

European Parliament approves final deal on fisheries fund - with potential to support more sustainable fisheries if well used by the Member States

Brussels/Strasbourg 16/04/ 2014 – Today, the European Parliament (EP) gave the rubber stamp to the final deal on the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) [1] - €6.5 billion to support the EU's fishery and maritime policies from 2014 to 2020. The new fund offers improved opportunities for investment in fisheries recovery and the environment, but still includes too many options for perverse subsidies.

“The new EMFF has the potential to support positive measures such as data collection, control and enforcement, and management of the marine environment” commented Bruna Campos, EU Marine and Fisheries Policy officer at BirdLife Europe. “But some perverse subsidies from the former European Fisheries Fund are still present in this new deal, such as subsidies for engine replacement in fishing vessels, which could increase the fishing capacity of vessels.”

There is broad agreement that the EU has in the past been subsidising a build-up of excessive fishing capacity, estimated by the Commission for some fisheries to be two to three times above the level compatible with sustainable fishing. Scientists advise that 88% of fish stocks in the Mediterranean and 39% of those in the North-east Atlantic are overfished.

Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife Europe concluded “It is now up to national governments to design their national plans for the EMFF, the so called “Operational Programmes”, to spend the money on managing fisheries better, rather than on further encouraging bloated and destructive industrial fishing fleets. We need to start giving a future to fish, fishermen, seabirds and the rest of our marine ecosystem”.

Now that the Parliament has approved the final deal, the Fisheries Ministers need to officially adopt it in the Fisheries Council. In the meanwhile, Member States need to also finalise their EMFF Operational Programmes which are intended to be approved by the European Commission in late 2014.

ENDS

BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 49 countries, including all EU Member States, and a leader in bird conservation. Through its unique local to global approach BirdLife Europe delivers high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

Notes to the editor

[1] This final deal was agreed on January 28th following a series of negotiations between the three institutions.

Contacts:

Bruna Campos, EU Marine and Fisheries Policy Officer – Phone: + 32 (0) 2 238 5099, Mobile: +32 (0) 492 888 127
email: bruna.campos@birdlife.org

Elodie Cantaloube, Media and Communication Officer, BirdLife Europe - Phone: +32 (0)2 541 0781, Mobile: +32 (0) 478 886 762, email: elodie.cantaloube@birdlife.org