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Nordic Council of Minist

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To  
The EU Commission  
Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
(DG MARE)

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From  
Nordic Council of Ministers

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Subject  
Memorandum from the Nordic Council of Ministers

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## **The Nordic Council of Ministers' response to the EU Commission's Green Paper of April 2009 on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy**

In December 2008, the Nordic Council of Ministers decided to contribute to the debate on reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The decision was a result of the recommendation by the Nordic Council that the Council of Ministers should play an active part in the debate.

The Nordic Region is home to eight different fisheries jurisdictions. The West-Nordic areas (Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Norway) are not members of EU, while Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Åland are EU members, and as such are subject to the CFP.

The eight management systems operate in societies that have a great deal in common, historically, culturally and socially. However, the systems also operate under conditions that differ significantly from country to country, especially with regard to their socio-economic dependence on fishery resources, their socio-cultural approaches to fisheries and, in particular, their ecosystems. These factors have led to a relatively high degree of diversity in fisheries management in the Region.

I enclose a list of initiatives taken by the Nordic Council of Ministers that are relevant to reform of the CFP, as well as extracts from the conclusions reached in the reports listed.

On behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers,

Jón Bjarnason

Icelandic Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture and President of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry

## Appendix 1

### Nordic initiatives relevant to reform of the CFP

**1.** The report "Nordic experience in fisheries management – Seen in relation to the reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy", written by a group of Nordic researchers, provides in-depth analysis of Nordic experiences of rights-based management, discard and co-management.

The report (TN 2009:579) is available at:

<http://www.norden.org/da/publikationer/publikationer/2009-579>

**2.** The EU Green Paper was the theme at the Nordic fisheries ministers' meeting in Iceland on 2 July 2009, which was attended by a representative of the European Commission. Other key themes included regionalisation of fisheries management and co-management.

**3.** The conference "Efficient Fisheries management – Fishing rights and flexibility", which focused on experiences of individual transferable quotas (ITQs) and rights-based fisheries, was held on 26 and 27 August 2009 under the auspices of the Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2009.

The report "Efficient Fisheries management – Fishing rights and flexibility" (US 2009:490) is available at:

<http://www.norden.org/da/publikationer/publikationer/2009-490>

**4.** The Nordic Council of Ministers hosted a seminar on regionalisation of fisheries management in Copenhagen on 13 October 2009, at which potential institutional options for regionalisation of EU fisheries management were discussed.

The report from the seminar ("Regionalisation of the EU Common Fisheries Policy", US 2009:489) is available at:

<http://www.norden.org/da/publikationer/publikationer/2009-489>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Extracts from conclusions reached by the reports "Nordic experience in fisheries management", "Efficient Fisheries management – Fishing rights and flexibility" and "Regionalisation of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy"**

#### **Rights-based management**

In the Nordic countries, RBM systems, including individual or communal rights along with transferability of rights have contributed to adjusting the fleet capacity and thereby to sustainable management of fish resources. This is the common experience from Iceland, Norway and Denmark, despite the differences in sector structure and resource base. With the reduction of the fleet capacity to match the TACs and fish quotas, the economic performance of the remaining active fishing vessels has improved significantly. The fishing industry in the Nordic countries has become more profitable with the adoption of RBM systems, generating a sizeable resource rent. The experience from the introduction of RBM systems also demonstrates that such policy decisions are very sensitive. Adaptive bottom-up approaches involving the stakeholders in the system design have shown to generate lasting solutions, whereas inflexible top-down approaches have largely failed, due to lack of legitimacy within the industry.

#### **Co-management**

In the Nordic countries, there are several examples of groups of fishermen or wider groups of stakeholders taking responsibility for parts of the management of specific fisheries under a co-management arrangement. The cases presented include different types of co-management. There are many consultative elements where the co-management groups comment on proposals from the authorities. However, the highest levels of legitimacy of regulations and compliance are found where the groups also have an advisory role, formal or informal, so that their proposals and recommendations are included in the management regulations.

#### **Discards**

The Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Norway have all implemented a ban on discards, combined with systems for control and enforcement, including strict interventions when the rules are violated. The crews and owners in these countries benefit economically from the landing of legal by-catch, and they are also allowed to buy quotas after landing. In both cases, discard would otherwise represent a financial loss. The systems in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway place a significant responsibility on crews. Compliance seems to be high because the ban and the repercussions are well known. If you break the rules, you run the risk of being exposed. In addition, the management of discard is considered reasonable and legitimate by the crews and owners, due to the extensive degree of participation that they have traditionally had in the design of management systems in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway.

In practice, however, a ban has to be backed both by reasonable rules and regulations and by financial incentives. It is impossible to totally avoid by-catch, and therefore mechanisms have been developed to discourage the discard of undersized or just small fish.

**Regionalisation**

There are certainly discussions surrounding the Nordic fisheries and regionalisation that are relevant to the reform of the CFP. However, it is important to note that no model can be transferred directly from one setting to another – as the variations between the Nordic countries clearly demonstrate. In the discussion of the Nordic experience in relation to CFP reform, their specific contexts must be kept in mind, and questions must be posed about the social, political and ecological circumstances under which the specific solutions and models have been developed.