



European Commission

No 42 March 2009



FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN EUROPE



An action plan to protect sharks Sharks in danger

 **Governance:**
assessing the advisory councils

 **Maritime affairs:**
planning use of the seas

Shows and exhibitions

Workshop on incidental catches of cetaceans, Brussels (Belgium), 24-25 March 2009

The European Commission is bringing together to this workshop Member States, Regional Advisory Councils, scientists, relevant Commission services and other stakeholders, to discuss the actions taken by Member States about measures concerning incidental catches of cetaceans (Regulation 812/2004). The aim of the workshop is to promote an exchange of information on main difficulties and on best practices in order to improve the implementation of this piece of legislation.

> For more information:

E-mail: fisheries-magazine@ec.europa.eu

Website: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/index_en.htm

GFCM, annual meeting, Tunis (Tunisia), 23-27 March 2009

Once a year, the Mediterranean fishing states that belong to this regional fisheries organisation (RFO) meet to lay down management rules for the stocks exploited in this zone, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee.

> For more information:

Tel: +39 0657 05 64 41

E-mail: alain.bonzon@fao.org / Website: www.gfcm.org

Sinaval-Eurofishing, Bilbao (Spain), 21-24 April 2009

This event draws representatives of the leading enterprises and specialists in shipbuilding, port services and fisheries, with the accent on new technologies.

> For more information:

Tel: +34 94 40 40 000

E-mail: bec@bec.eu / Website: www.bilbaoexhibitioncentre.com

European Seafood Exposition, Brussels (Belgium), 28-30 April 2009

This annual fair, a major event for European processors and traders in fishery and aquaculture products, is Europe's biggest commercial gathering. As it does every year, the European Commission will host an information stand.

> For more information:

Tel: +1 207 842 55 04

E-mail: food@divcom.com / Website: www.euroseafood.com

2 Calendar

3 Editorial

4-7 Fact File An action plan to protect sharks

8-9 In the news Redefining fisheries governance

10-11 A roadmap for maritime spatial planning

12 In brief

Note to readers

We welcome your comments or suggestions at the following address: European Commission – Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries – Information, communication, inter-institutional relations, evaluation and programming Unit – Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200 – B-1049 Brussels or by fax to: (+ 32) 2 299 30 40 with reference to *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe*.

E-mail: fisheries-magazine@ec.europa.eu

For further information on maritime affairs and fisheries, please consult the following sites:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/borg/index_en.htm

<http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries>

<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs>

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Shaping the future of our seas

2008 saw many major advances towards more sustainable fisheries under the common fisheries policy. The Commission's proposal for a new and more effective system of control and enforcement, the great effort made in collaboration with the Community Fisheries Control Agency to tackle overfishing on bluefin tuna, the decisions taken against discards, the adoption of the regulation to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the package of measures to address the underlying causes of the economic crisis in the sector triggered by soaring fuel prices – all these showed that the Commission is serious about creating a genuinely sustainable industry, and one where all actors can operate on a level playing field.

In 2009, we will be focusing on a range of new challenges. The future development of European aquaculture and the overhaul of the Common Organisation of the Market in fisheries products will figure high up our agenda. We will also be launching an action plan to ensure greater protection for sharks, those highly vulnerable members of the marine food chain, and taking our first concrete steps towards the elimination of discarding in EU waters.

Yet however positive such actions are, they can only achieve so much in isolation. The results of our efforts depend not only on our intentions, but also on the context in which we operate. And one thing has become clear to me over the course of my mandate as Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries: if we want to make the common fisheries policy work the way it should, then we urgently need to address the challenges it poses on a deeper, more structural level.

The Commission is already preparing the next review of the common fisheries policy which should be delivered by 2012. I believe we need to look critically at the way the CFP policy framework as a whole operates. European citizens have a right to expect more from all the players who together are responsible for nurturing our marine resources. Our fisheries could be more productive, and more sustainable. But to achieve this, we will need to ensure that the interests of all the parties involved – stakeholders and Member States, as well as EU institutions – are aligned with the long-term sustainability of our seas and oceans.

