

Mr Joe Borg, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries - MARE A
European Commission
99 rue Joseph II
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23 December 2009

Re: Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

Dear Mr Borg

The National Heart Forum (NHF) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the European Commission consultation on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Introductory remarks

The National Heart Forum (NHF) is the alliance of 65 organisations working to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (and related conditions) in the United Kingdom. Member organisations represent the medical and health services, professional bodies, consumer groups and voluntary organisations. Members also include many individual experts in cardiovascular research. Government departments have observer status. The views expressed in this response are consensus-based and do not necessarily reflect the views of individual members of the National Heart Forum.

Fish has a number of benefits on health; however, global fishing policies have had a devastating effect on marine fish stocks with associated social and environmental justice implications. NHF therefore strongly agrees that the Common Fisheries Policy's (CFP) core objective should be **"to promote responsible and sustainable fisheries"**. While the NHF doesn't have the competence or mandate to comment on some of the details of the CFP reform, we recommend that a number of key principles are considered to help achieve a sustainable and responsible future CFP in Europe.

Core objectives of the CFP

The NHF wishes to express its full support of the CFP's core objective being *"to promote responsible and sustainable fisheries"*. The NHF strongly believes that both the internal and external objectives of the CFP should focus on sustainability and responsibility as they are key to both the public health as well as the environment policy agenda.

Key actions required within the EU

- Among the key internal actions, the EU should promote efforts to improve consumer awareness and understanding of sustainable fishing. The EU should encourage member states to improve the provision of clear information on fish to consumers (including labelling) on how to choose sustainable sources of fish.
- The EU should make sustainable and responsible fish mandatory in public sector catering in all the member states, as well as for international sports events such as the Olympics.

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- EU should establish a framework for good governance to guide its partnerships with developing countries. This should promote transparency, support the fishing activities of coastal communities and promote good living and working conditions.

EU's international role in promoting better global governance

- We believe that the EU could strengthen its role on the international stage in promoting better governance of the sea and fisheries by showing true leadership in its own approach as per the recommendations above.
- The EU should encourage and support the fishing industry including wholesalers to move to more sustainable species. Incentives should be developed to reward those within industry who are making positive changes to support the sustainable fish agenda
- EU should promote the improvement of global fishing controls to tackle illegal fishing
- The EU should promote policies which protect the livelihoods of those who rely on fish not only as their income but also as their only source of protein.
- The EU should provide funding for specific research to address the issues around the fish, health & sustainability agenda; this should include an examination of the changes needed to fishing and aquaculture to achieve a sustainable diet which provides the necessary health benefits of fish and/or omega 3 oils.

The NHF will support the UK Government and the Department for Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in achieving the noble aims of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy.

We hope that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

M. Mwatsama

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National Heart Forum