

Brussels, 15 September 2010

Fisheries: Commission proposes fishing opportunities for the Baltic Sea for 2011

The European Commission has tabled its proposal on fishing possibilities for fish stocks in the Baltic Sea for 2011. Based on scientific advice, the Commission proposes increased fishing opportunities for Baltic cod, but sharp decreases for pelagic stocks (herring and sprat). The present proposal for fishing possibilities shall be discussed at the October Fisheries Council.

The European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Maria Damanaki commented: "The return of the Baltic cod is good news. The long term management plan for cod which we put in place together with strong measures against misreporting has helped us to reduce fishing pressure to sustainable levels, which has given stocks the time to replenish and allows us to again increase the TACs for both the Eastern and Western stocks.

The situation of pelagic stocks – herring and sprat – is unfortunately the opposite. Most of these stocks experience again rather weak incoming year classes. Yet, the fishing pressure has continued to be high and has in some cases even increased over the last few years. We will need to make serious reductions in fishing pressure to ensure sustainable management of these important stocks."

Cod stocks

The Commission is proposing an increase of 15 % in the EU Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for eastern Baltic cod, from 51 267 tonnes to 58 957 tonnes, and an increase of 6 % in the TAC on western Baltic cod, from 17 700 tonnes to 18 800 tonnes. The Eastern cod stock continues to benefit from strong recruitment, as well as improved discipline in the application of the multi-annual plan. For the Western stock the proposed TAC increases are in line with the provisions of the multi-annual plan, which aims to adapt fishing mortality to a level that is sustainable in the long term.

Herring

The Western herring stock has declined further and reached a new record low level. This is due to the continuous decrease of incoming year classes in the last years and very high fishing pressure. For a number of years, TACs for this stock have been set well above scientific advice and fishing pressure has even increased. In the Skagerrak the Baltic Sea herring intermingles with the North Sea herring stock, which also suffers from poor recruitment but is in a better state. It is therefore important to set the TAC in the Skagerrak at a level that will adequately protect the Baltic Sea stock, and not at a level that only reflects the abundance of the North Sea stock.

Having taken the economic situation of the sector into consideration, the Commission is proposing a reduction of 30 % in the TAC for Western herring, from 22 690 tonnes, to 15 884 tonnes. Other pelagic stocks have seen relatively low recruitment as well, requiring an adaptation of fishing pressure and thus reductions in the TAC. The Commission therefore proposes a 28 % reduction in fishing possibilities for the Central Herring stock (from 126 380 tonnes to 91 640 tonnes) and a reduction of 30% for sprat (from 379 900 tonnes to 265 969 tonnes).

Salmon

Given the decreasing survival of Baltic salmon juveniles at sea and the poor status of some of the river stocks, which are subject to mixed stock fishing within the main basin, the TAC in the main basin has been reduced by 15%. For the Gulf of Finland, no TAC reduction has been proposed as the causes of the problem in this area need to be addressed primarily by national management measures in inland waters. The issue will be addressed further with concerned Member States in the context of the future Baltic salmon management plan, which is to be tabled before the end of 2010.

The Commission's proposals follow the principles and rules outlined in the Communication " Consultation on Fishing Opportunities for 2011" in light of the latest advice from the [Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries \(STECF\)](#), together with input from stakeholders, in particular the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council.

For more information

Table in annex: overview of the Commission's proposals 2010 and 2011.

[MEMO/10/413](#)

Link to the map: cod stocks in the Baltic Sea:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/news_and_events/press_releases/map_baltic_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

Overview of TAC changes 2010-2011 (Figures in tonnes unless specified)

Stock	TAC proposal 2010	TAC 2010	TAC proposal 2011
Eastern Cod Sd 25-32	51 267	51 267 (-)	58 957 (+15%)
Western Cod Sd 22-24	17 700	17 700 (-)	18 800 (+6%)
Western Herring Sd 22-24	21 469	22 692 (+5%)	15 884 (-30%)
Bothnian Herring Sd 30-31	103 336	103 336 (-)	91 000 (-12%)
Riga Herring Sd 28.1	36 400	36 400 (-)	32 660 (-10%)
Central Herring Sd 25-29, 32	122 068	126 376 (+3%)	91 640 (-28%)
Plaice	3 041	3 041 (-)	3 041 (-)
Main Basin Salmon¹ Sd 22-31	263 273	294 246 (+10.5%)	250 109 (-15%)
Gulf of Finland Salmon¹ Sd 32	15 419	15 419 (-)	15 419 (-)
Sprat Sd 22-32	339 960	379 955 (+10.5%)	265 969 (-30%)

¹ Expressed by number of individual fish.