



# Paving the way for a New Common Fisheries Policy

Revised 15. October 2009





**A sustainable Common Fisheries Policy should aim at the highest long term economic yield of fish stocks at the lowest impact cost on stocks and environment**

**This goal must be reached by**

- **An incentive for the active involvement of fishers**
- **Obtaining reliable catch figures**
- **Development of selective fishing methods**
- **Phasing out of discards**

## **A New Fisheries Policy**

It has become clear that the distance between the fisherman and the management of his fishery is causing an unacceptable waste of resources and a poor economy.

To achieve an optimal utilization of the resource the fisherman should have the choice of method in conducting his fishery according to the variability of the circumstances at sea. This freedom must be exercised within clear impact limits. First and foremost in the form of the total catch of each stocks that he can take. The individual fisherman should be accountable for his total catches, not just his landings at port.

With the right to plan his fishery, comes the responsibility of documenting, that the given catch quota is respected.

The transfer of responsibility should be established gradually as an offer for voluntary participation in a "second management track", where fisher's who wish to accept the responsibility and to document their fishery are submitted to reduced control, exempted of effort regulation and given increased catch quotas that reflect that all fish caught are accounted for.

The optional approach, the gradual phasing in and the transfer of responsibility and documentation to fishermen will align the CFP with the market forces requiring a sustainable fishery. And the proposal accords with the Commissions vision expressed in the Green Paper.

*Fishing operators are given incentives to behave responsibly but they are also expected to demonstrate that they comply with the basic principles of the CFP.*

The prerequisite for the new policy approach is the establishment of a voluntary and reliable documentation of all catches.

In September 2008 Denmark launched a 12 months pilot project with six vessels being equipped with cameras and sensors. In August Scotland started a pilot project with camera documentation on seven vessels. The projects has produced convincing results in relation to obtaining full accountability of all catches, reducing discards, changing fisher's behaviour and the participating fishermen have supported the idea and practical implementation of the project. In Germany studies on a non-discard project showed a strong interest for a fishery based on the catch quota approach.

The knowledge obtained by the projects has convincingly substantiated the proposal for a catch quota management based on the fisher's own documentation. On basis of the results Denmark, Germany, UK and Scotland 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009 signed the following joint statement in Aalborg, Denmark.



## Joint statement

### **The Danish, German, UK and Scottish ministers responsible for fisheries policy, today expressed their joint desire to explore one way to improve the Common Fisheries Policy**

The CFP is currently being reviewed, with the intention of improvements being introduced by the beginning of 2013. CFP reform offers a real opportunity to ensure our shared fish stocks are safeguarded for the future, and therefore in turn, the economic livelihoods of our fishing communities. The Green Paper poses many questions and recognises that the current CFP takes a top-down approach and needs to give the fishing industry more incentives to behave responsibly. One change we all want to see, then, is a shift to a system reflecting results based management which incentivises good fisheries practices. Such a system would contribute to giving fishermen more scope for conducting their fishery as an economic activity, but only if they take full responsibility for accounting for all the fish they remove from the sea.

We believe that a system which engages the industry and harnesses the innovation of fishermen can be an integral part of a better, more effective CFP. And we want the fishermen themselves to take responsibility for using their skills to fish more selectively and to take more responsibility for recording their total catches and not just the fish they choose to retain and land.

We believe there are strong arguments for making fishermen more accountable for their total catches. It would improve information and management of removal levels of fish stocks and incentivise the development of selective fishing methods, gear and technology that can optimize the value of catches whilst significantly reducing the wasteful practice of discarding. We therefore wish to explore the scope for testing voluntary and incentive-driven management mechanisms based on catch rather than landing quotas. We would wish that fishermen choosing such an option carry the responsibility of documenting their total catches, and that the requirements for such documentation must ensure unequivocal reliability.

Our work to date on camera documentation and non-discard projects shows us that full documentation can be a feasible solution. However, we also recognise that further work needs to be done more generally to provide the necessary evidence and confidence to support this possible change in approach. We are therefore keen to work with the Commission and the Council – and with fishermen themselves - to refine our ideas and explore the potential to apply them during 2010 and for them to be a valuable reference point in the development of a new and more effective CFP.

Signed in Aalborg 8 October 2009, by

  
Eva Kjer Hansen

  
Ilse Aigner

  
Huw Irranca-Davies

  
Richard Lochhead

Beside the commitment to explore another way for the Common Fisheries Policy the important part of the statement points to the need for the catch quota incentive to be made available in 2010. The establishment of a limited incentive from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 will provide valuable knowledge prior to the revision of the CFP in 2012, and it will balance the Commission initiatives within the existing management framework with alternative information crucial to the decisions in 2012.

The finalised projects have demonstrated strong evidence of improved governance in the fishery and that fisheries management can be perceived as legitimate by fishermen. The establishment of a catch quota incentive in the TAC/quota regulation for 2010 will show whether the introduction of a "second management track" will provide the following benefits on a broader scale:

- Correct registration of catches
- Precise data for biological advice resulting in better advice and management and a more uniform perception of the stock situation between biologists and fishers
- Vessels with documentation will make reference points compared to the rest of the fleet
- All catches are counted against the quota, with the effect, that the fisherman will optimize his economy by fishing selectively instead of discarding
- Simplification of rules. The complex machinery of rules and controls do not have to apply. Why impose days at sea, when all catches are documented and accounted for
- Discards can be abandoned

In relation to the public costs of managing and controlling fisheries it will provide important information about alternative methods and financing of catch documentation.

### **How to accomplish the change**

Denmark has made fundamental changes in the national fisheries policy in order to accommodate the requirements for better economy, less fishing effort and improved sustainability. In EU there has been a broad and uniform conception of the problems of the CFP for the past ten years. A fundamental change of the CFP is needed in order to allow member states to reap the benefits of a sustainable and economically viable fisheries management, but no comprehensive proposals have yet been tabled.

The Danish, German, UK and Scottish proposal for a catch quota management is concrete, it is comprehensive, it is documented on a pilot scale, it is supported by ICES (The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea), by WWF and by market groups.

Furthermore it can be implemented gradually, it respects Relative Stability as conceived in 1983, it allows the use of fish that would otherwise be discarded and it will add a real knowledge as a supplement to the assembling of viewpoints currently being done in relation to the Commissions Green Paper.

### **Background**

The results of the Danish project on catch quota management and fully documented fishery can be seen at [www.fvm.dk/yieldoffish](http://www.fvm.dk/yieldoffish). A video presenting the catch quota management and other material regarding a New Fisheries Policy are found here too.

Vessels equipped with camera observation. See all the vessels at [www.fvm.dk/yieldoffish](http://www.fvm.dk/yieldoffish)