So I was delighted when, last September, the Fisheries Ministers welcomed the Commission's suggestion to launch immediately the mid-term review of the common fisheries policy. By acting now, we will give ourselves time to produce a full diagnosis of what needs to change, and to involve stakeholders fully in the process. The Commission plans to publish a Green Paper to launch the process of public consultation in spring 2009. I hope that all those concerned by the fate of our fisheries and our seas – and that includes you readers – will take this opportunity to play an active role in shaping their future.

Joe Borg,
*European Commissioner
for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries*



An action plan to protect sharks



© Biosphoto

Small-scale coastal fishing represents Europe's biggest production of cartilaginous fish, with catches of more than 40 000 tonnes of rays and small coastal-water sharks, especially spurdog. In the 1960s, spurdog was the principal target of shark fishing in Europe.



Sharks, rays, and chimaeras (chondrichthyans or cartilaginous fish, grouped under the generic term 'sharks') are ancient species that play a vital role in maintaining the balance of marine ecosystems. To safeguard these fragile populations, the European Commission has just adopted a communication that prepares the ground for a plan of action for the conservation of these species and management of the fisheries that catch them.

Sharks have a bad reputation: *Jaws*, the series of films whose villain is a shark that attacks swimmers, reflected and perhaps magnified this widespread attitude. Yet the sharks that represent a real danger for man make up only a small minority of the more than 450 known species. More important is the essential role sharks play in the balance of ecosystems: their disappearance leads to the proliferation of their prey and, by domino effect, endangers inferior species.

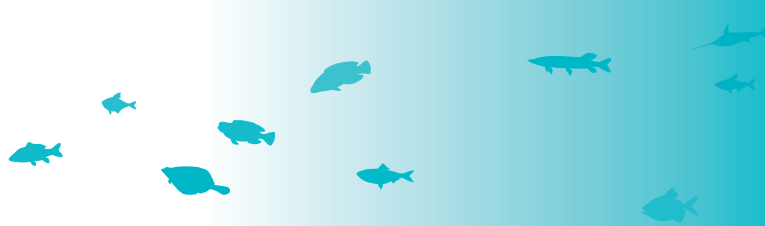
Increasingly intense pressure

Sharks have come under increasingly intense fishing pressure since the mid-1980s. In a global context of depletion of commercial stocks, sharks represent a sought-after alternative resource, principally in Asian markets, but in Europe as well. Sharks also have the particularity of being exploited not only for their meat, but also for their fins, skin, cartilage, etc. From 1984 to 2004, global shark catches grew from 600 000 to more than 810 000 tonnes⁽¹⁾.

Shark populations are fragile as a rule because of certain characteristics of their life cycle: low fertility rate, slow growth and late maturity. Their capacity to restore their numbers in case of overfishing is therefore limited. As a result, these ancient species, with their key role in maintaining balance in marine ecosystems, are sometimes endangered.

Several species caught by the EU fleet in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean are on the Red List drawn up by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Some are 'critically endangered' (spurdog, porbeagle shark, skate, several species of angel shark and ray) and others are 'endangered' (basking shark, great hammerhead shark) or 'vulnerable' (great white shark, gulper shark, leaf-scale gulper shark). According to the IUCN, the Mediterranean holds the record in the number of cartilaginous fish species in danger of extinction. In 2007, 42% of the species of sharks and rays living in the Mediterranean were endangered.

(1) All the figures contained in this Fact File are taken from the proposal for a *European Community Action Plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks* (COM(2009) 40).



