

Citizens' summary

Consultation - reforming EU fisheries policy

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Reforms in 2002 have made EU fisheries policy (the “common fisheries policy”) more sustainable...

- **stakeholders** now have more **influence on policy-making**.
- many **fish stocks** are now **managed through comprehensive long-term plans** (not annually, as before).

... but big problems remain:

- **plummeting fish stocks** - some 80% of all species in EU waters are currently overfished.
- there are **too many fishing vessels** for the number of fish that can safely be removed from the seas.
- most EU fishing fleets are making either **very low profits or a loss**, causing an added incentive to overfish.
- catches have fallen so much that Europe now **relies on imports for two-thirds** of its fish consumption

WHO WOULD BENEFIT AND HOW?

The consultation is part of a review of fisheries policy which aims to:

- help **natural resources** to recover
- ensure fisherman have access to **plentiful stocks**
- give the **processing industry** more competitive access to fish
- **save jobs** in the fisheries sector
- give consumers a **greater selection of high-quality fish**
- enable retailers and consumers to be confident that fish **originates from well-managed, sustainable fisheries**
- provide a **more diversified local economy** for residents of coastal regions

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- Fish (and fishermen) **move across national jurisdictions** and live in a **shared ecosystem** - individual countries can't influence this sector sufficiently on their own.
- If not coordinated, actions taken by one set of stakeholders may **undermine the livelihood of others...**
- ...so EU governments have agreed that European fisheries will be **managed jointly** by the European Commission .

WHAT EXACTLY WOULD CHANGE?

At this stage – nothing. The Green Paper is just inviting interested parties in the EU to **give their views** on how EU fisheries policy can be improved. This input will then feed into **concrete future proposals**.

However, the EU does want to consider **fundamental changes** to its fisheries policy, e.g.:

- the current system of managing fish stocks under **fixed shares** between EU countries
- **subsidies** to the fisheries sector
- agreements with **countries outside the EU**
- the way **decisions** are taken at EU level
- the responsibility of the **fisheries sector** for managing stocks.

WHEN WOULD ANY REFORMS COME INTO EFFECT?

- **1 January 2013** –following a full consultation process and approval by the European Parliament and Council.