) showing their side of the coin and raising key issues and concerns, such as:

- Advisory Councils: The voice of the stakeholders must be taken into account and sought out, which is not the case as of right now. In the case of the Pelagic AC, for example, there is a regulatory chaos amongst fishers and national administrations in regards to the landing obligation due to the fact that Member States did not follow the advice suggested by that said AC

(neither has EC, on its part, put forward PELAC decisions at the discussion table with MS). There is a general feeling from the sector that it is not viewed as trustworthy enough to regulate its metier.

- Data: The issue of the lack of data, the need for more exhaustive scientific analyses in order to come up with a clearer picture and the need to increase monitoring was emphasized; if more information doesn't start coming in, then the formula used to set the TACs can sometimes lead to unclear picture or wrong results. In the case of the Long Distance AC, when it comes to increasing data gathering efforts, the exercise can become quite costly when it comes to certain 3rd countries; EU fleet can assist but shouldn't carry the whole burden.
- Level playing field: It must be enforced when it comes to markets access and negotiations with 3rd countries, those be SFPAs or TACs. The EU fleet mustn't be discriminated for playing by the rules and adhering to a higher level of sustainable fishing.
- Fishing opportunities 2017 (TACs and quotas): Stocks are in good condition. There is need of stability in the use and exchange of TACs. Multi-annual plans must be put in place with a defined set of TACs, thus avoiding the year-to-year debate on the amount of catches a MS can use or swap around.
- MAPs: The need for a reality check on some proposed advices (policy and science) was advocated so as to ensure stability (e.g a case in which a decrease of TAC has been suggested despite the decrease of fishing mortality and clear abundance of fish stock size – raising the question that perhaps other factors need to be looked at when calculating fishing mortality). Multi-annual management plans need time to produce results and immediate measures must be avoided whilst discussions and dialogues must be promoted.
- Pillars of sustainability: Apart from the scientific aspect of fish stocks, economic and social aspects of fisheries must also be taken into account (economically important stocks, direct and indirect value of landings, protection of small scale communities living off fisheries, etc.).
- Ecosystem based approach: Fisheries must be viewed (both on a political and scientific level) as part of a wider picture. Other human activities (e.g. mining and offshore wind energy) and external factors (e.g. climate change, changes in biological fish stock behaviour) need to be put in the formula.
- Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY): Measures shouldn't be set to achieve political goals since failure to reach them will impact fishers and their

livelihoods. Science should be looking at the output/input in fish stocks and should not produce recommendations based on achievement goals.

- Choke species (a species with a low quota that can cause a vessel to stop fishing even if they still have quota for other species): An issue that affects strongly most of the fishing fleets in the EU with no clear solution in sight. To this, the EC did reply that the CFP includes a list of mechanisms to deal with this problem but it is up to stakeholders to propose a solution and up to MS to adopt it.
- Small scale fishing fleet: The situation of regions living off of SSFs is slowly deteriorating with jobs and number of vessels having diminished from last year; but expected to improve next year.

In its closing remarks, the EC highlighted the importance of tackling fisheries from an ecosystem based approach; acknowledged that problems and gaps do exist in the scientific advice with different stocks being reviewed from previous times; proposed that a “block” of commercially important fish stocks must always be assessed; and, an extension of the MSY goal can be given if there is a well justified reason.

Fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2017

After consulting the Baltic Sea Advisory Council and in line with the Commission's Communication on Fishing Opportunities we informed you about, the European Commission published this month its proposal on fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2017.

The proposal follows the recently adopted multiannual fisheries management plan for the Baltic Sea, and takes into consideration scientific advice received in May 2016. The Commission proposes to increase catch limits for 6 out of 10 fish stocks and to decrease catch limits for 2 stocks (see table below). The Commission is collecting more information before proposing catch limits for the remaining 2 stocks (Western and Eastern cod).

Overall, the Commission proposes:

- 8% increase (28401 t) on Western Herring (from 26274 in 2016)

- 17% increase (140998 t) on Bothnian Herring (from 120872 in 2016)
- 21% decrease (27429 t) on Riga Herring (from 34915 in 2016)
- 8% increase (191129 t) on Central herring (from 177505 in 2016)
- 40% increase (282349 t) on sprat (from 202320 in 2016)
- 95% increase (7862 t) on plaice (from 4034 in 2016)
- 10% increase (105696 t) on Main Basin Salmon (from 95928 in 2016)
- -28% decrease (9403 t) on Gulf of Finland Salmon (from 13106 in 2016)
- Still awaiting info on Western and Eastern cod before suggesting catch limits (EC has asked its scientific body to measure the impact of recreational fishing on Baltic cod stocks and assess different possible stock management measures). According to ICES, the state of the Western Baltic cod does not seem to have improved this year.

