



## YOU CAN TURN THE TIDE FOR EUROPE'S FISH STOCKS

### Priorities for a reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

Europe's fishing grounds were once among the most productive in the world, but forty years of the CFP have resulted in serious depletion of fish populations, ecosystem degradation and damage to species, habitats and sites protected by EU environmental legislation. Fishing has become unsustainable, increasingly unprofitable and reliant on public subsidies. This in turn has led to deprivation in coastal communities and an ever growing reliance on imported fish.

According to Commission figures, Europe's fishing fleets are far too large. The majority of fishers in Europe are fairly small-scale, operating on vessels less than 12m length. Current EU policies primarily benefit more destructive, indiscriminate, and fuel-intensive fishing fleets, at the expense of more environmentally sustainable fishing methods.

#### The reform offers you the opportunity to recover the well-being of our seas and dependent fishing communities:

The CFP should end overfishing, reduce damage to ecosystems and re-build an EU fishing sector that is environmentally sustainable, and socially as well as economically viable. Only such a reform will guarantee Europe's consumers a rich variety of responsibly and locally-caught fish into the future.

The proposal to revise the EU's core legislation for fisheries management will be part of a package that includes measures on the EU's domestic and external fisheries policy, common market rules and a new financial instrument.

For the first time, the European Parliament has co-decision in fisheries policy. We are looking to you and your colleagues to support a new CFP which achieves healthy fish stocks and contributes to achieving good environmental status for EU waters under the 2008 Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Only if stocks recover can the CFP deliver a secure future for fish, fishers, and consumers alike.

Our organisations are present in Brussels and at national, regional and local level across every Member State of the European Union. Together, we speak on behalf of several million supporters for whom the future of our seas is a major concern.

#### We stand for CFP reform that:

- recovers the well-being of our seas and dependent fishing communities;
- ends overfishing and makes the shift towards environmentally sustainable fishing practices, regardless of whether vessels fish within or outside the EU;
- respects scientific advice and the limits of the ecosystem;
- applies precautionary and ecosystem-based fisheries management;
- delivers fair and equitable use of marine resources;
- can supply Europe's consumers with a rich variety of locally-caught fish now and into the future; and
- uses public funds as part of the solution and not as a driver of overfishing.

Our proposals for improvements in three priority areas are outlined on the next page.

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## Charting out a new EU fisheries policy in 3 priorities

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### 1) Get the objective right: no fishing without healthy seas

Healthy seas and productive fish stocks are a precondition for the well-being of the fishing sector. A perverse culture of short-term decision-making aimed at cushioning the economic and social impacts of reduced fishing opportunities has compromised the long term sustainability of fish stocks, undermining the survival of the sector.

#### *We call on MEPs to:*

- Keep the objective of stock recovery beyond levels which can produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield as a premise for sustainable and equitable access to fishing opportunities; and
- Ensure the new CFP regulates fishing so that environmental impacts are kept within levels compatible with achieving Good Environmental Status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and favourable conservation status of species, habitats and Natura 2000 under the Birds and Habitats Directives.

### 2) -Ensure long term management of fisheries and the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach, in line with science

The 2002 reform committed the EU to an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, but implementation has been painfully slow, incoherent and reactive. The new CFP must make ecosystem-based fisheries management fully operational across all regions and within a set timeframe. As prescribed in US legislation, catch limits must not be set above scientifically recommended levels.

#### *We call on MEPs to:*

- Include firm timelines for the development and adoption of multiannual plans which are ecosystem-based and consistent with the requirements under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to co-ordinate management regionally;
- Include provisions to ensure that fishing limits do not exceed scientific advice, so as to restore and maintain populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield not later than 2015;
- Extend the commitment to end discards to include measures that minimise bycatch of non-target species, including fish, birds, turtles, etc.; and
- Maintain the obligation for all EU vessels to meet the same legally-binding standards wherever they fish.

We consider that operational and management decisions should be made by institutions and stakeholders at a regional, Member State and local level. These decisions must be consistent with the overarching objectives, targets and timelines of the CFP and the agreed multiannual plans, where details of fish mortality targets, harvest control rules, bycatch limits and wider management issues should be set out.

### 3) Prioritise access to the fishery within the limits of the resource

The size and capacity of the EU fleet is estimated to be up to 2 to 3 times above the sustainable level. This overcapacity drives overfishing, making the fleet economically unviable. Without targeted and legally binding measures to adjust the fleet in line with the available resource the reform is meaningless.

#### *We call on MEPs to:*

- Strengthen provisions on fleet capacity management to ensure a mandatory reduction of overcapacity and restructuring of fleets to bring them in line with available fishing opportunities;
- Reject the compulsory nature of the proposed Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFCs) scheme. There should be discretion to choose from a range of tools that best suit the allocation of access to fishing opportunities.
- Ensure that any allocation of access to fishing resources to practitioners is understood as a system of privileges and with clear obligations attached. The privilege of fishing must acknowledge fish as a public resource and accordingly be leased in a time-limited fashion. A system of safeguards must allow for the timely revocation as deemed necessary on biological, social, economic or compliance related grounds.
- Introduce criteria to rank and distribute access to fisheries resources. These sustainability criteria should favour those who have the least impact on the marine environment, who can demonstrate strong legal compliance and who operate within and contribute to local coastal communities. These criteria should be applied under a long-term management framework that meets central goals.