



NGO priorities for the Plenary vote on the North Sea Multi-Annual Plan (2016/0238(COD))

August 30th 2017

In September the European Parliament will vote on MEP Ulrike Rodust's report concerning the European Commission's proposal for a multi-annual Plan (MAP) for demersal fisheries in the North Sea.ⁱ If properly designed, the North Sea MAP could make a significant contribution to ending overfishing and restoring fish stocks in line with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which was significantly shaped by the European Parliament. We urge you to support and further strengthen the Report from the Fisheries Committeeⁱⁱ, which voted on the file on 12th July 2017. In particular we ask you to support the following points:

1. THE MULTI-ANNUAL PLAN MUST APPLY TO ALL DEMERSAL FISH STOCKS IN THE NORTH SEA.

The CFP's objectives apply to all harvested species. MAPs should provide the management framework to achieve these objectives in a given geographical area or for specific fisheries. The report adopted by the Fisheries Committee ensures that objectives and management targets are defined for all demersal fish stocks in the North Sea, and should be supported.

We urge you to support the Fisheries Committee report to ensure that the MAP applies to all demersal fish stocks in the North Sea.

2. THE SAME MANAGEMENT TARGETS MUST APPLY TO ALL FISH STOCKS.

The CFP's objective to restore harvested species to healthy levels applies to all fish stocks. The North Sea MAP must therefore ensure that targets to restore fish stocks above sustainable levels apply to all demersal stocks in the North Sea. The Fisheries Committee acknowledges this requirement, including for stocks for which the scientific knowledge is uncertain. Where data is limited, the precautionary approach as defined in the CFP must be applied to ensure that these stocks are also able to recover above sustainable levels, as required by the CFP.

We urge you to support the Fisheries Committee report to ensure that the same management targets apply to all North Sea demersal fish stocks.

3. FISHING MORTALITY MUST BE LIMITED TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS.

In order to restore fish stocks to healthy levels, the CFP requires that fishing mortality be limited to sustainable levels. The Fisheries Committee report includes the possibility to exceed these sustainable levels under certain circumstances. Fishing in a range that goes beyond the limit prescribed in the CFP, even under a landing obligation, will not restore stocks to healthy levels, and will lead to negative socio-economic impacts in the long term. The CFP specifies that the introduction of the landing obligation should not jeopardise the sustainability of fishing limits nor lead to an increase in fishing mortality.

We urge you to reject the Fisheries Committee's position on fishing mortality ranges, and support amendments ensuring that fishing mortality is limited to the sustainable levels stipulated by the CFP.

4. INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF RECREATIONAL FISHERIES.

The CFP recognizes that recreational fisheries can have a significant impact on fish resources, and states that they should be conducted in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the CFP. The Fisheries Committee has introduced a requirement to take account of recreational catches when setting fishing limits, if recreational catches are deemed to have a significant impact on stocks.

We urge you to support the Fisheries Committee report to ensure that recreational fisheries with significant impacts on stocks are adequately managed.

We look forward to supporting the European Parliament in adopting a robust North Sea multi-annual Plan that is fully in line with the CFP, coherent with EU environmental legislation, and which secures environmentally and economically sustainable fisheries for EU fishermen.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any additional information.

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ⁱ European Commission (2016) [Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) 676/2007 and Council Regulation \(EC\) 1342/2008. COM\(2016\) 493 final](#)

ⁱⁱ [Draft European Parliament Legislative Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) 676/2007 and Council Regulation \(EC\) 1342/2008 \(COM\(2016\)0493 – C8-0336/2016 – 2016/0238\(COD\)\)](#)