



# **FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWSLETTER**

November 2016

Dear readers,

In preparation of the Council meeting of December, where TACs and quotas are decided every year, the Commission launched this month its proposal on the TACs for the North Sea and Atlantic. Baltic Sea TACs have also been approved in October. The Commission also organised this month a meeting on Port Reception facilities: do not miss our report on it.

We also bringing you a summary on two important meetings that took place at the European Parliament on MPAs and Global Ocean Biodiversity Governance. Read as well the new publications of the EP Think Tank on the Fishing Authorisation Rights proposal and other issues of interest.

Finally do not miss out the developments from the Advisory Councils, the 66<sup>th</sup> meeting of the International Whaling Commission and a conference on Marine Plastics organized this month by Eunomia.



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# European Commission

## Baltic and North Sea- TACs to come

### Baltic Sea

This month the Council reached a political agreement on the fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2017 out of the then main commercial stocks. These TACs were the first to be set in accordance with the long-term management plan for the Baltic basin that had recently been adopted by the Council and the European Parliament. Member States will have the possibility to adopt tailored measures under the principle of regionalisation to adapt to the needs of local fishermen.

All the TACs agreed are in line with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy, within the principles of the multiannual management plan for the Baltic sea, and following scientific advice, in particular the advice provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

The Commission, who was very satisfied with the results, received support from Ministers to table a proposal regarding an effective recovery plan on swordfish this year at ICCAT (14-21 November, Vilamoura, Portugal).

See here the: [EU total allowable catches \(TACs\) in the Baltic Sea for 2017](#)

### Atlantic and North Sea

The Commission presented its proposal on fishing quotas in the Atlantic and North Sea for 2017. The proposal maintains or increases the current fishing quotas for 42 stocks which are in good health, and reduces catches for 28 stocks which are faring poorly. The TACs will be discussed, as every year, in December at the Council.

Later this autumn the Commission will also propose the so-called 'quota top-ups', for the fisheries that fall under the landing obligation in 2017. These extra quotas are granted on account of the fact that fishermen can no longer discard the fish caught unintentionally but have to land it. These quotas facilitate the transition to the new system of no discards.

You can find all the information [here](#).

# 6th meeting of the European Sustainable Shipping Forum (ESSF) Sub-Group on Port Reception Facilities

**4 October 2016, Committee of the Regions**

The meeting, organized by the Commission on the, included an update and discussion on the Impact Assessment (IA), IA support study, and Common Monitoring and Information System on the Port Reception Facilities (PRF); and on the work done by the European Maritime Agency (EMSA) to support the PRF revision. There was also a session where 5 policy issues were discussed among participants on: 1) adequate facilities, 2) cost incentives, 3) effective and efficient enforcement, 4) definitions and forms, and 5) rules on exemptions.

The implications of the PRF to the fisheries sector were discussed during the session "Cost recovery system (CRS) for waste from fishing vessels". The Irish Port Authority stressed that differences among ports are likely to hinder the gathering of information and fees introduction, and that the characteristics of the fishing vessels are likely to complicate the logistics of inspections. The Directorate-General of Maritime and Fisheries (DG MARE) stressed the need to tackle and regulate the issue of marine litter dumped at sea by fishing boats in light of the increasing number of evidences showing this is significant. OSPAR indicated to have developed a regional plan on marine litter and to be currently assessing a range of potential indicators for it. It also stated that 30-50% of litter found on the beach is ADLFG (Abandoned, Derelict or Lost Fishing Gear), and stressed the need to improve enforcement measures. After an introduction on the key aspects of the European fishing fleet, Europeche highlighted the need to focus on waste disposal prevention through ensuring adequate facilities, and the need to change attitudes, come up with tailor-made and creative solutions, and promote discussions and awareness rising. KIMO Netherlands and Belgium provided an overview on the Fishing for Litter (FFL) project run in the UK, Netherlands and Sweden since 2002, resulting in 4500 tones of litter removed so far. Based on the characteristics of the project and its success, it suggested that the revision of the PRF should bring no additional costs to fishermen or ports, create no additional administrative burden and ensure sufficient reception facilities.