In socio-economic terms the Commission proposal should improve overall economic performance in the Baltic Sea as a whole, in spite of significant differences across fleets segments and fisheries. This proposal could increase both profits by €13 million and employment at sea basin level.

The state of the **Western Baltic cod** does not seem to have improved this year, according to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Fishing pressure from commercial and recreational fisheries remains high, and past measures have not had the desired effect in helping the stock to recover.

The Commission is examining with national authorities and stakeholders – including commercial and recreational fishermen – which steps are needed to give this stock a chance to recover, while also ensuring the economic viability of the fishing industry.

In addition, the Commission has asked its scientific advisory body STECF to analyse the impact of recreational fishing on Baltic cod stocks and assess different possible stock management measures.

The Commission will propose catch limits for the Baltic cod stocks (Western and Eastern) once these clarifications are available. The proposal will be discussed by Member States' fisheries ministers at the October Fisheries Council in Luxembourg.

More information [here](#).

Council of the EU

Multiannual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna

The Council adopted during the summer the **update of the multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean**, as the result of the transposition into Union law of measures adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), particularly the recommendation 14-04, which **rationalises the existing control provisions** and sets out procedures in relation to the use of **stereoscopic cameras, release operations** and **the treatment of dead fish** in the recovery plan.

The regulation will **enter into force and become applicable by the end of 2016**.

You can find more information in the documents attached to this email:

- [Commission Statement](#)
- [Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 302/2009](#)

European Parliament

What is coming

After the summer recess, the European Parliament will continue with its activities. Apart from the monthly Fisheries Committee meetings, find below activities and meetings that might be of your interest:

- A debate and a mini hearing in the PECH Committee on the consequences of the Brexit on the Common Fisheries Policy, after the summer recess.
- Non-legislative resolution (NLE):
 - The conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway on reciprocal access to fishing in the Skagerrak for vessels flying the flag of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. This dossier is attributed to the ECR political group.

- Legislative resolutions:
 - Fisheries Control Regulation: PECH committee will wait for the ex-post assessment and the Commission proposal after which it will decide whether or not to endorse a study that “would assess the policy options for revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation and the effect that these would have on other related topics such as integrated maritime strategy, maritime spatial planning and marine protected areas. The impact on emerging new marine activity would also be considered.”
- Research studies to be presented in PECH: In addition to the list you can find below, the PECH has asked for 2 additional studies; a study on “EU non-commercial fishing (recreational, semi-subsistence), the socio-economic value and impact on fish stocks”; a technical study of the “consequences of Brexit on the CFP”. The studies will be ready for presentation at PECH either end of 2016 or early 2017.

	Reference and title	Type of research/commitment	Event	Date of Event (scheduled)
1	IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-180 Markets of fisheries and aquaculture products: The added value chain and the role of promotion, labelling and consumer information - Small-scale fisheries case	In-depth analysis	Presentation	15/06/2016
2	Workshop on The discard ban and its impact on the Maximum Sustainable Yield objective on fisheries IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-145 The discard ban and its impact on the MSY objective - <i>The Atlantic Ocean: The Bay of Biscay case</i> IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-146 The discard ban and its impact on the MSY objective - <i>The Baltic Sea</i> - IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-147 The discard ban and its impact on the MSY objective - <i>The North Sea</i>	In-depth analysis In-depth analysis In-depth analysis	Workshop	16/06/2016
3	IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-124 Options of handling choke species in view of the EU landing obligation - the Baltic plaice example	Study	Presentation	12/07/2016
4	IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-181 Impact of fisheries partnership agreements in the development of employment in the EU and in third countries	In-depth analysis	Presentation	31/08/2016
5	IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-162 Integration in the fisheries industry	Study	Presentation	10/10/2016
6	IP/B/PECH/IC/2015-141 Socioeconomic role and environmental impact of recreational, subsistence, small-scale and other fisheries in the EU	Study	Presentation	tbd
7	IP/B/PECH/IC/2016-050 Regional ocean governance in Europe: the role of fisheries	Study	Presentation	tbd
8	IP/B/PECH/IC/2016-068 Sustainable 'blue growth' in the EU and opportunities for small-scale fisheries	Study	Presentation	tbd
9	IP/B/PECH/IC/2016- The management of the fishing fleets in the outermost regions	In-depth analysis	Presentation	tbd

- Proposed upcoming hearings for 2017:

