

Key issues in the draft CFP regulation (07/04/2011)

BalticSea2020 is a private foundation that has one overarching goal: In the year 2020, when the foundations money is spent, it has contributed to turn the environmental trend of the Baltic Sea. Otherwise the quality of life for 90 million citizens, who live in the region, will deteriorate.

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BalticSea2020 highlights on the CFP reform

Below you find a brief overview of why our four proposed key concepts will improve fisheries management, provide increased profitability for the industry and contribute to sustainable ecosystems. More detailed proposals and arguments can be found in BalticSea2020 "Position on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, BalticSea2020.

Ecosystem approach

In the present proposal there is no operational implementation of the ecosystem approach concept. It is first of all important to ensure that objectives set out in multiannual plans are not in conflict with other environmental objectives. Such provisions would give an overarching legal framework for the ecosystem approach. Particularly the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is important in this context as it has a defined methodology for defining and delivering on the ecosystem approach. BalticSea2020 therefore suggest that the present proposal is amended to ensure that fisheries management objectives are not opposing objectives of other environmental legislation.

Introducing MSY as a target for the CFP

The MSY concept is starting to become a well tested target in fisheries management with 19 EU stocks presently being managed at or above MSY (see also "The effect of following scientific advice" www.balticsea2020.org/images/Bilagor/follow%20sci%20advice.pdf). The MSY-management has led to increased quotas and less year-to-year variation, improving profitability and stability of production for the fishing industry. This follows from the improved stock status as a result of the management. In conclusion these sea areas benefit from improved ecosystem health and increased fisheries profitability. Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), as an overall limit value for the CFP and the multi annual plans are therefore central concepts for a successful fisheries management. These concepts will place the Fisheries Policy well in line with other EU legislation (2008/56/EC).

Long term plans & Priorities

The concept of MSY can be delivered by way of long-term management plans and by focusing on the core objective of a healthy marine environment. Long-term management plans, if followed year on year, have a track record of restoring fishing stocks. The cod stock recovery in the Baltic has come about in part due to the management plan being followed. Whilst there has been pressure to defer or change the plan each year, Baltic fishing Ministers feel compelled to follow the plan. This has resulted in a continuously improving stock and doubled revenues in the fishing industry.

Discards

Baltic Sea 2020 strongly supports the discard ban. The core of a discard ban is that everything that is caught is counted against the quota. This incentivizes the industry to improve selectivity and only catch individuals with a high market prize (normally larger individuals) not to use their quota on low prized fish. Thus counting all catches against the quota will

reduce the number of unwanted individuals that are caught. Eradicating discards will also automatically benefit the industry by making the quota for discards available for inclusion in the catch quota thereby increasing the quotas. A discard ban has been implemented in Norway with good results but there are good solutions to increase effectiveness of a ban by improved control.

Regionalization of fisheries management

The Council and the European Parliament should focus on long term plans and targets, increasingly leaving the operational details of the implementation to a regional management of Sea basins. The present system where fisheries ministers negotiate all aspects of the management, from overall targets to specific mesh size, has resulted in a very cumbersome operational management where the end result is often far from optimal. This is partly due to lack of competence and partly due to lack of regional specificity. The new procedure of co-decision is likely to make this even more time consuming. Micromanagement could be avoided using the proposed regional approach to handle the operational management towards targets and deadlines as set by the Council and the Parliament.

Transferable Fishing Concessions

Overcapacity reduces profitability of the fishing industry and thereby their possibility to take responsibility for impacts of their fishing activities according to the polluter pays principle. Overcapacity also introduces a political pressure to increase quotas. The present CFP has had a top-down control of capacity – a strategy that has completely failed. TFCs have the potential to move the regulation of capacity to the local level where capacity is realized, increasing profitability and decreasing political pressure to increase quotas.

Subsidies

Subsidies that directly support the industry or indirectly help vessels to stay in operation are increasing capacity with harmful effects on profitability of the industry. We encourage the will to address and limit the negative impacts of subsidies and promote a phasing out of all harmful subsidies. (See also Contribution to the discussion on the reform of the CFP – elimination of subsidies in fisheries, BalticSea2020, www.balticsea2020.org/english/images/Bilagor/elimination%20of%20subsidies%20to%20fisheries.pdf.)