During the Panel Discussion representatives from DG Move, DG MARE, OSPAR, Fisheries organizations, Fishing port, and KIMO International TBC discussed on "Delivery of waste from fishing vessels". There was a general feeling that the introduction of a standard fee independent on what or how much waste vessels bring ashore (e.g. 100% fee) is likely to incentivize dumping at sea. Increasing the number of FFL programs and improving port reception facilities were suggested as the adequate approach, whose funding falls under the responsibility of Member States. Including a system to verify the waste of fishing vessels was seen as a way of increasing the administrative burden for fishermen. As per enforcement schemes, it was stated that it is essential to keep fishermen informed and make

them responsible for sustainable fishing practices, but that some inspection regime could be introduced to pursue those avoiding responsibilities. It was also stressed that fishing gear has been recently introduced on Annex V of MARPOL, so its disposal regime is not yet fully enforced. There was also a discussion on whether providing economic incentives for FFL programs may trigger the disposal of old nets through the FFL program, to which it was suggested that only fishermen complying with port regulations could participate in the FFL schemes. The use of tagged nets to track back ownership was discussed, but it was highlighted that the voluntary disposal of entire pieces of fishing gear is not a common practice among fishermen since they are very costly and usually retrieved. The conclusion was that more efforts should be put in engaging fishermen in FFL programs all over EU.

# European Parliament

## Fisheries Committee

**10-11 October, European Parliament**

The Committee on Fisheries (PECH Committee) met on the 10-11 of October at the European Parliament for its monthly gathering to discuss current fisheries issues. The event started with a presentation on 'The socio-economic role and environmental impact of recreational and subsistence fishing in the EU' led by Policy Department B of the Directorate General for internal policies. The study analyzed and presented different existing criteria for defining marine recreational fishing (MRF) across EU countries. No final results could be presented yet, but instead the framework and recommendations were shared.

There was also an exchange of views with the European Commission on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures. It was also communicated that the proposal on establishing a long-term plan for cod stocks and the fisheries exploiting those stocks had been adopted by the Council with no changes. The proposal will now be voted at the coming Committee on the 9-10<sup>th</sup> November; and voted in EP plenary on the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> December meeting.

Manuel Barange, Director of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, provided an overview on what FAO has done so far in the area of fisheries, and then he explained the work on the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), discussed FAO's Code of conduct for fisheries, and finalized his talk discussing some of the projects carried out on food security.

There was also an exchange of views on the multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, on the status of fish stocks and the socio-economic situation of

the fishing sector in the Mediterranean, and on the management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Convention Area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

The working document on the management of the fishing fleets in the Outermost Regions was also discussed, and the state of the sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Government of the Cook Islands was presented. Also, the EC provided an overview on the state of several delegated and implementing acts currently taking place in relation of the discard plan.

The Committee approved the suggestions made towards the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, and it was adopted.

## **Fishing Authorisation Regulation (FAR)**

### **An update on a very complex piece of proposed legislation**

The new FAR has evolved a lot since it was adopted in 2015. The European Commission agreed that the proposal was not clear enough to begin with and intensive work took place to make it simpler and reduce redtape. A new chapter on external dimension, with a harmonized system for vessels fishing outside community waters recognizing that RFMOs have their own procedures under multilateral treaties is now included. This regulation will be a general set of rules. Two elements are missing from the Commission Proposal that are critical: a) an article on the eligibility criteria to make sure that those fishing outside abide by the managing rules of the external fleet, not the resources. If someone has for example been sanctioned should not be allowed to fish anymore. The industry finds this very harsh; and b) a clause with the possibility to stop a vessel when it does not abide with the rules, the Commission should have the authority to act, not only the Member States. The Commission wants to have the legal basis to call for action when a Member State does not take action to stop the vessel. The only way for the Commission to act in this case is to initiate an infringement procedure but that can take over 2 years. The European Parliament has initiated an opinion. The draft report was discussed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, and 22<sup>nd</sup> of September was the deadline for amendments. 300 amendments have been tabled and the vote will take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November at the Pech Committee.



# “Interactions between Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Fisheries”

20<sup>th</sup> October 2016, European Parliament

Hosted by Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP and co-organized with Europêche/EAPO

The event was conceived as a way to enhancing the cooperation between the European Commission (EC), Members of European Parliament (MEPs) and stakeholders to properly put in place EU and national legislation concerning MPAs. Participants were invited to identify cases where MPAs have had negative impacts and provide examples of best practices for the future.

**Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP (S&D, PT)** opened the event stressing the usefulness of well-managed MPAs as a potential tool to not only ensure sustainable fisheries and improve the state ecosystems, but also to increase the productivity of fisheries and ecosystems, and to create job and business opportunities. MPAs, in his opinion, should not only be thought as reserve areas (no-take zones), and should take into account both biological and socioeconomic parameters.

**Mr. Michel Sponar**, from the **Marine Environment and Water Industry Unit at Directorate-General of Environment (DG ENV)**, provided an overview of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in promoting MPAs at EU level, and shared what has been done by both the European Commission (EC) and Member States (MS) in this sense. He defended that MPAs can be an effective tool that can contribute to meeting with the 10% protection target if designation is based on sound socio-economic assessment, involve stakeholders, and are adequately implemented and managed. **Dr. Michel Kaiser**, from the **School of Ocean Sciences at Bangor University**, highlighted that MPAs can be effective in some but not all situations. He identified the need to carefully consider the spatial and temporal scales, evaluate the suitability of MPA networks, better understand the connectivity of fish populations, consider socioeconomic impacts, predict behavioral changes of fishing fleets, and better understand the wider implications for adequate design. He concluded stating that we need to be prepared to be wrong and re-evaluate, create new legislative opportunities, produce better information, and be also prepared for a medium-term loss of revenue.

During the **First Panel** focused on the challenges **Dr. W. (Pim) Visser**, representing **Europêche and EAPO**, stressed that fishermen are highly dependent on fishing as a source of food and income, and that closing areas for fishing often has profound impacts in their lives. The way forward, in his view, should involve clear choices made by policy-makers based on informed and active discussions, attitude

change by all parties, remember fishermen as the natural underdogs, stop considering fishing as the use of the remainder, steer away from the Natura 2000 top-down approach, and see Advisory Councils (ACs) as effective platforms. As part of this panel, **Mr. Andries de Boer**, a **Dutch fisherman** representing **VisNed**, reviewed the changes occurred in the Dutch fisheries sector through time, and stated that the main challenge is to keep fishing. He explained that there has been productive cooperation between fisherman and scientists, but stressed the concern of fishermen as the fishing grounds keep getting reduced. Finally, he claimed that the protection that once fishermen enjoyed as the guardians and providers of fish protein to the world does no longer exist.

The **Second Panel** focused on opportunities included **Mr. Lasse Gustavsson**, **Senior Vice President and Executive Director of the Europe Executive Committee at Oceana**, who stressed that the fishing industry is its own best enemy as fishing is the number one threat to marine biodiversity. He defended MPAs as useful tools for the protection of the marine environment but criticized the slow implementation process. Oceana, he concluded, is pro-fishing and a real recovery would imply preserving the fish resources while maintaining the socio-economic benefits. **Mr. Tommy Finn**, fishermen and representative of the **Clyde Fishermen's Association (Scotland)**, remarked that the industry generally feels they are hard done-by MPAs which to fishing communities represent a threat to food safety, loss of about 50% of gross turnover, give up fishing activities, and stress among others. Finally, he stated that there is a need for more research on fisheries and MPAs, and highlighted that there are examples of both successful and failed examples. **Mr. Federico Cardigos**, **Parliamentary Assistant of Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP**, delivered the presentation prepared by Dr. Gilberto Carreira, from the Government of Azores, provided an overview of the Azores context, main legal instruments to protect marine ecosystems, and the timeline of MPAs' introduction in the region. He then shared examples of MPAs created through bottom-up processes led by fishermen and scientists and with strong presence of scientists and the private sector in the regulatory process. The full implementation of MPAs in the Azores is an ongoing process facing challenges for the future.

