



## YOU CAN TURN THE TIDE FOR EUROPE'S FISH STOCKS

### Priorities for a reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

Europe's fishing grounds were once among the most productive in the world, but forty years of the CFP have resulted in serious depletion of fish populations, ecosystem degradation and damage to species, habitats and sites protected by EU environmental legislation. Fishing has become unsustainable, increasingly unprofitable and reliant on public subsidies. This in turn has led to deprivation in coastal communities and an ever growing reliance on imported fish.

Europe's fishing fleets are far too large with capacity that is 2 to 3 times above sustainable levels, according to Commission figures. While the majority of fishermen in Europe are fairly small-scale, current policies primarily benefit those that operate large industrial vessels, which often employ the most destructive, indiscriminate, and fuel-intensive fishing methods.

**The reform offers you the opportunity to recover the well-being of our seas and dependent fishing communities:**

The CFP should end overfishing, reduce damage to ecosystems and re-build an EU fishing sector that is environmentally sustainable, and socially as well as economically viable. Only such a reform will guarantee Europe's consumers a rich variety of responsibly and locally-caught fish into the future.

The proposal to revise the EU's core legislation for fisheries management will be part of a package that includes measures on the EU's domestic and external fisheries policy, common market rules and a new financial instrument.

For the first time, the European Parliament has co-decision in fisheries policy. We are looking to you and your colleagues to support a new CFP which achieves healthy fish stocks and contributes to achieving good environmental status for EU waters under the

2008 Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Only if stocks recover can the CFP deliver a secure future for fish, fishers, and consumers alike.

Our organisations are present in Brussels and at national, regional and local level across every Member State of the European Union. Together, we speak on behalf of several million supporters for whom the future of our seas is a major concern.

### We stand for CFP reform that:

- recovers the well-being of our seas and dependent fishing communities;
- ends overfishing and makes the shift towards environmentally sustainable fishing practices, regardless of whether vessels fish within or outside the EU;
- respects scientific advice and the limits of the ecosystem;
- applies precautionary and ecosystem-based fisheries management;
- delivers fair and equitable use of marine resources;
- can supply Europe's consumers with a rich variety of locally-caught fish now and into the future; and
- uses public funds as part of the solution and not a driver of overfishing.

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## Charting out a new EU fisheries policy in 3 priorities

### 1) Get the objective right: without healthy seas, no fishing

Healthy seas and productive fish stocks are a precondition for the well-being of the fishing industry. A perverse culture of short-term decision-making aimed at cushioning the economic and social impacts of reduced fishing opportunities has systematically compromised the long term sustainability of fish stocks, undermining the very survival of the sector.

#### ***We call on MEPs to ensure that the new CFP:***

- explicitly sets the objective of stock recovery beyond levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield, as a premise for sustainable and equitable access to fishing opportunities; and
- regulates fishing such that environmental impacts are kept within levels compatible with achieving good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and favourable conservation status of species, habitats and Natura 2000 under the Birds and Habitats Directives.

### 2) Promote long-term, ecosystem-based levels of fishing in line with the science

The 2002 reform committed the EU to an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, but implementation has been painfully slow, incoherent and reactive. The new CFP must make ecosystem-based fisheries management fully operational across all regions and within a set timeframe. As prescribed in US legislation, catch limits must not be set above scientifically recommended levels.

#### ***We call on MEPs to ensure that the new CFP:***

- establishes firm timelines for the adoption of fisheries management plans which are long-term, multi-stock, and ecosystem-based, corresponding to the marine regions set out in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive;
- sets quotas and fishing effort ceilings that do not exceed scientific advice, so as to restore and maintain populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield, not later than 2015.

- minimises bycatch of non-target species, including fish, birds, turtles, etc.
- applies the same sustainability standards to all EU vessels regardless of where they fish.

We consider that detailed operational and management decisions should be made by institutions and stakeholders at a regional, Member State and local level. These decisions must be consistent with the overarching provisions and timelines of the CFP and agreed long-term management plans. The latter would set fish mortality targets, harvest control rules, bycatch limits etc.

### 3) Prioritise access to the fishery within the limits of the resource

The size and capacity of the EU fleet is estimated to be 2 to 3 times above the sustainable level. This overcapacity drives overfishing, making the fleet economically unviable. Without targeted and legally binding measures to adjust the fleet in line with the available resource the reform is meaningless.

#### ***We call on MEPs to ensure that the new CFP:***

- reduces overcapacity and restructures the fleet of each Member State in line with targets and timelines to achieve stock recovery;
- obliges Member States to achieve and report on fleet management targets or face meaningful penalties, such as a reduction in EU funds or relevant quotas;
- establishes preferential access to fishing for those who can demonstrate that they fish responsibly, in the least damaging and most selective, fuel-efficient way and who operate within and contribute to local coastal communities; and
- where rights-based instruments are used, the privilege of fishing must acknowledge fish as a public good and accordingly be leased in a time-limited fashion, subject to full compliance with EU and Member State legislation and evidence of good practice.