



norden

The Nordic Council

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15th December 2009
08-00403-35

**Nordic Council comments on the Commission's Green Paper on
reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, April 2009**

It is our pleasure to forward the comments of the Nordic Council on the
Commission's Green Paper on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Yours sincerely,


Jan-Erik Enestam
Secretary General



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15th December 2009
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**Comments* regarding the Commission's Green Paper on reform of
the Common Fisheries Policy, April 2009**

The Nordic Council** has read with interest the Commission's draft reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). As an organisation made up of countries and autonomous territories with different formal links to the European Union, the Nordic Council submits the following comments:

It is the opinion of the Nordic Council that the reform process represents an ideal opportunity to move the CFP in a positive direction. The Council agrees with the analysis of the underlying problems facing the existing policy, as presented in Section 4 of the Green Paper. The purpose of this letter is to support the Commission's efforts to address these structural deficiencies.

The Nordic Council is unable to comment on all of the issues raised, and has opted therefore to restrict itself to expressing its views on the principles upon which it believes the new CFP should be based.

In this context, it is important that the foundations for European fisheries are built on the principle of *ecosystem-based fisheries management* and that policies are ecologically, financially and socially *sustainable*.

The policy will only succeed in the long term if it complies with these principles. The Commission must ensure a rapid transition to a system in which catches are determined at a level and in a way that will convincingly help to rebuild the depleted European stocks.

In order to live up to these principles, it will be necessary to introduce stock-specific restrictions on the scale of fishing and on fisheries' adverse environmental impact. Collectively, the Nordic countries have experience of a range of management instruments that can help to achieve this objective – for example, fixing a certain number of fishing days per boat, *catch* quotas, minimum size of catch, discard bans, temporary closure of fishing in important breeding grounds, etc.

The Nordic Council strongly opposes the current principle of catch regulation by means of *landing* quotas. It has proven to lead to a level of discard that is completely unacceptable on ethical, environmental and stock-sustainability grounds. The Commission is strongly encouraged to base future regulation on different principles.

The Council supports the proposal that – subject to centrally determined basic principles and within general frameworks – practical responsibility for fisheries management should, as far as possible, be devolved to regions. In this context, the relevant EU and non-EU countries concerned must agree on the specific conditions that should prevail in the waters concerned. *Regional*

management of fisheries must imply the highest possible level of responsibility devolved to the decision-making body. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that regional management is based on industry involvement and *accountability*; that other interested parties in the area are involved; and that research results are incorporated into the planning.

An *effective control system* should be maintained. The decision-makers that determine which rules should be subject to control should be responsible for the actual implementation of the control system as well. The industry should also be involved in this work and made responsible for the effective functioning of the control system.

The Nordic Council supports the proposal to introduce special mechanisms to ensure that member states are able to *maintain coastal fishing*. These mechanisms would be introduced in situations where the fishing concerned is able to document it uses particularly low-impact and environmentally friendly tools and methods, produces special niche products and high-quality fish, and contributes to the maintenance and development of local coastal communities and valuable cultural and historical environments.

As far as general views are concerned, the Council refers to a description of the experiences gained through an analysis of the *Nordic countries' different fisheries management systems*. The Nordic Council of Ministers has drawn up material that deals with a range of topical issues related to fisheries, and the Nordic Council encourages the Commission to include these experiences in the ongoing process of drafting the new CFP - e.g. the publication "Nordic Experiences of fisheries management". This material is accessible at www.norden.org/da/publikationer/publikationer/2009-579.

Similarly, the Nordic Council supports the Commission's parallel efforts to improve the current fisheries policy in the period up to its expiry at the end of 2012. Particularly pressing in this regard are the need for an immediate solution to the problem of *discard* and an acceleration of initiatives to *protect sensitive species and habitats*.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the Nordic Council


Per Rune Henriksen
Chairperson


Jens Nytoft Rasmussen
Committee Secretary, Senior Advisor

* Prepared by the Nordic Council Environment and Natural Resources Committee and endorsed by the Presidium.

** The Nordic Council is an inter-parliamentary assembly, founded in 1953. It consists of MPs from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The Environment and Natural Resources Committee is one of the standing committees and is responsible for the environment, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, sustainable development and energy. The Presidium co-ordinates the work of the Nordic Council between its annual plenary sessions.