



BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CFP IS NEEDED TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES BY 2020

Six years on from the most recent reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), our organisations present European and national decision makers with a summary of the shortfalls in implementation of CFP legal requirements. Addressing these implementation gaps in the coming months is crucial to meet the sustainability fishing deadline of 2020.

The CFP aims to make fisheries environmentally sustainable in the long term, consistent with the objective of achieving social, economic and employment benefits. To date, insufficient progress has been made across all major CFP themes, with national marine strategies failing to include clear, concrete objectives in line with the CFP, and decisions by the European institutions falling short of what the CFP requires. The European Union and its Member States miss the mark on provisions for sustainable and viable fishing, healthy marine ecosystems and biodiversity conservation. In particular:

- Overfishing persists, aided by the setting of catch limits exceeding scientific advice;
- Member States have failed to adopt management measures to reduce the harmful impacts of their fisheries on marine species and habitats;
- Systematic monitoring of bycatch of sensitive species and fishing impacts in Marine Protected Areas is lacking;
- Compliance with the landing obligation, introduced gradually since 2015, remains weak;¹
- Between 2014 and now, no European Member State but one² has used more than 50% of its allocated part of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to control practices such as discarding onboard fishing vessels and to collect data on those vessels. The EMFF is significantly underspent to fund solutions for more selective fishing and protect marine habitats. In addition, current negotiations on the future EMFF point to the alarming reintroduction of harmful subsidies that were phased out 15 years ago and will exacerbate overfishing.

Securing the EU's commitments to sustainable fisheries, environmental protection, and the wider management of human activities to ensure healthy seas by 2020 must be a priority for all Member States, both at the European and national levels. Specifically, Member States have committed, in Article 11 of the CFP, to adopt conservation measures aligned with measures adopted under European environmental legislation such as the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which requires Member States to achieve Good Environmental Status of all European Seas by 2020.

¹ COM(2019) 274 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the state of play of the Common Fisheries Policy and consultation on the fishing opportunities for 2020.

² <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/funds/emff>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020 AND BEYOND

Urgent improvements in the implementation of key areas of the CFP are needed to bring Europe's trajectory to sustainable fisheries back on course. The responsibility for this falls on all EU decision-makers, including the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission, as well as all Member States individually. **Reviewing and addressing current and past shortcomings in implementation must be a critical priority now and before any future revision of the CFP is even considered.**

Apart from the main task of co-legislation, the European Parliament's role is to ensure democratic accountability over management of the marine environment. Crucially, the European Commission reports annually to the Parliament on the progress in ending overfishing and the situation of fish stocks, and by 31.12.2022 on the functioning of the fisheries policy as such (CFP Articles 49-50).³

NGOs call on all European decision-makers to urgently take the necessary steps to deliver the CFP's objectives, ensuring the long-term environmental sustainability of EU fisheries and providing for thriving coastal communities. Priorities for decision-makers are to:

- End overfishing and secure healthy and resilient fish populations:
 - Setting Total Allowable Catches (TACs) without exceeding scientific advice;
 - Controlling the landing obligation with more robust monitoring and data collection;
 - Reporting more accurately on the CFP's benchmarks, fishing mortality F_{MSY} and biomass B_{MSY} ;
 - Managing fishing fleets in balance with the fishing opportunities available.
- Protect the wider marine ecosystems ensuring comprehensive and effective protection for threatened marine habitats and sensitive species, by:
 - Adopting joint recommendations to tackle incidental catches of seabirds, marine mammals and sea turtles as per the Technical Measures Regulation of 2019;
 - Adopting fisheries management measures in Natura 2000 sites as per Article 11 of the CFP;
 - Establishing a monitoring system that collects data on fisheries impact on wider ecosystems as per the Data Collection Regulation of 2017.

Our organisations call on decision makers to revive the level of ambition embedded in the most recent reform of the CFP and to not allow that ambition to disappear in its implementation.

³ [Regulation \(EU\) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy](#)—the Commission also is obliged to regularly reports to the Parliament on: fish stock recovery areas, adjustment and management of EU fleets fishing capacity, as well as evaluation of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (CFP [Art. 8, 22, 31](#)). Furthermore, the Parliament has power to scrutinize delegated acts proposed by the Commission, for example adopting fisheries management for Marine Protected Areas ([CFP Art. 11](#)).