Action under way

The European Union has already taken action to protect sharks, especially the most endangered species. Generally speaking, measures under the common fisheries policy (CFP) to reduce fishing effort, by-catches, discards and illegal fisheries have already had an impact on the protection of sharks. The ban on the use of drifting gillnets in all Community and international waters, and on bottom-set gillnets at depths of over 200 m in the NE Atlantic, the regulation of minimum mesh size in terms of target species, size restrictions on fishing gears and other measures have also helped reduce by-catches of sharks.

Total allowable catches (TACs) are set for a few stocks of deep-water sharks as well as for spurdogs and skates in certain fishing zones. Fishing is prohibited for white sharks, basking sharks and, in certain regions, angel sharks and a few species of rays, due to the state of these stocks.

A Council regulation⁽²⁾ prohibits and prevents the practice of 'finning', which consists of removing a shark's fins and discarding the remainder of the animal at sea.

Lastly, a number of measures have also been implemented to regulate international trade in sharks and shark products, all under the auspices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

These measures nevertheless appear to be clearly inadequate to put declining stocks back on the path to recovery. That is why the Commission has adopted a communication on a specific plan of action⁽³⁾. Its final drafting was preceded by a wide consultation of stakeholders, who concluded on the whole that the recommended measures are necessary. The EU Council and the European Parliament still have to vote on the communication.

Acting locally and globally

From a strategic perspective, all the measures contained in the EU Action Plan have both internal and external dimensions since several shark species are present in international waters and are highly migratory species. Thus the regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) concerned will be primarily responsible for management of fisheries that target these species. These organisations will have to determine the appropriate measures for the waters under their responsibility. It is consequently important to support the work of the RFMOs, to strengthen measures already being implemented and to cooperate on the creation of new RFMOs in areas not yet covered. Coherence between internal and external policies is a cross-cutting objective for all the actions to be implemented.

The European action plan is based on the following three objectives:

1. deepen knowledge both on shark fisheries and on shark species and their role in the ecosystem;
2. ensure that directed fisheries for shark are sustainable and that by-catches of sharks in other fisheries are properly regulated;
3. encourage a coherent approach between the internal and external European Community (EC) policies for sharks.

Five main actions have been agreed to meet these objectives.

More reliable data

The first action aims to **improve data collection** to make available reliable and detailed data on catches and landings of different species, as well as marketing data. Monitoring will be made more effective at landing sites and in processing and marketing industries. Observers may board the vessels concerned. Measures will also be taken to ensure that landings and trade in shark fins, meat and oil are registered separately by product and, as far as possible, by species.

The second action aims to **monitor and evaluate** shark stocks more effectively and **develop harvesting strategies** that ensure long-term ecological and economic sustainability. This will include optimisation of EC and RFMO research programmes and development of expertise in the Member States.

The third action consists of **developing and improving consultation of stakeholders**, raising awareness and involving the players concerned and the public at large in the conservation of these species. Stakeholder awareness and consultation programmes will be set up at the level of the Regional Advisory Councils. Educational programmes aimed specifically at informing fisheries operators and the public about shark, ray conservation programmes will be implemented at Member State level.



The FAO International Plan of Action

The European plan is in keeping with the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-SHARKS), adopted in 1999 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The international plan aims to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their sustainable use at global level.

(2) (EC) No 1185/2003.
(3) COM(2009) 40.

Adapting catches to available resources

The plan's fourth action seeks to **adapt catches and fishing effort to available resources** by focusing special attention on fisheries identified as 'high priority' and on vulnerable stocks or those in danger of extinction. Measures under this action will aim to limit or even prohibit fishing activities for areas that are considered sensitive, species in danger of extinction, periods of resource vulnerability (spawning and immature fish) and high-risk fisheries. Total allowable catches (TACs) by species will be introduced. Discards will be banned (with certain exceptions) and measures will be taken to enhance size and species selectivity. Programmes to reduce by-catches will be set up for vulnerable and endangered species.