PROPOSALS EPP	JUSTIFICATION
The role of advisory councils in the new regionalised CFP* <i>*could be also done as 'exchange with stakeholders' since RAC representatives wouldn't need reimbursements</i>	Advisory Councils represent fisheries stakeholders (both fishermen and NGOs). They are consulted in the elaboration of EU fisheries regulations. They have a special role to play in the regionalisation process, when Member States provide joint recommendations. With the new framework for technical measures, Advisory Councils should be fully involved. This hearing could show which role they could concretely play.
State of play of the implementation the landing obligation	The landing obligation is in force for pelagic fisheries since January 2015. More fisheries will be progressively concerned. Since the landing obligation is a major change to fisheries management, it would be useful to assess its implementation so far.
Ban of fishing activities in Natura 2000 areas	During the preparation and development of the Natura 2000 management plans it becomes obvious that fishing activities in these areas will be restricted. In the end, regulations could cause large marine areas, for example 30% of the German EEZ, to be totally banned from fishing. The measures could restrict so far applied rights of the fishing sector to operate draught in certain areas. Nevertheless, it is not yet clear to which extent the fishing sector, especially small scale and artisanal fisheries will be affected. Therefore the EPP recommends a hearing to investigate the impact and effects of the planned measures. Such an extensive intervention in existing "status quo", by which a lot of European fishermen and the whole fishing sector might be affected, should only be implemented after a comprehensive investigation.
PROPOSALS S&D	JUSTIFICATION
Consumption of fish in Europe: new forms of food education	The aim would be to analyse projects and possible ways to better educate consumers (and fishermen) on their choices in order to protect fish stocks and ensure food security in developing countries (for instance, in Africa, a considerable proportion of catches is reduced to fishmeal for aquaculture purposes).
Biomass* <i>*could be done in 'Workshop' format</i>	One of the central objectives of the new CFP is to reach and maintain healthy populations' biomass levels. Nevertheless, we rarely see the current biomass levels of the several managed fish populations or the aimed biomass levels. Representatives from science and administrations should be invited to explain their views on this issue.
PROPOSAL GUE	JUSTIFICATION
Super-Trawlers: destructive or sustainable?* <i>*could also be done as 'exchange with stakeholders': one lobbyist 'pro' vs. one lobbyist 'contra' (non-reimbursed)</i>	

Advisory Councils

Several Advisory Councils, bodies of stakeholders from the fisheries sector, met and issued recommendations:

Long Distance Advisory Council

The Long Distance Advisory Council published a letter addressed to the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries with 10 recommendations to improve observance and compliance with International Law rules in terms of human, labour and social rights applicable to workers in the fishing sector:

1. Ratification by the EU signing Member States of the International Labour Organisation Convention concerning Work in the Fishing Sector (ILO C188), adopted in Geneva on 14 June 2007
2. Promote the fast-tracking by the Council of the integration process into the Community "acquis" of the Agreement on Social Stakeholders of ILO C188, as per Commission proposal COM (2016) 2354
3. Inclusion of a specific clause on compliance with fundamental rights at work and human rights in all trade agreements and sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with third countries, with clear sanctions, including the denunciation of the agreement, in case labour and human rights are not complied with.
4. Introduction of monitoring mechanisms to check and assess the compliance with fundamental rights at work and human rights within sustainable partnership fisheries agreements, as well as commercial and trade agreements, by way of the already existing joint committees between the EU and the third country.
5. The preferential access to EU market (GSP, etc.) should be conditioned to the observance of human rights and fundamental rights at work.
6. All necessary support, including financial support and capacity building, should be provided to developing countries through the development cooperation funds, for these countries to be able to meet these human and labour rights international standards.
7. Coordination of the Directorates General of the European Commission to create coherent synergies amongst development aid, labour protection

and migrants protection policies with the consistent application of the Control and IUU Regulations to fight against IUU fishing, which is closely linked to job insecurity and violation of human rights of workers, especially in the case of migrant workers, taking as example the model created by some DGs and the EEAS for Thailand. Coordination and collaboration of the EU with other existing projects carried out by international organisations whenever it is necessary.

8. Enhancement of the policy against human trafficking and organised crime at the DG HOME of the European Commission, especially in the fisheries field.

9. Promotion of the establishment of traceability initiatives by means of due diligence procedures in the EU importing, processing and trading industry in order to contribute to the effective implementation of the IUU Regulation and to minimise risks on the supply and entry of products of IUU origin and/or coming from human trafficking and organised crime into the EU market.

10. Launch of awareness-raising campaigns at European level for encouraging a responsible consumption of fisheries products.

Find the letter [here](#).

North Sea Advisory Council

NSAC adopted in July a document named **NSAC Reflections on the Joint Recommendation of the Scheveningen Group Discard Plan for Demersal Fisheries in the North Sea (find it [here](#))**, which reflects the NSAC opinion on the working relationship between the Scheveningen Group and the North Sea Advisory Council on the Joint Recommendations for a Discard Plan for 2017 and beyond.

