

Discussion paper for the Focus Group on CFP Reform

Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th October

The work will take its starting point in the Commission's Green Paper on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0163:FIN:EN:PDF>

We encourage all members of the Focus Group to read the paper before the meeting.

Then, to help give focus to the discussions around the Baltic Sea, the Chair of the Focus Group suggests the 4 following themes:

1. Regionalisation,
2. The Role of the RACs,
3. Fisheries Management (3a. relative stability, 3b management, 3c. small-scale fishery)
4. Markets

Below, we introduce the topic, refer to the sections in the Green Paper, and formulate questions (from the Chair and from the Green Paper).

1. Regionalisation:

The Commission is positive about more regionalisation in the CFP, but does not have a clear proposal on what form it should take. The Commission welcomes input from stakeholders on this point. The Green Paper refers to Regionalisation in section 4.3 where it focuses in particular on decision-making and on the division of responsibilities, and suggests possible alternatives. At the BS RAC conference on 1st -2nd October a strong wish for regionalisation was made by several speakers, including Commissioner Borg. According to Ernesto Penas, DG Mare, from a recent fisheries conference in Aalborg, it is a crucial issue.

Questions from the Green Paper

Section 4.3: Focusing the decision-making framework on core long-term principles

- How can we clarify the current division of responsibilities between decision-making and implementation to encourage a long-term focus and a more effective achievement of objectives? What should be delegated to the Commission (in consultation with Member States), to Member States and to the industry?
- Do you think decentralised decisions on technical matters would be a good idea?

What would be the best option to decentralise the adoption of technical or implementing decisions? Would it be possible to devolve implementing decisions to national or regional authorities within Community legislation on principles? What are the risks implied for the control and enforcement of the policy and how could they be remedied?

- How could the advisory role of stakeholders be enhanced in relation to decision-making? How would ACFA and the RACs adapt to a regionalised approach?

Some more questions from the Chair (not from the Green Paper):

- How do we in the BS RAC see a regional fisheries policy for the Baltic evolving?
- What needs to be done?
- Which areas in the CFP should or can be regionalised?
- What special factors and characteristics about the Baltic should be included?
- Should more management decisions be taken on a regional level or not? What sort of decisions?
- What do you think should be left with the Council of Ministers?
- What issues can be dealt with in the co-decision process, involving the European Parliament?

2. The role of the RACs:

The BS RAC has not yet sent in comments or input on the role of the RACs and their functioning. It has promised to do this in connection with input to the Reform of the CFP.

On 17th June 2008 the Commission published its Communication on a Review of the functioning of the Regional Advisory Councils:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0364:FIN:EN:PDF>

Questions (not from the Green Paper):

- Do we need to re-define the RACs in a reformed CFP?
- Should the RACs work on more general CFP issues? If so, which?
- Should the RACs have only an advisory role?

- Or should they deal with decision-making and management?
- Do the structure and membership of the RAC need to be changed?
- Are the RACs organised most effectively, i.e. should they be separated by species/geographical areas or should they be recombined? Or should there be another RAC?
- Should there be a formal Inter-RAC body?
- Is the current funding system appropriate for the RACs?
- How do you see the role of the RACs in relation to ACFA?

3. Fisheries Management

This is a very broad section. It should give the chance to discuss among other things relative stability, management systems (ITQs, rights-based management etc) structural policy and fleet capacity, especially in relation to small-scale coastal fishery.

See the Green Paper:

Section 4 Overcoming the structural failings of the policy and

Section 5 Further improving the management of EU fisheries

At the BS RAC General Assembly on 8th May 2009, Ernesto Penas, DG Mare, pointed out that the CFP allows for testing out things and ideas: and if they succeed, they could be incorporated in the management system of a reformed CFP. In this connection the Baltic Sea was a good area for this. So the challenge was to take the debate seriously, to be creative and to come forward with suggestions and ideas which can be tried out before 2013.

3a) Relative stability

Relative stability was a lively subject in the discussions at the BS RAC Conference in Stockholm. Is there an alternative to relative stability? For example, by linking it to effort? At the Conference the strong wish was expressed by some to maintain relative stability. Some pointed out that flexibility between member states was obtained through quota swaps. These work well and efficiently.

From the Green Paper, Section 5.3 Relative stability and access to coastal fisheries

- How could relative stability be shaped to better contribute to the objectives of the CFP? Should it be dismantled or, if not, should it become more flexible and if so, how? How could such alternatives be set up?
- Should access to the 12 nm zone be reserved for small-scale fishing vessels?

3b) Management

And management in general: what sort of management systems does the BS RAC want to achieve in the Baltic?

From the Green Paper, Section 5.2: Making the most of our fisheries:

- How can long-term management plans for all European fisheries be developed under the future CFP? Should the future CFP move from management plans for stocks to fisheries management plans?
- Should we consider reforming the CFP in two steps, with specific measures to move to MSY prior to 2015 followed by measures to maintain MSY as the upper exploitation level after that date?
- How could the MSY commitment be implemented in mixed fisheries while avoiding discards?
- What should the main management system be for Community fisheries and to which fisheries should it apply? Catch limitations? Fishing effort management? A combination of the two? Are there any other options?
- What measures should be taken to further eliminate discards in EU fisheries? Could management through transferable quotas be useful in this regard?

3c) Small-scale fishery

This links into discussion about the small-scale, coastal fishery. Should we have a special coastal fishery in the Baltic? How does it link into capacity?

Questions from the Green Paper, Section 5.1: A differentiated fishing regime to protect small-scale coastal fleets?

- How can overall fleet capacity be adapted while addressing the social concerns faced by coastal communities taking into account the particular situation of small- and medium-sized enterprises in this sector?
- How could a differentiated regime work in practice?
- How should small-scale fisheries be defined in terms of their links to coastal communities?

- What level of guidance and level-playing field would be required at EU level?

4. Markets

The revision of the Common Markets Organisation has begun, but it has been postponed, so as to run in line with the reform of the CFP. Consideration needs to be given to the market vis à vis the consumer. What is the future for the POs? Today 64% of EU seafood consumption is dependent on imports. What support mechanism do we need from the Common Markets Organisation to help the EU fishing industry?

Questions from the Green Paper Section 5.4 of the Green Paper Trade and markets – from catch to consumer

- How could market mechanisms be used to encourage the development of fisheries that are market efficient as well as sustainably exploited?
- How can the future CFP best support initiatives for certification and labelling?
- How can traceability and transparency in the production chain be best supported?
- How could the EU promote that fisheries products come from sustainably managed fisheries, providing a level playing field for all?
- How can the POs better work to match production with market needs? Which new market based policy instruments could be implemented through POs?
- How can fishermen improve their position towards processing and distribution? What is the role of trade policy in balancing the interests of producers, consumers and our relations with exporting countries?