During the **Discussion Panel**, the Directorate-General (DG) for Research and Innovation asked for any possibilities to integrate aquaculture activities in MPAs as a way to alleviate the struggles of the sector for space in the EU. Dr. Michel Kaiser, stated that this will depend on the type of aquaculture activities; and Dr. W. (Pim) Visser provided the example of an MPA established in the Netherlands under Natura 2000 where mussel farming has substituted previous bottom trawling activities successfully. Regarding the re-opening of MPAs to fishing, Mr. Tommy Finn stressed that this is limited by the lack of scientific knowledge and data; and Dr. W. (Pim) Visser suggested this has to be included in the regulation, which Mr. Andries de Boer sees impossible to achieve at political level. While Ricardo Serrão Santos



MEP stressed the potential benefits of fishing below Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), Dr. W. (Pim) Visser perceived MSY as an out of date and place instrument which makes it challenging to work with. In this sense, DG Environment stressed they are already collaborating with ICES to clarify things.

Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP (S&D, PT) concluded stressing his desire for the event to contribute to a better understanding of the issue and future improved cooperation between stakeholders.

# Global Ocean Biodiversity Governance - The contribution of science

17<sup>th</sup> October, European Parliament

Science briefing by the European Parliament's Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup (SEARICA)

**Ms Gesine Meissner, MEP and President of the SEARICA-Intergroup**, chaired the meeting Global Ocean Biodiversity Governance - The contribution of science, which took place on the 17 October at the Parliament, aimed to reflect on the role of Europe in global marine biodiversity governance negotiations and focused on discussing the coming challenges for marine biodiversity governance. **Mr Marco Affronte, MEP and Member of the Intergroup**, provided a brief introduction on the state of marine ecosystems worldwide, stressed the importance of having sound and robust scientific knowledge and data for adequate governance, and welcomed the strong recent commitment in both developed and developing countries to increase data collection.

**Ms Kristina Gjerde, High Seas Policy Advisor for International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, provided an overview on the Implementation Agreement under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the use and protection of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). She explained that during the next 2 years, the First Preparatory Committee Meeting will work on recommendations and the Package Deal and will focus on avoiding undermining or affecting the legal status of existing agreements. She stressed her optimism on the input that science provides to the process and the progress of it so far, even though it is still one year until the Preparatory Committee finishes its mandate.

**Mr Helmut Hillebrand, Director of the Institute for Chemistry and Biology of the Sea (University of Oldenburg and Chair) and the German Marine Science Strategy Group on Marine Biodiversity**, provided a science keynote on the changes of

marine biodiversity research through time, and identified fundamental knowledge gaps namely the challenges for predicting biodiversity change and the relationship between biodiversity and stability of ecosystems. In his view, infrastructure for long-term observations and manipulations on relevant scales, promotion of biodiversity outreach, foster joint projects, or improving access and usage of data are, among others, essential elements to overcome those challenges. **Mr Kevin Gaston, Director of the Environment and Sustainability Institute (University of Exeter)** offered a few reflections from the terrestrial perspective on the interaction and integration between people and biodiversity. He also identified new areas for marine research, and emphasized our lack of knowledge about those and their interactive effects. Finally, he discussed about Blue Growth, Blue Health, protected area effectiveness, and their relationship with biodiversity conservation.

**Mr Stefaan Depypere, Director of International Affairs and Markets at the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) of the European Commission**, stressed that the EC has been supportive of the BBNJ process as ocean governance is a main priority for the EC. He further highlighted the importance of scientific knowledge for management, the relevance of adopting integrative approaches, and the need to develop better understanding between scientists and managers.

**Mr Ricardo Serrao Santos (MEP)** moderated a **final discussion** session with speakers and participating experts. Ute Jacob, guest scientist at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv), stressed that it is key that we have a better understanding on how much species support each other in order to better achieve the conservation status goals. Torsten Thiele, expert in ocean governance and founder of Global Ocean Trust, stated that we need to better understand the value of the blue natural capital, improve current data infrastructure and scale-up efforts to attract society. The level of representation of Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) in BBNJ discussions was questioned by Ricardo Serrao Santos. Kristina Gjerde argued that the level of representation at such discussions was good and varied, and John Brincat (DG MARE) stressed the importance of leadership role of SIDSs in ocean management. John Brincat also highlighted the need to re-double our management efforts and questioned the effectiveness of science since in providing answers and tools. Seas at Risk (NGO) stressed the need for enforcement, and questioned whether too much hope is put on blue economy to ensure sustainability. Stefaan Depypere agreed on the need to scale-up efforts and better enforcement, and stressed that the more effort is put into developing a management strategy the better the result. Helmut Hillebrand concluded that the interaction between science and policy is a complex one that requires long term observations and spatial upscale (from local to global) approach, which the EU should be able to improve.

