

Maria Damanaki

Member of the European Commission
Responsible for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

2011 Work Programme

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Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

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Madam Chair, Honourable Members,

I would like to present you our work programme for 2011.

I will begin with our CFP reform package.

Our new policy will have to ensure sustainable exploitation of marine living resources. At the same time we will be contributing to the Europe2020 Strategy by working towards robust economic performance, inclusive growth and enhanced coastal cohesion. At this point I must insist that our aim must be a fishing industry that provides better jobs and livelihoods and that operates on principles, such as low environmental impact.

As you are well aware, our aim is to develop a package for the CFP reform that takes effect on 1 January 2013. That is why I am aiming to have the upcoming CFP reform package ready in time for the Commission to adopt it towards the end of the first half of next year. The package will consist off five parts:

- 1. An overarching Commission Communication, explaining the content of our proposals, but also highlighting the Commission's ideas for all those areas which will not be part of the proposed legal instruments. I am thinking here, for example, about issues such as what we intend to do to improve the quality of scientific advice;
- 2. A Communication on the reformed international dimension of the CFP covering international organisations, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and Fisheries Partnership Agreements.
- 3. The proposal with the basic framework for the functioning of the CFP. To introduce the radical reform we have already discussed.
- 4. A proposal to reform the market policy. We will address sector organisation and the role of producer organisations, to improve the management of fisheries and aquaculture activities and the marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products. It will also revisit instruments to support stability of the market and information to consumers, through a labelling system.
- 5. A proposal on a fund to support the new Integrated Maritime Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy and aquaculture. Here we envisage integrating all the financial instruments we need, building it in support of the objectives of our fisheries policies and contributing in a broader context to the aims of the Europe2020 Strategy. I can already tell you that I won't be proposing more of the same. The new fund will be there to help deliver the policy we want.

The CFP reform package is also about simplification. We want to simplify regulation wherever possible. We hope to achieve this, chiefly by moving away from micromanagement, towards results-based management. Various financial instruments will be combined within a single fund and we will benefit from clearer legal architecture. The market policy reform, too, will see simplification boosted by means such as fewer legal acts, greater consistency with the CFP and a greater use of the subsidiarity principle.

I would like to stress here two very important principles for the negotiating process.

Firstly, if I refer to a CFP reform "package", it is precisely because we are not dealing with a hotchpotch of random pieces of legislation. These proposals are linked to each other and we will ensure that they are consistent. Our package must reflect that, and this should guide our negotiations.

Secondly, although we started the process for the reform, very early, two years ago, together we are facing very serious time constraints. That is why I would appeal to you to make the reform package the top priority, in your work planning, for next year – and, indeed, the following year.

While the CFP reform package will be the top priority for us next year, we will also continue our work on other fisheries proposals, such as the long-term plans. Plans proposed will cover a number of stocks and fisheries, including southern hake, Norway lobster, pelagic stocks and salmon in the Baltic.

We will also be following up on our international obligations and commitments.

On fishing opportunities, I intend to continue my "firm but fair" approach, whereby scientific advice will colour our proposals. This will be reflected in the next year's Communication.

Before turning to IMP let me quickly address the initiative launched last Friday by Members of the European Parliament to press for strengthening the EU ban on shark fishing. I would like to congratulate you on this excellent initiative and inform you that I fully support this call. This is why I am about to launch a public consultation within a few days from now on what we can do to finally close the loophole in our legislation and strengthen this ban. This consultation will take six weeks and we will then look at all the contributions sent to us from stakeholders, NGOs and citizens. I intend to come forward with a proposal to better protect sharks in July 2011 and in the meantime I will push for introducing quotas for a number of shark species fished in international waters.

Turning now to the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), I would like first to mention a few initiatives which I consider important in furthering the IMP portfolio. The Communication "Marine knowledge 2020" was published on the 8 that September; we need knowledge of the seas and oceans in order to achieve the goals of the EU 2020 of smart and sustainable growth in the marine and maritime economy. The Communication establishing the roadmap for the integration of Maritime Surveillance is being adopted on the 20 October; we need a ever better awareness of what's happening at sea. A Communication on Maritime Spatial planning (MSP) - which takes stock of the work, which has been done and proposes options for the future, - will be adopted in December. And I am pleased to say that the Commission has adopted the 30 September a proposal for financial resources to take us from 2011 to 2013. I hope you will agree with me that we are talking about rather modest sums here.

I believe that the European Parliament understands the need for us to pursue the IMP agenda we have already mapped out. The Commission has identified a vibrant coastal and maritime economy as a catalyst for the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe.

These deliverables prepare the ground for our further initiatives in 2011. We plan to come forward with a proposal for action on maritime spatial planning. The objective of such a proposal, would be to ensure, that all Member States are in a position to optimise the use of marine space to the benefit of both economic development and the marine environment. This would notably include proposals, for a common approach to MSP in order to facilitate cross-border cooperation. All this will be done in constructive cooperation with Member States and regions concerned.

Any further action on MSP at EU level, must be developed in full coordination with current and future policies and initiatives, within the broader field of maritime policy. Notably the Common Fisheries Policy, the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and future developments of Integrated Coastal Zone Management. We also need to fully respect the principle of subsidiarity and the existing competences and jurisdictions of the relevant authorities.

In order to determine the way forward, the Commission will, therefore, launch an impact assessment, including public consultation, to explore a range of options which will cover:

- Non-binding options, such as exchange of best practices, cross-border projects, studies and research, guidelines and/or Recommendations.
- Legislative options for setting the common approach and cross-border cooperation, on a firm legal footing, whilst leaving implementation to Member States.

The Commission also intends to continue its development of integrated sea basin strategies. We are going to issue a Communication on the Atlantic and to continue the work on the North Sea, the Mediterranean and other sea basins in close dialogue with coastal Member States and regions. Furthermore, we will come forward with the progress report on the Arctic, requested by the Council in December 2009.

I look forward to discussing these plans with you now.

Thank you.