The Advisory Councils are established by the commission under the CFP as stakeholder forums to provide recommendations to the Commission on their proposal. There are 7 regional ones and the two newly established ones are the Market Advisory Council and Aquaculture Advisory Council for which EBCD provides the Interim Secretariat.

The FAO/COFI was held in Rome 11-15 July. COFI started off with the presentation of the 2016 State of World Fisheries which constitutes a reference point for fisheries and aquaculture data statistics and information. COFI endorsed the decisions and recommendations of the Sub-Committee of Fish Trade as well as of those of the Sub Committee of Aquaculture. COFI addressed the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS), combating IUU, the role of fisheries in food security, securing small scale fisheries, the outcome and follow up of the 2015 Global Forum on rights based approaches for fisheries and the various global and regional processes. The issue that dominated discussions was in relation to the guidelines for CDS as some members thought that following two sessions of the Technical Consultations and two informal meeting that COFI could solve the e two main outstanding points and adopt the Voluntary Guidelines but several members thought that more consultations were necessary yet and suggested postponing the adoption for the next COFI meeting in 2018. COFI agreed on another session of the Technical Consultation to resolve the outstanding issues and present them to the FAO conference July 2017 for adoption.

EBCD/ FEG organized a side event together with the FAO and CBD Secretariat to present the results and recommendations of the FAO- CBD - IUCN /FEG Expert Meeting on the implementation of Aichi Target 6 and MPAs and food security.

Deep sea

The UN offices in New York hosted a discussion early this month on a set of landmark resolutions adopted by the General Assembly over the past ten years calling for action by States to prevent damage to deep-sea ecosystems from destructive fishing practices (specifically discuss the implementation of paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 and paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68 on sustainable fisheries, addressing the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks).

Following this link you can find all relevant documents presented at that meeting: http://www.un.org/depts/los/reference_files/Bottom_Fishing_Workshop_2016.pdf, such as:

- Informal compilation of paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 and paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68
- An advance and unedited report of the Moderator of the Workshop to discuss implementation of paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 and paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68, addressing the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks (English only), where it remarks that "Overall, while a number of actions have been taken, implementation of the resolutions continues to be uneven and further efforts are needed. Unless timely actions are taken by all the stakeholders concerned, overfishing of deep-sea species is likely to continue to occur."
- Advance and unedited reporting material for the report of the Secretary-General on the actions taken by States and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements in response to paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 and paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68 (English only)
- Panellists Presentations

Reactions from stakeholders:

The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations expressed the need to increase and defend collaboration at scientific, technical and political level to preserve the Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs).

The NGOs stated that "The United Nations World Ocean Assessment stated that the deep sea contains the largest source of biodiversity on the planet. Partial measures for such an important area of the global commons are not acceptable. States and regional fisheries bodies need to continue to implement these resolutions as a matter of urgency." (Katie Schleit of the Ecology Action Center)

"Stopping destructive fisheries practices is an urgent challenge. We must protect sensitive deep sea ecosystems like seamounts, submarine canyons, sponge grounds and cold-water corals by excluding these areas from bottom trawling and other destructive fishing methods. Only by banning harmful fishing practices and introducing effective management can we successfully rebuild stocks, and end the destruction of fragile marine ecosystems and species. WWF is keen to support low impact fishing gear innovations" (Alfred Schumm, from WWF)

"These reviews at the level of the United Nations are important to hold States accountable for the commitments they've made to the international community to protect deep-sea ecosystems on the high seas from the harmful impacts of fishing. Unfortunately, what we've learned at the workshop this week is that while progress has been made, these resolutions have not been fully implemented after 10 years" (Matthew Gianni of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition).

Upcoming Events

1. Marine Litter - Europe's answers to a global challenge, 6 September, Brussels, Belgium

More information [here](#).

2. Defence and protection of small-scale, artisanal and coastal fishing, 7 September, Brussels, Belgium

More information [here](#).

3. "Building a European Ocean Observing System – European Parliament event, 08 September, Brussels, Belgium

More information [here](#).

4. Blue Economy Business and Science Forum – The Hamburg Summit 2016, 2-13 September, Hamburg, Germany

More information [here](#).

5. Best Practice in Percid Fish Aquaculture, 20 September, Edinburgh

More information [here](#).

6. Workshop on integrated maritime policy and maritime spatial planning in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, 20 September, Turkey

More information [here](#).

7. 3rd Atlantic Stakeholder Platform conference Promote entrepreneurship and innovation, 27 September, Dublin, Ireland

More information [here](#).



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