

Contribution to the Consultation on the Common Fisheries Policy

December 2009

The advice of scientists has been repeatedly ignored while the seas are being depleted of their diversity and the livelihoods of fishing communities are being threatened. The EU needs to act without delay and take whatever steps are necessary to prevent a total collapse of fish stocks and indeed the entire fishing industry. We believe that there are a number of actions which need to be taken seriously if we want sustainable fisheries and we offer the following suggestions:

- ❖ **Decision-makers must heed the advice of marine scientists and conservationists**
The EU has repeatedly ignored recommendations by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to reduce catch quota to an ecologically sustainable level and to set an interim zero quota for those stocks that are heavily over-exploited. Scientific advice and not just the short-term economic interests of Member States, must determine the amount of fishing resources available to be caught in any one period.
- ❖ **An ecosystem-based approach**
Priority must be given to ecological sustainability. This is a prerequisite to fulfilling social and economic objectives. Without a healthy marine ecosystem, we cannot have a thriving fishing industry - fisheries are dependent on fish and fish are dependent on healthy marine ecosystems.
- ❖ **Marine habitats must be protected**
More Marine Protected Areas must be designated, in consultation with fishermen, so that stocks which are under threat can be allowed to flourish.
- ❖ **Favour fishing methods and practices that contribute to achieving the objectives of the CFP.**
Set up allocation systems which reward those who fish in the most environmentally and socially sustainable ways.
- ❖ **Ban the practice of bottom-trawling**
The destroying of vital marine habitats which are necessary for the recovery of depleted fish populations, must be halted immediately.
- ❖ **Waste and bycatch must be eliminated**
A management system which limits catches rather than landings would go a long way to reducing discarding. Such a system would encourage operators to minimise the removal of non-target species.

❖ **Phase out environmentally harmful subsidies with a view to eliminating them**

It is regrettable that subsidies in the fisheries sector have greatly contributed to developing the main driver of overfishing, namely overcapacity. Resources must be redirected to improved management, oversight, research and support for the transition to a more sustainable future.

❖ **Match fleet capacity with available resources**

This must be a mandatory target and incentives must be provided to ensure sustainable fishing for the long-term well-being of marine ecosystems and fishing communities.

❖ **Support the introduction of eco-labels**

Buyers and consumers should be able to purchase products with the certainty that they are at least legally harvested.

❖ **The external dimension of the CFP should also be reviewed**

EU Fisheries Partnership Agreements with ACP countries risk overfishing the waters of developing countries. The EU must help maintain sustainable fishing activity in third countries, ensuring that it is not exploitative but for the greater benefit of the local economy.

We ask that you please give serious consideration to the above points
in the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

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