Finally, Ms Gesine Meissner concluded emphasizing the need for more data in marine biodiversity, promote a better interaction between science and governments, outreach ocean biodiversity to society, and increase the number of existing instruments.

## European Parliament Think Tank

**The European Parliamentary Research Service is the European Parliament's in-house research department and Think Tank. Its mission is to assist Members in their parliamentary work by providing them with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union. It is also designed to increase Members and EP committees' capacity to scrutinise and oversee the European Commission and other EU executive bodies. More information [here](#).**

**The month of October has been an active month for the European Parliament Think Tank in fisheries issues. The aim of this Think Tank is to give an insight into the inner workings of the EU's only directly-elected institution. The content of all documents contained in the Think Tank website is the sole responsibility of the author and any opinions expressed therein do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament. It is addressed to the Members and staff of the EP for their parliamentary work.**

**Following are briefings, studies and fact sheets published this month:**

### **International fisheries relations- Fact sheet**

With the aim of promoting legal, environmental, economic and social governance frameworks for sustainable fisheries, of gaining access to key fishing areas of the world or of promoting monitoring, control and surveillance schemes to combat illegal fishing, the European Union has concluded more than 20 international fisheries agreements. The European Union concludes bilateral agreements such as sustainable fisheries partnerships and reciprocity agreements, or multilateral agreements such as agreements with regional fisheries management organisations and international conventions.

Read it [here](#).

You can find here a list of the current Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs): [https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/international/agreements\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/international/agreements_en)

### **Fisheries resource conservation- Fact sheet**

Fisheries resource conservation is based on the need to ensure environmentally sustainable exploitation of those resources and the long-term viability of the sector. With a view to achieving this objective, the European Union has adopted

legislation governing access to EU waters, the allocation and use of resources, total allowable catches, fishing effort limitation and other technical measures.

Read it [here](#).

### **The Common Fisheries Policy: origins and development- Fact sheet**

A Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was first formulated in the Treaty of Rome. Initially linked to the Common Agricultural Policy, over time it has gradually become more independent. The primary goal of the CFP, as revised in 2002, is to ensure sustainable fisheries and guarantee incomes and stable jobs for fishermen. Several changes to the fisheries policy were introduced in the Treaty of Lisbon. In 2013 the Council and Parliament reached agreement on a new CFP, for the long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability of fishing and aquaculture activities.

Read it [here](#).

### **Research for PECH Committee - Feasibility of Measuring Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts of Recreational and Semi-Subsistence Fisheries in the EU-Study**

No unanimous definition for Marine Recreational Fishing yet exists among European Member States. The following report recommends a common definition and a methodological approach to assess marine recreational fishing socio-economic and environmental impacts. These recommendations are based on the analyses of five representative examples in Europe on these issues. The methodology recommended by the authors is an economic impact assessment based on fishermen's expenditures and catches, data collection by an on-line survey, adjusted and managed with a model based on input-output tables.

Read it [here](#).

### **Research for PECH Committee - Seafood Industry Integration in the EU – Study**

The aim of the study is to provide the Members of the Parliament's Fisheries Committee with a clear description of the corporate structure of the EU seafood industry (fishing, processing and the retail market). It provides a description of both the horizontal and vertical integration in the industry through the use of case studies. The research utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in order to provide an in-depth and nuanced picture of integration in EU fisheries.

Read it [here](#).

### **New rules for managing the EU external fishing fleet- Briefing**

On 9 November 2016, the Committee on Fisheries is due to vote on a Commission proposal for a revised system of issuing and managing fishing authorisations,

intended to improve monitoring and transparency of the EU external fishing fleet. The proposal, replacing the current 'Fishing Authorisations Regulation' 1006/2008, applies to all EU vessels fishing outside EU waters, and to third-country vessels fishing in EU waters. The current scope of the authorisation system would be extended to include practices poorly monitored so far, such as private agreements between EU companies and third countries and abusive reflagging operations. Member States would authorise fishing vessels using common eligibility criteria, complemented by specific conditions depending on the nature of the authorisation. Part of the electronic fishing authorisations register, showing who fishes what and where, would for the first time be publicly accessible. Second edition. The 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefings are updated at key stages throughout the legislative procedure. To view earlier editions of this briefing, please see: PE 580.910, April 2016.

