



No aid for engine modernisation or replacement under the EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) COM (2011) 804 final

The CFP has failed to prevent overfishing in the EU: 63% of the assessed stocks in the Atlantic, 82% of the assessed stocks in the Mediterranean, and four out of six assessed stocks in the Baltic are all overfished¹. The European Commission has recognised overcapacity as one of the key drivers of overfishing, and has acknowledged that subsidies have contributed to this imbalance through artificially maintaining excess fishing capacity.² The Pew Environment Group, OCEAN2012, WWF, Oceana, Greenpeace and BirdLife Europe and Seas At Risk ask to delink public funding from fishing overcapacity. **We welcome the Commission's proposal to stop providing public funding for the replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines on board fishing vessels and ask decision makers to support EMFF Article 39(2) in its current form** for the following reasons:

- The capacity of the fleet in a number of fisheries is estimated to be two to three times the sustainable level.³ Fleet capacity must be in line with available fishing opportunities, in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the reformed CFP. Public funding must not contribute to excess capacity.
- Modernising or replacing equipment is often associated with higher efficiency and a greater capacity to catch fish – a phenomenon called 'technological creep'.⁴ As such engine modernisation and replacement measures would undermine EMFF Article 13(a) which states that operations increasing the fishing capacity of the vessels should not be eligible for EMFF funding.
- Even if modernising or replacing old engines is conditional upon making them equally or less powerful, it will not necessarily translate into a reduction of the vessel's ability to catch fish. The recent European Court of Auditors report states that vessels equipped with so-called 'fuel efficient' engines still have an incentive to increase their fishing effort, for instance by spending more hours at sea.⁵
- Importantly, under-declaration of engine power is a common and general problem. Engines can be legally certified with a power much lower than their maximum continuous power. This is possible through adjustments to the fuel injection settings, which can easily be reversed once the engine has been certified. As a result, the Commission assesses that the real power installed on board is almost impossible to control.⁶

The proposed EMFF offers a significant opportunity to establish a funding policy for the fisheries sector that will support the sustainable exploitation of marine resources. This must not include measures that maintain or even increase existing overcapacity. We therefore ask Member States and the European Parliament to support Article 39(2) in its current form.

¹ Communication from the commission concerning a Consultation on fishing opportunities COM(2011) 298 final.

² EU Commission (2009) Green Paper - Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy COM(2009)163 final.

³ EU Commission (2008) Reflections on further reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, non-paper.

⁴ J. Fitzpatrick, 'Technology and Fisheries Legislation', in FAO (1996) Precautionary approach to fisheries Part 2, FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 350/2, pp. 191-199.

⁵ EU Court of Auditors (2011) Have EU measures contributed to adapting the capacity of the fishing fleet to available fishing opportunities?, paragraphs 43 – 47.

⁶ European Commission (2006) The under-declaration of engine power. Non Paper for the Meeting of Director Generals for Fisheries of Member States, March 31, 2006.