



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



11111/12

PRESSE 258
PR CO 36

PRESS RELEASE

3174th Council meeting

Agriculture and Fisheries

Luxembourg, 12 June 2012

President

Ms Mette GJERSKOV

Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark

P R E S S

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Main results of the Council

*As regards fisheries, the ministers reached a general approach on a proposal for a **regulation on the common fisheries policy (CFP)** and a proposal on a **common organisation of markets in fishery and aquaculture products**. The Council then took note of a progress report from the Presidency concerning the **European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF)**. All these issues were debated within the framework of the CFP reform package*

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

PARTICIPANTS

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Czech Republic:

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Head of Office, Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

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State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

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Ms Rosa María QUINTANA

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Minister for Rural Environment and for the Sea of the Autonomous Community of Galicia

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Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy

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Minister for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy

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State Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment

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Mr Richard BENYON

Mr Richard LOCHHEAD

Mr Alun DAVIES

Ms Michelle O'NEILL

Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, (Natural Environment and Fisheries)
 Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Scottish Government)
 Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes (Welsh Government)
 Agriculture and Fisheries Minister (Northern Ireland Assembly)

Commission:

Ms Maria DAMANAKI

Member

The Government of the Acceding State was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Snježana ŠPANJOL

Deputy Minister for Agriculture

ITEMS DEBATED

REFORM OF THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY

The Council reached an agreement on a general approach on two of the three regulation proposals of the common fisheries policy (CFP) reform "package"([10415/12](#); [11322/12](#); [11366/12](#)):

- proposal for a regulation on the CFP ([12514/11](#)) replacing the basic provisions of the CFP;
- proposal for a regulation on the common organisation of the markets (CMO) in fishery and aquaculture products ([12516/11](#)), focussing on market policy issues;

In addition, the Council took note of the Presidency's progress report ([10276/1/12](#)) on a proposal for a regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) ([17870/11](#)) replacing the existing European Fisheries Fund.

General approach on the main proposals of the CFP reform

This general approach represents the Council's direction towards first reading pending the first-reading position of the European Parliament.

With regard to the basic regulation on the CFP, the compromise supported by a large majority of delegations, but not by all of them, developed concrete text amendments for several outstanding issues.

Maximum sustainable yields (MSY): the compromise aims to achieve MSY by 2015 where possible (e.g when scientific advice on the stocks are available at the necessary detail) and by 2020 at the latest. Consultation with the third countries concerned will be initiated in case where the stocks are shared, with a view to finding an agreement on MSY exploitation if possible.

Multiannual plans: the compromise establishes that multiannual plans should manage fisheries in more detail through quantifiable targets linked to biological parameters as well as safeguard and remedies. It applies the MSY to the significant stocks in mixed fisheries while specific measures apply to other stocks with an approach taking into account interactions between stocks.

Landing obligation and discards ban: a gradual approach of the policy is proposed but the aim is still the elimination of discards. With regard to the landing obligation in identified fisheries a specification through multiannual plans within a fixed timeframe is laid down.

Regionalisation: this concept is supported by a vast majority of member states as it accepts that one size does not fit all. The compromise also introduces an alternative model for regionalisation where member states adopt national measures through regional cooperation.

Advisory councils: the compromise envisages the creation of additional advisory councils namely one for the Black Sea and one for outermost regions of the EU.

Transferable fishing concessions (TFCs) and capacity management: as requested by many delegations, the agreement stipulates that TFC systems should be voluntary. Exemptions to fleet management rules is possible where TFCs are established, and access to funds from the EMFF is strictly conditioned by follow-up on a reinforced reporting on capacity management.

On the CMO in fishery and aquaculture products, there is a broad agreement on many issues, in particular the support for fishery and aquaculture producer organisations, whose role was enlarged to contribute to handling landings of unwanted fish. In addition, proposals were established through the general approach.

Storage aid: no major change was made to the Commission proposal concerning the remaining intervention instrument "storage aid". The EMFF, on which a general approach was not foreseen, envisages the phase-out of this instrument over time.

Consumer information: in addition to the horizontal food information regulation (1169/2011), conditions for displaying voluntary information are highlighted. The framework allowing the Commission to develop an EU sustainability label is established.

Use of fish not conforming to marketing standards: all caught fish may be used for purposes other than human consumption.

The following topics of both regulations have to be further scrutinised after the general approach, namely:

- the procedure for adopting fisheries measures in sites of Natura 2000 and similar marine protected areas;
- the fishery-related timelines for applying the discard ban;

- flexibility tools for quota management under a discard ban;
- recitals and definitions;
- the choice and formulation of Commission powers to adopt delegated acts or implementing acts (alignment of the text on the Lisbon Treaty).

EMFF

The progress report presented by the Presidency sets out state of play and describes views expressed by delegations in relation to the main outstanding issues. It identifies the main achievements on the issue and the points which should be discussed further.

A vast majority of delegations have welcomed this progress report. There was in particular a general agreement within the Council on the increased support for the aquaculture sector by the EMFF.

The EMFF proposal must be seen in the context of the Commission's proposal for a multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 as well as the package for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which is designed to lay down the legislative framework for the same period.

In July 2011, the Council held an initial public exchange of views on Commission proposals for the reform of the CFP.

In addition, as regards this reform, the Council held policy debates in March on the three main proposals for regulations in the CFP reform "package": basic provisions of the CFP, CMO in fishery and aquaculture products and the EMFF. The debate on the proposal for a regulation on the CFP focussed on the issue of a discard ban. Also in March, the Council unanimously agreed on conclusions on the external dimension of the CFP .

In April, the policy debates in the Council covered regionalisation and transferable fishing concessions (TFCs), two specific issues raised in the basic provisions of the CFP. In May, the policy debate focused on achieving environmental sustainability through maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and the integration of environmental law requirements into the proposal covering the basic provisions of the CFP. A further debate on the EMFF took place at the same meeting.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FISHERIES****Partnership agreement between the EU and Mozambique - New protocol adopted**

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of a new protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the fisheries partnership agreement between the EU and the Republic of Mozambique ([18059/11](#)).

The partnership agreement in the fisheries sector between the EU and Mozambique was concluded in 2007. The main objective of the protocol to this agreement is to define the fishing opportunities offered to EU vessels as well as the financial contribution due, separately, for access rights and for sectoral support. Following the negotiations, a new protocol was initialled on 2 June 2011 as the previous protocol expired on 31 December 2011. In order to allow EU vessels to carry out fishing activities, the new protocol had be signed and applied on a provisional basis, pending the completion of the procedures for its formal conclusion.