Read it [here](#).

### **Multiannual plan for Baltic fisheries**

Multiannual plans for fisheries management are an essential tool to ensure the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks and marine ecosystems. They also offer increased predictability to fishermen in the long run. In October 2014, the European Commission proposed a multiannual plan for stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and for the fisheries exploiting them. Seen as a test case, this Baltic multiannual and multispecies plan was the first proposed plan to build on the principles of the 2013 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. After quite difficult negotiations, a compromise was reached in March 2016 in trilogue discussions. The plan notably defines ranges of fishing mortality levels on the basis of which the Council will have to define annual catch limits. In cases where a spawning stock would be at too low a level, safeguard measures must be taken and the level of fishing mortality reduced. The Commission would also be empowered to adopt delegated acts for fisheries technical measures based on recommendations elaborated jointly at regional level by the Member States concerned. Following approval by Parliament and Council in June, Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 entered into force on 20 July 2016. This briefing updates an earlier edition, of February 2016: PE 581.985.

Read it [here](#)

### **Multiannual plan for North Sea demersal fisheries**

On 3 August 2016, the European Commission tabled a legislative proposal for a multiannual plan to manage some fisheries in the North Sea. This plan would cover demersal species (i.e. species living close to the sea bottom) in the EU waters in the North Sea and some adjacent maritime areas. These stocks are exploited by various fishing fleets using various fishing gear but often catching different species together (mixed fisheries). These demersal fisheries, conducted by several thousand EU vessels, represent over 70% of the EU catches in this area. After recent adoption of a plan concerning the Baltic Sea, this multiannual plan for North Sea demersal fisheries is the second management plan proposed by the European Commission since the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy agreed at the end of

2013. Such multiannual tools are essential for the sustainable exploitation of marine resources and offer better predictability on catches allowed to fishermen over time. They also set a framework for improved cooperation between the concerned Member States at sea regional level. The European Parliament is now to start the examination of the proposal.

Read it [here](#).

## Advisory Councils

### Pelagic AC: fishing opportunities for 2017

This month the Pelagic AC adopted its recommendations on fishing opportunities in 2017 for all stocks:

#### **Blue whiting**

The Pelagic AC recommends following the ICES MSY advice and setting the TAC at 1 342 330 tonnes in 2017.

#### **Atlanto-Scandian herring**

The Pelagic AC recommends following the existing long-term management plan and to set the TAC at 646 075 tonnes accordingly in 2017.

#### **North Sea autumn spawning herring**

The Pelagic AC recommends that the EU-Norway management strategy will be revised in view of the new ICES advice and revised Fmsy reference point. Such a revision must be done as quickly as possible and before the December Council meeting so that the TAC for 2017 can be set based on a revised management strategy in accordance with the latest scientific advice.

#### **Western Baltic spring spawning herring**

The Pelagic AC recommends to follow the management strategy agreed by the EU and Norway, but to revise the TAC setting mechanism taking into account the revision of the EU-Norway management strategy for North Sea autumn spawning herring as recommended by the Pelagic AC.

#### **North Sea horse mackerel**

The Pelagic AC recommends that the TAC is set at 15 200 tonnes in 2017. This figure is lower than the ICES catch advice which includes an additional 3 047 tonnes based on discard estimates from the demersal sector which has not yet come under the landing obligation.



**Northeast Atlantic mackerel**

The Pelagic AC recommends that the management strategy proposed by the EU, Norway and the Faroe Islands will be submitted for evaluation to STECF as soon as possible.

**Western horse mackerel**

The Pelagic AC recommends to follow the ICES MSY advice and to set the TAC for this stock at 69 186 tonnes in 2017.

**Southern horse mackerel**

The Pelagic AC recommends that the ICES MSY approach is being followed and that the TAC will be set at 73 349 tonnes accordingly in 2017.

