



European  
Commission  
Maritime Affairs  
and Fisheries

# Reforming the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

Building a brighter future  
for fish and fishermen

# EC proposal at a glance

- Take action against over-fishing and in favour of the sustainable management of fish. ➔
  - Ensure productivity of fish stocks to maximise long-term yield. ➔
  - Multi-annual plans governed by ecosystem approach. ➔
  - Simplified rules and decentralised management. ➔ ➔
  - System of transferable fishing concessions. ➔
  - Measures beneficial to small-scale fisheries. ➔
  - Ban on discards. ➔
  - New marketing standards and clearer labelling. ➔
  - Better framework for aquaculture. ➔
  - EU financial assistance to support sustainability objectives. ➔
  - Up-to-date information on state of marine resources. ➔
  - International responsibility. ➔
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# The challenge

Europe's fisheries policy is in urgent need of reform. Our vessels are catching more fish than can be safely reproduced, thus exhausting individual stocks and threatening the marine ecosystem. With two-thirds of North Atlantic stocks now overfished, the fishing industry is experiencing smaller catches and facing an uncertain future. It is time to make fishing environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

# Objectives of the reform

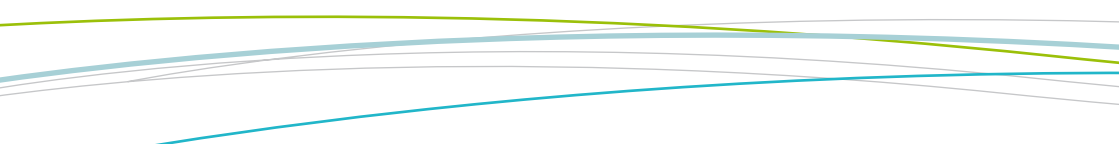
By bringing fish stocks back to sustainable levels, the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) aims to provide EU citizens with a stable, secure and healthy food supply for the long term. It seeks to bring new prosperity to the fishing sector, end dependence on subsidies and create new opportunities for jobs and growth in coastal areas. At the same time, it fosters the industry's accountability for good stewardship of the seas.

# Multi-annual ecosystem-based management

We need to protect the marine environment more effectively if we are to rebuild a vibrant fishing economy. From now on, EU fisheries will be managed by multi-annual plans and governed by the ecosystem approach and the precautionary principle. Scientific data on the state of the stocks will be more reliable, and the fishing industry will have a better and more stable basis for long-term planning and investment. This will safeguard resources and maximise long-term yields.

## Improving scientific knowledge

Reliable and up-to-date information about the state of marine resources is essential to support sound management decisions as well as effective implementation of the reformed CFP. EU Member States will be entrusted with collecting, maintaining and sharing scientific data about fish stocks and the impact of fishing at sea-basin level. National research programmes will be established to coordinate this activity.



# Banning discards

Discarding will be phased out. This practice of throwing unwanted fish overboard is estimated at 23 % of total catches (substantially more in some fisheries!). Fishermen will be obliged to land all the commercial species that they catch. This will lead to more reliable data on fish stocks, support better management, and improve resource efficiency. It is also an incentive to avoid unwanted catches by means of technical solutions such as more selective fishing gear.

# Decentralised governance

The reform will clarify roles and obligations of each actor and will bring decisions closer to the fishing grounds. EU legislators will define the general framework, the basic principles, the overall targets, the performance indicators and the timeframes. Member States will decide the actual implementing measures, and will cooperate at regional level.

# Making fishing profitable

A system of transferable fishing concessions will be introduced for vessels over 12 metres long. Distributed by Member States, the concessions will grant their owner an entitlement to a share of the national fishing opportunity for each year. Operators will be able to lease or trade their shares. This will give the fishing industry a long-term perspective, more flexibility and greater accountability, while at the same time reducing overcapacity.

## Support for small-scale fisheries

Coastal communities that depend on fishing require specific support. The reformed CFP extends to 2022 the right for Member States to restrict fishing in a zone within 12 nautical miles of the coastline. Small-scale fisheries will also be exempt from the transferable fishing concessions scheme. The future financial instrument for fisheries will include measures beneficial to small-scale fisheries and will help local economies adapt to the changes.

# Developing sustainable aquaculture

A better framework for aquaculture will increase production and supply of seafood in the EU, reduce dependence on imported fish and boost growth in coastal and rural areas. Member States will draft national strategic plans to remove administrative barriers and uphold environmental, social and economic standards for the farmed-fish industry. A new Aquaculture Advisory Council will be established to give advice on industry-related issues.

## Empowerment of the sector

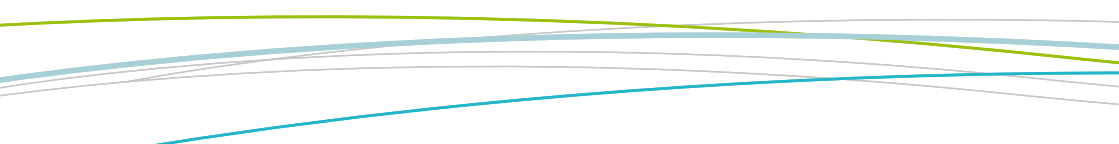
Simplified rules and decentralised management will devolve power to the industry. Prescriptive top-down decisions will be replaced by results-based management, and industry will be able to choose how to best achieve the agreed outcomes. Producer organisations will play a greater role in collective management, monitoring and control. Better marketing of EU fisheries and aquaculture products will help to reduce waste and provide market feedback to producers.

## Better informed consumers

New marketing standards on labelling, quality and traceability will give consumers clearer information and help them support sustainable fisheries. Certain labelling information will be compulsory, for example to differentiate fisheries and aquaculture products. Other claims may be supplied on a voluntary basis.

## A modern and adapted financial instrument

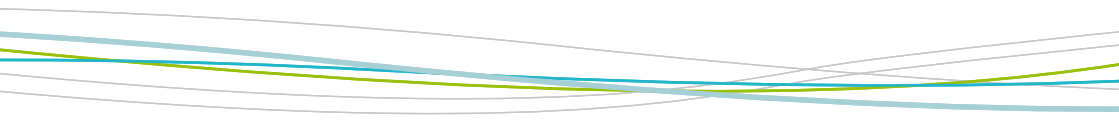
EU financial assistance will be granted to support the sustainability objectives of the new CFP. It will focus on greening, innovation, coastal development, science and research. Fleet subsidies that maintain unsustainable structures will be discontinued. There will be no public money for those who do not comply with the rules: Member States may see payments interrupted or suspended, while operators may be subject to temporary or permanent bans on future subsidies, if they violate sustainability principles.





# Taking international responsibility

In international and regional organisations, the EU will step up its role of honest broker for sustainability and conservation of fish stocks and marine biodiversity. It will establish strong alliances and undertake actions with key partners to combat illegal fishing and reduce overcapacity. In bilateral fishing agreements with non-EU countries, the EU will promote sustainability, good governance and the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.



**Find out more**

For further information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/  
reform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.htm)