Lastly, under the plan's fifth action, measures will be taken to **minimize waste and discards from shark catches**. Sharks whose fins have been removed, for example, will have to be retained on board, landed and used. Control measures will also be strengthened. To prove that no carcasses have been discarded, the Commission may propose that the weight of fins landed may not exceed 5% of the gutted and beheaded carcass weight, as opposed to the present rule of 5% of live weight. However, the Member States submitting requests on the basis of a relevant data collection programme would be allowed to use the standard of 5% of live weight.

By ensuring more sustainable management of sharks, the European Union aims to contribute to protection of the balance of marine ecosystems, which is crucial to developing sustainable fisheries. It also wishes to enable operators who exploit resources legally and responsibly to maintain their profitability and thus ensure their long-term survival.



The different shark species

The species concerned by the action plan are in fact all cartilaginous fish (or chondrichthyans), i.e. sharks, rays, and chimaeras.

The different species can be divided into three groups:

- rays and small shallow-water sharks caught in coastal fishing;
- large pelagic sharks exploited in the three main oceans by large high-seas fleets;
- deep-sea sharks caught by deep-water fishing in the Northeast Atlantic.

The principal shark fisheries of the Community fleet

North Atlantic

The North Atlantic holds a number of shark fisheries, situated in EU and third-country waters (Norway, Faeroe Islands, etc.) and in international waters governed by different regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs). EU vessels take some 56 000 tonnes of sharks in this region (NW and NE Atlantic, including the Mediterranean). These are mainly rays and small demersal sharks, with very few large pelagic sharks.

Central and South Atlantic

In the Central Atlantic, sharks are often taken as by-catches by vessels fishing for tuna. Some 31 000 tonnes a year are caught, consisting mainly of blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) and short-finned makos (*Isurus oxyrinchus*).

Indian Ocean

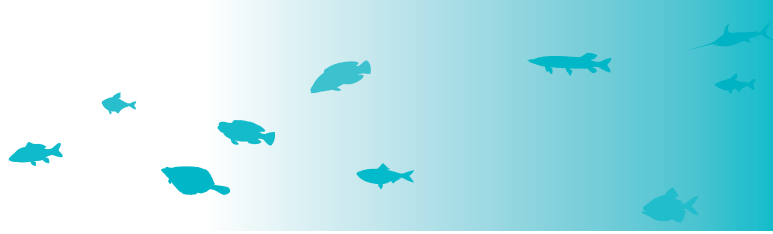
Shark catches in this ocean amount to 6 100 tonnes a year and consist mostly of blue sharks. The other species caught, the short-finned mako, makes up around 9% of shark catches in this zone.

Pacific Ocean

Between 2001 and 2005 landings of sharks in the Pacific rose constantly, from around 400 to 6 100 tonnes. Blue sharks and short-finned makos are the pelagic shark species found most often in catches and in landings by surface longliners fishing these seas.



Cartilaginous fish are fragile because of their life-cycle characteristics of low fertility, slow growth and late maturity. Their capacity to build their population back up in case of overfishing is therefore limited. Some species, such as angel shark, are currently endangered.



□ A fate that is not inevitable



Professor Antonio di Natale is a marine biologist. He is consulted by several countries that wish to develop scientific fisheries management, such as Madagascar. His many visits there served as inspiration for one of the tanks at the Genoa Aquarium, where Professor di Natale is the scientific adviser. He is also a specialist in fishing for large pelagic species and is well versed in the impact this fishery has on sharks. *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe* met him to get an expert opinion.

Professor di Natale is waiting for us in front of one of the biggest tanks at the Genoa Aquarium. Behind him, a sandbar shark and a sand shark, two endangered Mediterranean species, seem to be on guard. He has served as the scientific adviser at this institution since its creation in 1997, a role he is fond of because it calls for building bridges between scientists and the general public, and the key to this is a tremendous effort to make science accessible to the widest audience.