**Boarfish**

The Pelagic AC recommends that the precautionary approach is followed and that the TAC in 2017 will be set at 27 288 tonnes accordingly.

**Herring in ICES area 6.a and 7.b,c**

The Pelagic AC recommends that STECF will be requested as soon as possible to provide advice on a monitoring TAC for these stocks.

**Celtic Sea herring**

The Pelagic AC recommends following the management strategy it has developed previously and to set the TAC at 14 467 tonnes in 2017.

**Irish Sea herring**

The Pelagic AC recommends following the ICES MSY approach and to set the TAC in 2017 at 4.172 tonnes accordingly. Furthermore, efforts to develop a multiannual management strategy for this stock must continue.

You can read the full advice [here](#).

## **North Sea AC: Reflections and recommendations on the consultation procedure by Member States regarding Article 11 of the CFP**

The NSAC adopted this paper at its Executive Committee meeting in Den Haag on 27 September 2016. Aware that the North Sea (Scheveningen) Group has established a technical expert group (Fish-ENVI technical group) 'to ensure continuous cooperation at a regional level in formulating joint recommendations set out in Article 11 and in Article 18 paragraph 3 of the fisheries basic regulation

concerning obligations under Union environmental legislation' (Terms of Reference of Fish-ENVI, 10 July 2014), and that these ToRs specify the role of Ad-hoc groups by initiating Member State, the NSAC presents this paper to the High Level Group to inform the procedure for consulting the Advisory Council by the initiating Member State.

You can read it [here](#).

## Whaling

# 66TH Meeting of the International Whaling Commission

**The 66<sup>th</sup> meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that took place in Portoroz, Slovenia from the 20-28 October, was attended by more than 400 participants representing member and non-member governments, academia, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous groups and the media.**

As in previous years, pro- and anti-whaling nations clashed during a key meeting Monday where Japan sought to ease the 30-year-old moratorium on commercial hunts while others pushed for creation of a whale sanctuary in the Atlantic Ocean. Similar to previous Commission meetings, participants expressed strongly opposing views throughout the meeting. The fundamental disagreement on whether whales can be used sustainably or merit total protection resurfaced under most agenda items. As a result, many decisions were taken by vote rather than consensus.

Japan reiterated its position regarding the principle of sustainable utilization of marine living resources, noting that sustainable use is perfectly consistent with environmental protection. Since the sanctuary is based on the idea of total protection of whales, Japan country is not able to support the proposal, suggesting instead regional activities and cooperation in the form of a memorandum of understanding.

Several other countries, including the European Union bloc, urged Japan to stop its hunts, some accusing it of using the scientific exemption as "a license to kill. The 88 member economies of the IWC are almost equally divided between pro-whaling and anti-whaling camps, although allegations that countries on both sides of the argument lobby for support from nations with little history of whaling are common.

Among others, the meeting addressed proposals for:

- a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary
- aboriginal subsistence whaling
- socio-economic implications and small-type whaling

- cetacean status and health
- and the IWC in the future.

Resolutions were considered on:

- enhancing the effectiveness of the IWC
- improving the review process for whaling under special permit
- cetaceans and ecosystem function
- the creation of a fund to strengthen the capacity of governments of limited means to participate in the work of the IWC
- food security
- and the critically endangered vaquita.

All resolutions, except the one on food security, were adopted. The proposal on the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary was rejected, with 38 members voting in favour, 24 opposing and 2 abstaining.

**Others**

## Measures to Prevent Marine Plastics – A Call for Action

29<sup>th</sup> September, Press Club Brussels Europe

The conference was organised by **Eunomia**, a medium-size environmental consultancy with extensive experience on waste resources and a more recently built-up expertise on marine litter. The aim of the event was to clear up misconceptions about the marine plastics problem and to present existing challenges and new measures to tackle this growing issue.

