

Key NGO priorities for the Baltic Multi-Annual Plan

March 2015

On the 31st of March the Fisheries Committee will vote on the Jarosław Wałęsa's report concerning the EU Commission's proposal for a Multi-Annual Plan (MAP) for certain stocks in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks [2014/0285 (COD)]. This MAP is the first of its kind under the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP, Regulation 1380/2013), presenting a great opportunity for MEPs to implement the ambitious CFP objectives supported by the European Parliament during the CFP reform. We urge MEPs to ensure that the objectives of the reformed CFP are not undermined in the new MAP, addressing carefully the issues raised below regarding the Commission's proposal:

1. Objectives of the plan must be in line with the objectives of the CFP

<p>Restoring and maintaining fish populations above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield is a core objective of the new CFP, which the European Parliament widely supported during the CFP reform process. The objectives of the Baltic Multi-Annual Plan must clearly reflect this requirement, therefore Article 3(a) must include wording to the effect of "achieving maximum sustainable yield exploitation rates that will restore and maintain populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield". Both the Commission's proposal as well as the Rapporteur's Report omits such language in Article 3, failing to state that populations of <u>all</u> harvested species should be restored to and maintained "above MSY" (Maximum Sustainable Yield) levels. The objective (Art. 3) of the Baltic MAP must therefore be amended to be in line with the CFP objectives (Art 2.2) in order to be certain that they will be achieved.</p>	<p>Support: AM 32, AM 67, AM 69, AM 70, AM 71, AM 73, AM 75, AM 76, AM 77, AM 80, AM 81</p>
<p>Integrating the ecosystem based approach is fundamental to the objectives of the CFP (Article 2.3). It is therefore important that the plan includes measures to minimise the impact of fisheries on the wider marine environment. Achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) of EU seas by 2020 as required under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is also an objective of the CFP (Art. 2.5). Therefore, the Baltic Multi-Annual Plan must include wording under Article 3 which reflects the need to protect the wider marine environment, to contribute to achieving Good Environmental Status and to integrate the ecosystem based approach to fisheries management.</p>	<p>Support: AM 87, AM 88, AM 89, AM 90, AM 154</p>

2. Sustainable fishing exploitation rates

<p>The Commission requested that ICES provides values <u>around</u> F_{MSY} which were subsequently integrated into the Commission's proposal in Article 4 of the Baltic MAP. The proposed ranges were calculated as the F_{MSY} value with a ten per cent margin on either side. That means fifty per cent of the proposed ranges for fishing mortality rates are actually above the MSY exploitation rate (F_{MSY}). This is not in line with the new CFP, which states that the maximum sustainable fishing rate shall be achieved by 2015 where possible and, on a progressive, incremental basis at the latest by 2020 for all stocks. Fishing mortality rates below the F_{MSY} upper limit provide at least a chance to</p>	<p>Support: AM 37, AM 91, AM 95</p>
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restore and maintain fish stocks above levels capable of producing the maximum sustainable yield. This is in line with ICES advice on fishing limits as well as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, Annex II. Article 4 of the Baltic MAP must therefore be amended to set mortality rates below the F_{MSY} upper limit in order to meet the objectives of the CFP and the UN Fish Stock agreement.	
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3. Conservation reference points

In the Commission's proposal (Article 5), management measures would only be taken if biomass levels fall below a critical level of B_{PA} , when stocks are at a risk of collapsing. The proposal thus currently lacks the ambition of the agreed CFP (Article 2.2) to restore and maintain stocks above biomass levels capable of producing MSY. Therefore Art. 5 of the Baltic MAP should be amended to ensure measures shall be taken as soon as stocks fall below biomass levels capable of producing MSY (B_{MSY} levels). Also within Article 14 of the Baltic MAP regarding the framework of the evaluation of the plan, support should be given to amendments which request the Commission to report on progress towards restoring and maintaining fish stocks above levels capable of producing the MSY.	Support: AM 39, AM 102, AM 103, <u>AM 105</u> , AM 106, AM 107, <u>AM 108</u> , AM 109, <u>AM 111</u> , <u>AM 186</u>
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4. Minimising impact of fisheries to the wider environment

The Baltic MAP must deliver on the CFP objective of Art 2.3 to ensure that the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised and to avoid degradation of the marine environment. This includes minimising the impact on seabirds, marine mammals and the integrity of the seabed. Therefore conservation measures and technical measures should integrate the ecosystem based approach to fisheries management.	Support: AM 27, AM 62, AM 112, AM 113, AM 118, AM 156, AM 157, AM 158, AM 187
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Furthermore, we support a full first plenary reading following the Fisheries Committee vote on this file. This would allow for a mandate from the full European Parliament as is a normal procedure for a legislative file. In addition, a plenary majority vote would strengthen the Parliament's voice in its negotiation with the Council on this report. We would therefore recommend against a vote that grants the Rapporteur a mandate for early trilogue negotiations.

We look forward to supporting you throughout the negotiations of the Baltic MAP and please contact us for any additional information.

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