'Il professore', as he is called here, is first and foremost a specialist in fishing for large pelagic species. This expertise has earned him a seat in the Scientific Committee of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the regional fisheries management organisation with responsibility for tunas and swordfishes in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent waters. He is also Vice-Chairman of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), composed of around 30 scientific experts and charged with assisting the European Commission with development of the common fisheries policy.

On this mid-November day, he meets us in Genoa after spending a week in Brussels for the STECF, where he reviewed the proposal for the Action Plan for Sharks. Walking along the glass walls of the *Acquario*, he stops in front of a tank that recreates a tropical ecosystem. Professor di Natale proudly points out several species of warm-water sharks, such as guitarfishes and leopard sharks. *'You know'*, he explains, *'shark catches in European fisheries are not limited to species living in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean. There are fishing vessels from the European Union all around the world and they all catch sharks, rays, and eagle rays. The guitarfish we see here is a deep-water shark found regularly in demersal trawls that target cephalopods in West African waters.'*

All around the world

He then discusses the longline fishing that targets tunas and swordfishes, in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean of course, but also the surface longliners flying the flag of European Union Member States in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Professor di Natale is sceptical of official catch figures, which seem to minimize the impact of these distant fisheries on large pelagic sharks. He is categorical: these populations of sharks are the most affected by fishing activity and in spite of the ban on finning, many carcasses are still being discarded at sea and consequently go unreported.

'But it's not hard to let the fish go', he adds, making a cutting gesture with his hand. *'All it takes is to cut the line, without bringing the shark on board. Generally, the hook is simply attached to the skin on the shark's mouth'*, he explains, showing his lower lip. *'The shark is not injured and its life is not in danger. This practice would also prevent difficult handling for fishermen. If you could see how a large pelagic shark fights on the deck, you would understand what I mean...'*

For Antonio di Natale, scientific knowledge on these species makes it possible to identify their spawning grounds, their reproduction and gestation periods and more. Based on this information the fishing effort concerned can be restricted in certain areas and at certain times of the year. So shark catches, even as by-catches, are not inevitable...



Redefining fisheries governance

The Commission is assessing the functioning of the sector's two consultation bodies: the Regional Advisory Councils and the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture. The review aims to improve their functioning in the light of experience and to explore scenarios for the future of these institutions in the context of the upcoming reform of the common fisheries policy.



In just four years, the RACs have become key players in the Common Fisheries Policy. They provide the Commission and the Member States with useful information on local realities.

At the time the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) were created in 2004, it was agreed that the functioning of these bodies would be reviewed after a few years of actual experience. The process of setting up the seven RACs took from November 2004 (North Sea RAC) to September 2008 (Mediterranean RAC). So the time has come for the Commission to evaluate this launch and implementation phase.

The review is the subject of a communication entitled '*Review of the functioning of the Regional Advisory Councils*'⁽¹⁾. The evaluation is positive on the whole. In four years, the RACs have become important actors in the common fisheries policy (CFP). The main objective for which they were created has been achieved, and the RACs have provided the Commission and Member States with useful information on local realities.

However, the Commission also enumerates aspects that need improvement and proposes solutions. For example, although the Commission recognises the quality of the RACs' contributions and often takes them into consideration, it does not always follow up on their advice, which is nevertheless adopted unanimously by RAC members. The Commission has repeatedly explained that it cannot follow RAC recommendations where they depart significantly from scientific advice or run counter to international obligations or Community long-term management plans. The unanimous opinion of a Regional Advisory Council cannot be taken into consideration if it is incompatible with CFP objectives. The same principle also holds for advice from the ACFA.

To prevent this type of misunderstanding, the Commission has committed itself to define clearly its evaluation criteria and to organise annual meetings with the RACs to review follow-up of their advice.

The report also analyses how to improve the quality of RAC advice, particularly by giving these bodies better access to available scientific findings. In this context the Commission has concluded a new memorandum of understanding with the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to strengthen cooperation between RACs and this scientific institution. Cooperation will involve ICES experts visiting the RACs concerned to present their recommendations. Such cooperation may also be extended to include economic and social experts.

