

Common Fisheries Policy Reform 2012

Priorities for CFFA

Approved at the CFFA meeting on November 27th 2008

Context

Some elements of the Common fisheries policy, the conservation and fleet policy pillars, are subject to mandatory review by 2012 at the latest. But reforms are already underway in relation to control and IUU fishing. In a working document recently published, the European Commission recognises that it is also essential to address the external dimension of a reformed CFP. The option of the Commission is to go for a broad-based review so as to be able to undertake a holistic assessment of the Common Fisheries Policy.

CFFA position is to support such broad based review, given the continuous failure of the CFP

The Commission also proposes that the long-term ecological sustainability of fisheries should be the basis for all the proposals to be made in the context of the reform.

CFFA position: whilst we agree that long term ecological sustainability is the bottom line for the decisions – without fish, there will be no fishermen-, we demand that all proposals should be accompanied by a social and economic impact assessment, looking in particular at impacts on the small scale fishing sector.

We also demand that, based on these impact assessment, accompanying measures are proposed to mitigate any negative impact such measures may have on small scale fishing communities.

Priorities for CFFA's work in the context of the reform

1. Access to resources: protect ecosystems and guarantee fishing communities sustainable access to resources

The fishing capacity of European fishing fleets has not been sufficiently reduced, and un-discriminate overfishing by EU fleets has depleted many resources in third countries as well as in the EU waters. More than ever, competition for access to decreasing resources will be important. The issue of who has access to these decreasing resources, and how to ensure that those communities who depend on fishing for their livelihood have a fair access to these resources remains a priority for CFFA.

CFFA will focus its work on the following aspects:

- EU fleets access to resources outside the EU waters

CFFA will advocate for priority access for the small scale sector to be recognised and protected, through negotiations of Fisheries Partnership Agreements and outside (joint ventures, EPAs, etc). Where made available (*like in the case of West Africa – see West African professional organisations' draft position herewith*), CFFA will lobby for ACP artisanal fishing communities organisations positions to be fully taken into account in EU-ACP fisheries relations.

- Access rights based management

Our position on this topic is based on the NGOs position adopted in 2007. Based on that position, in September 2007, an agreement was reached with the EU industry, trade unions and NGOs on this issue, stating that *priority* should be given, for access to resources, to fishing units that fit "sustainable development" criteria to be identified with the stakeholders concerned. These criteria could include, for example, the use of selective fishing techniques, low fuel consuming techniques (one of the costs that most affect the running costs and profitability of the fishing enterprises), etc".

On the issue of transferability of fishing rights, CAPE reiterates its opposition to it, for the following reason, stated in the joint position, that given the high costs of acquiring such rights, these rights may become concentrated in the hands of a small number of large companies. This would, a priori, be incompatible with certain Community principles such as for example the free access to Community waters and the relative stability. It would also be to the detriment of small coastal fishing communities, which would find themselves at a disadvantage as regards resource access, with potential consequences for employment and the geographical redistribution of the fishing activity and the coastal population that depends on it. It is therefore necessary to ensure that checks and balances are applied in any rights based systems of fisheries management to prevent the concentration of ownership due to transferability, and the associated potentially harmful environmental, social and economic impacts, and to protect the right of fishermen to access the resources."

2. Governance: transparency, participation of small scale fishing communities and civil society in decision making processes

Transparency is the best way to tackle widespread corruption that affects EU-developing countries fisheries relations, fuels IUU fishing practices/IUU fish trade, and undermines developing countries fishing communities future.

CFFA will advocate for more transparency in the relations between EU and developing countries (for example transparency of the FPA negotiating process), transparency on investments made by the EU fishing sector in developing countries.

Participation of small scale fishing communities and civil society in decision making processes

In parallel with the reform of the CFP, the overall EU decision making process is also evolving, particularly relating to the introduction of the co-decision (Council + Parliament). Many feel that, to avoid lengthy co-decision procedures, the Commission will try to get as much as they can delegated to them (framework rather uncontroversial decisions may go through co-decision, whilst the details will be for the EC), which would then look for increased collaboration from RACs.

The new opportunities and threats this may present for improved participation of small scale fishing communities (from developing countries and EU) should be carefully weighed, and CFFA's role should be to facilitate these communities' participation.

Access to information and dissemination of information on issues arising from the CFP review to the stakeholders, in an appropriate format, is also an issue that will be addressed by CFFA.

3. Promoting Equity in ACP-EU Fish Trade

With more than 60% of the fish consumed in the EU imported, including from developing countries, the issues arising from EU-ACP fish trade are becoming increasingly important. Fish trade should not undermine food security for fishing communities and developing countries populations.

On the other hand, developing countries fishing communities should get a fair return from fish trade with the EU (issues arising from non trade barriers, rules of origin, ecolabelling, geographical indications, etc). CFFA should advocate for these issues to be taken up in the process for the reform of the CFP and in the context of the reform of the Common (Fisheries) Markets organization.

CFFA should also highlight the issues arising from the massive imports of fish products from intensive aquaculture, as regards the preservation of the coastal ecosystems and fishing communities depending on these ecosystems.