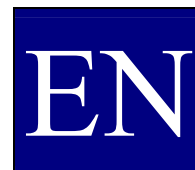




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on the Commission communication on the role of the CFP in implementing an ecosystem approach to marine management

*2892nd AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council meeting
Brussels, 29 and 30 September 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. WELCOMES the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the role of the common fisheries policy in implementing an ecosystem approach to marine management, submitted on 14 April 2008;
2. POINTS OUT that progressive implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, like the precautionary principle, is one of the objectives of the common fisheries policy, as laid down in Article 2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the common fisheries policy;
3. RECOGNISES that healthy ecosystems are essential for the sustainable exploitation of marine resources;
4. EMPHASISES that the ecosystem approach is also regarded as an important objective under a number of international agreements, including the 2000 Convention on Biological Diversity and the declaration issued by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002;

P R E S S

5. NOTES that the ecosystem approach to management of the marine environment is already being progressively implemented under the common fisheries policy, as shown in particular by:
 - the implementation of measures designed to bring fishing pressure into line with maximum sustainable yield, through recovery plans and multiannual management plans, as provided for in the Council conclusions of November 2007 on maximum sustainable yield,
 - the adoption of measures to protect vulnerable habitats,
 - the application of measures to avoid accidental catches of cetaceans,
 - support from the European Fisheries Fund for the development of fishing methods and technologies with a low impact on ecosystems;
6. SHARES the view that progressive implementation of an ecosystem approach forms part of a cross-sectoral approach, there being a need to take account of the impact of all human activities on marine ecosystems and EMPHASIZES in this regard the need for all the sectors concerned to cooperate on the evaluation and management of their cumulative impact on marine ecosystems;
7. NOTES that this cross-sectoral approach is advocated in the integrated maritime policy for the European Union proposed in the Commission's October 2007 "Blue Paper" and welcomed in the European Council conclusions of December 2007, the environmental section of which is constituted by Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of marine environmental policy (the Marine Strategy Framework Directive);
8. CONSIDERS it crucial to improve scientific knowledge of the marine environment, in order to facilitate implementation of an ecosystem approach and CALLS FOR dissemination of all available information for full implementation of this approach in the common fisheries policy;
9. ENCOURAGES the involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation of an ecosystem approach, inter alia within regional advisory councils;
10. ENCOURAGES continued implementation of the ecosystem approach, by stepping up Community efforts internationally, in particular within United Nations bodies, in regional fisheries management organisations, under bilateral fisheries agreements and regional agreements and action plans on marine and maritime issues;

11. WISHES to see the ecosystem approach continue to serve as a guide for the preparation of new initiatives under the common fisheries policy, amongst other things in reducing discards and protecting vulnerable species and habitats, especially via action plans for the protection of sharks and seabirds and for specific fishery management measures under the Natura 2000 network and
 12. CALLS ON the Commission to continue implementing and to develop the ecosystem approach to management of the marine environment."
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