The review also highlights certain structural improvements that are needed. For example, two thirds of the seats in the General Assembly and the Executive Committee must be held by representatives of the fisheries sector and one third by representatives of other interest groups (such as environmental NGOs, consumer associations, etc.). This ratio is difficult to maintain, however. For example, if a NGO withdraws, two fisheries organisations should in theory be expelled to maintain the ratio. The current composition rule should therefore be adapted, while ensuring that the rights of all groups are safeguarded, in particular when designating representatives to the Executive Committee.

(1) Communication from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament – Review of the functioning of the Regional Advisory Councils, COM(2008) 364 final.



RACs at a glance

The Regional Advisory Councils were set up under the last CFP reform as a way to involve the sector more closely in resource management. They bring together regional representatives of the catch and aquaculture sectors, processors, traders, recreational and sport fishermen, as well as environmental organisations, consumer associations and fishermen's wives. They enable the sector and other players to provide advice to the Commission and the Member States, on the one hand, while encouraging dialogue and consultation among stakeholders on the other.

Of the seven RACs that have been set up, five are based on a specific region of Community waters: the North Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean, Northwestern waters and Southwestern waters. The other two deal with a particular type of fisheries: the Pelagic RAC and the Distant Water Fisheries RAC.

In practice, the RACs work through an Executive Committee of 24 members. Two thirds of its members represent the catch sector and one third other interests. The work of this Committee is to respond to the Commission's requests for advice and consultations and to issue advice spontaneously to draw the Commission's attention to a regional problem.

Certain interest groups still have inadequate representation in the RACs (processors, consumers, etc.). The Commission therefore plans to promote the image and role of RACs to encourage other stakeholders to participate.

The ACFA at a crossroads

In parallel with this review of the functioning of RACs, the Commission has also evaluated the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA) with a view to improving its functioning or even redefining this body in the framework of the upcoming CFP reform (2).

Generally speaking, the Committee functions well and meets its objectives. *'The ACFA has been a driving force behind establishment of a dialogue both at European level and between different stakeholders, in particular between commercial and non-commercial interests.'*

The ACFA has long since demonstrated its usefulness, but the report states that developments in the general fisheries environment should prompt a structural evolution of the

Committee. For example, there may be a need to redefine the nature of issues to be addressed by the ACFA and those to be forwarded to the RACs so as to prevent duplication of efforts between these institutions.

Many questions are also raised on how to orientate this evolution in the context of the future CFP reform. The report outlines four scenarios, all of which are open for the moment: first, replace the ACFA with a RAC coordinating committee; second, focus on main issues in the CFP; third, expand the Committee to make it a dialogue structure for the fisheries sector with other users of the marine space; fourth, transform the Committee in the framework of the integrated maritime policy into a maritime advisory council.

These two reviews have three objectives. For the short term, the idea is to improve the functioning of these institutions by making small changes that are easy to implement without revising the legislative texts. For the medium term, and with the agreement of the Council and European Parliament, amendments to the decision creating the RACs can be considered. By the same token, the Commission's decision creating the ACFA could be amended. For the longer term, the role of these bodies should be redefined in the context of the CFP reform and the organisation of an integrated maritime policy.