In his introduction, the Chair of the event **Dominic Hogg**, and **Chairman at Eunomia**, defined marine litter as the ultimate boomerang since “it keeps coming back to us”, and stressed that Europe should take the lead on this issue and be a reference point at international level. The guest speaker **Ricardo Serrão Santos, MEP**; experienced marine researcher, Vice Chair for Marine Knowledge and leader in the marine plastic conversation; thoroughly introduced the topic and highlighted that microplastics have been defined as a marker for anthropogenic change, meaning the global concern is huge. He stressed the need to act now and strategically, and think further and critically about EU's responsibility on this issue abroad (e.g. in developing countries). In his opinion, the Circular Economy (CE) represents a good approach to tackle the issue, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) offers opportunities to involve fishermen in the retrieval of fishing gear, and technology should be put at the service of preventing marine plastic pollution. From his position, he has asked the European Commission (EC) to do a study on the legislative framework concerning marine litter. **Anne-France Woestyn, Policy Officer at the European Commission's DG MARE**, also a guest

speaker, provided an overview of the current policies and legislative process taking place at Commission level that consider marine litter, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (descriptor 10); 2); the Circular Economy Package (30% reduction of marine litter by 2020); the Plastic Strategy to be released in 2017; the Revision of the Port Reception Facilities Directive; the evaluation of the Fishing Control Regulation for fishing vessels to retrieve and report lost fishing gear; and the revision of the EMFF for the period 2014-2020 for removal of fishing gear and other marine litter by fishermen, as well as investment in facilities for waste and marine litter collection. She also informed that the Marine Knowledge initiative is releasing a map for marine litter concentration in 2017, and that the soon to be released Global Ocean Governance Communication also contains references to the marine litter issue. She finally briefly mentioned the projects that the Research and Technological Development Fund has supported to tackle the marine litter and plastics issue, and stressed that although EC actions may appear modest there are elements to look forward to.

**Chiarina Darrah, Senior Consultant at Eunomia**, discussed about the challenges of monitoring marine litter, namely getting comparable data, the intrinsic high variability of the data and complex logistics for monitoring the ocean; and the implications for Member States (MS) in meeting with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the MSFD or the CE package. She highlighted that only 10 MS have already collected some of the data required by the MSFD, meaning there is huge data gap. She finally reflected on the need to establish how important it is to know exactly how much marine litter is out there and how much money is worth spending to find that out, arguing that we know enough to take actions and make decisions to improve the management of marine plastics. Finally, **Chris Sherrington, Principal Consultant at Eunomia**, discussed the existing responses available to tackle the issue of marine plastics. In his view, measures have to be proportionate to the issue, and should be based on the CE principles. Best-in-class measures should, in his opinion, be decided by an expert committee, be designed to reduce monitoring burden and considering the best available technologies (BAT) under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), and be implemented by all MS, which should do all they reasonably can to apply them. He then provided a list of best practice examples, and concluded stating that each MS should, following the subsidiary principles, be responsible for the implementation of the best practices. In his words, “there is no time to waste”.

**Emma Priestland, Policy Officer at Seas at Risk**, and **Antonio Furfari, Managing Director of Plastics Recyclers Europe** joined the **Panel Discussion**. There was an unanimous agreement on the need to act now, even though there are elements that still remain largely unknown (e.g. lack of data), and on the idea of adopting the precautionary approach and focus on preventive measures. There was certain criticism to the so far lack of effectiveness of the CE package to procure prevention (Emma), and on the responsibility of the EU on the marine plastic pollution in developing countries (e.g. East Asia), caused by EU exports and their lack of adequate waste management systems to cope with those (Antonio and Ricardo). Finally, there was a general consensus on the need to strengthen awareness rising and to introduce other instruments such as economic incentives to involve society and stakeholders.

# Upcoming Events

## **1. 19TH MSCG MEETING, 10-11 NOVEMBER, BRUSSELS**

More information [here](#)

## **2. INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES, 10 NOVEMBER, BRUSSELS**

More information [here](#)

## **3. FISHERIES IN THE ORS, 10 NOVEMBER, BRUSSELS**

More information [here](#)

## **4. DEEP-SEA MINING – WHAT NEXT FOR SCIENCE?, 11 NOVEMBER, BRUSSELS**

More information [here](#)

## **5. ICCAT - 20TH SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION, PORTUGAL**

More information [here](#)

## **6. NEAFC-35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING, LONDON**

More information [here](#)

## **7. LONG DISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL- WORKING GROUP 2, LONDON**

More information [here](#)

## **8. LONG DISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL- EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, MADRID**

More information [here](#)



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