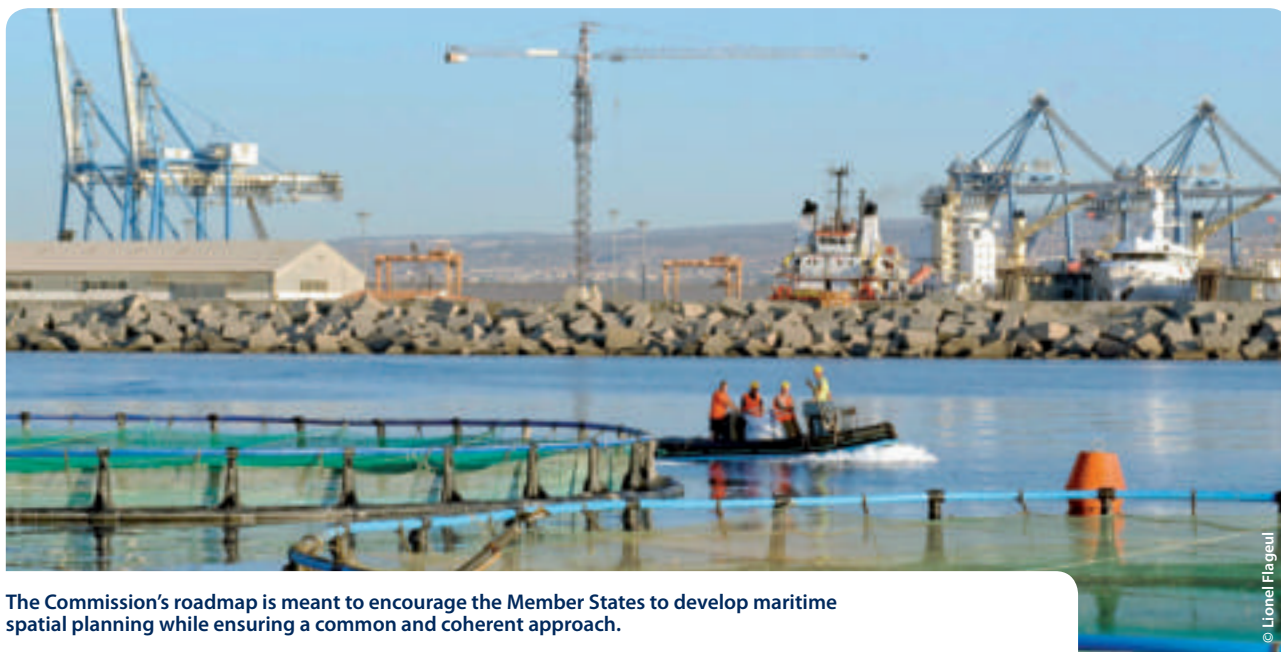
The ACFA at a glance

The Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture was the first governing body to translate into action the Commission's commitment to work in close cooperation with the sector. It was created in the early 1970s, and was initially composed solely of representatives of the fisheries sector. In 1999, it was expanded to other interest groups, such as aquaculture, scientific institutions and non-governmental organisations. It has 21 members, generally from the European federations of the sector's various professions (vessel owners, fishermen, cooperatives, unions, fish farmers, processors, NGO groupings, etc.). The Committee is consulted by the Commission on everything related to the CFP and can issue own-initiative opinions. It differs from the RACs in two main respects: on the one hand, its geographical scope covers the entire European Union, and on the other its more general objectives allow it to work on matters other than fisheries, such as aquaculture, economic organisation, markets, product marketing, social issues and so on.

(2) *Intermediate evaluation of the Advisory Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture – Final report*, August 2008, available on the DG MARE site (<http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries>).

A roadmap for maritime spatial planning

Maritime spatial planning (MSP), by providing a stable and foreseeable framework for the management of maritime regions, underpins an integrated maritime policy. It is a tool for the economic development of maritime activities and effective protection of the marine environment. Planning allows arbitration in the case of conflicts resulting from increasingly intense use of the sea. In this framework, the European Commission proposed last November a roadmap to encourage the Member States to develop maritime spatial planning and to contribute to the European coherence of this initiative.



The Commission's roadmap is meant to encourage the Member States to develop maritime spatial planning while ensuring a common and coherent approach.

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The aim of the European integrated maritime policy is the sustainable exploitation of the tremendous development potential of oceans. To achieve this aim, all the sectorial policies that affect maritime spaces (fisheries, transport, energy, environment, tourism, etc.) must work together in a coordinated way.

The introduction of maritime spatial planning instruments, similar to terrestrial spatial planning, constitutes a key tool of the integrated maritime policy. Without planning, a fish farm can be harmful to the development of tourism, a tourist zone can hinder the development of a port, the extension of a port can be detrimental to a nature zone and so on. Before developing a wind farm in a given area, it is vital to ensure that it will not lie on a maritime route, that it will not disrupt fish spawning grounds or that it will not force migratory birds off one of their usual resting grounds. Conflicts like these can be avoided if the use of maritime space conforms to a pre-existing framework that takes account of the needs of all the sectors that must exist side by side in the maritime space.

The Member States are responsible for setting up a planning system for their maritime space, i.e. their coasts, territorial waters⁽¹⁾ and exclusive economic zones⁽²⁾ (EEZ). Only a few Member States have undertaken this initiative. Such planning nevertheless holds the advantage of establishing a stable development framework that offers investors legal certainty and foreseeability in terms of the development of maritime zones. It is along these lines that maritime spatial planning is an instrument crucial to the development of the tremendous economic potential of Europe's maritime sectors.

Coherence

The roadmap⁽³⁾ proposed by the Commission introduces common principles for such planning and encourages collaboration between States to ensure a more coherent approach. It is based on 10 key principles (see box) which the Commission would like to see applied by all the players charged with implementing such plans, the Member States of course, but also regional maritime conventions such as those for the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Seas and the Northeast Atlantic.

(1) The 6 or 12 mile marine zone over which the coastal State has full territorial powers.

(2) The zone of no more than 200 miles in which the coastal State alone is empowered to organise the exploitation of natural resources.

(3) COM(2008) 791 of 25.11.2008.



Adoption of the roadmap ushers in a series of meetings and consultations for all the players concerned. A large general conference kicked off a series of thematic workshops to be held in 2009. In the wake of these working sessions, the Commission will publish a follow-up document towards the end of 2009.

Thanks to coherent and effective spatial planning, the integrated maritime policy will have a key instrument to ensure harmonious development of the different activities related to the maritime space, in the interests of economic development and employment, the living conditions of inhabitants of coastal areas and the marine environment.

The 10 principles

1. Using maritime spatial planning according to area and type of activity

A maritime spatial planning programme should be based on the type of existing or planned activities. It may not need to cover a whole area, may be based on a stricter or more flexible approach depending on the density of use of the area concerned, and must operate within the three dimensions of the use of maritime space (on the surface, in the water and on the sea bed).

2. Defining objectives to guide maritime spatial planning

Detailed objectives need to be set for the development of MSP. Planning must manage activities in progress and guide future development in an area.

3. Developing maritime spatial planning in a transparent manner

Transparency is needed with regard to both the general public and the parties concerned. Transparency must be the rule for shaping MSP as well as for the plan itself, which must be understandable to all to be accepted by all.

4. Stakeholder participation

Maritime spatial planning must be developed with the **participation** of the players concerned, both to ensure the collaboration of knowledgeable stakeholders and promote acceptance of and support for the plan's implementation.

5. Coordination within Member States – simplifying decision-making

Maritime spatial planning simplifies decision-making and speeds up licensing and permit procedures, to the benefit of maritime users and maritime investment alike. Such simplification can be enhanced through the establishment of a coordinating administrative body.

6. Ensuring the legal effect of national maritime spatial planning

MSP will only be effective if it is legally binding, in the same way that terrestrial spatial planning establishes a legally binding framework for the management of land.

7. Cross-border cooperation and consultation

Coherence of plans across ecosystems cannot be guaranteed without cross-border cooperation. Such cooperation will lead to the development of common standards and processes and raise the overall quality of maritime spatial planning. Organisations such as HELCOM have already started this work.

8. Incorporating monitoring and evaluation in the planning process

The plan must be flexible enough to adapt to the constant change that is characteristic of the marine environment. A **monitoring and evaluation mechanism** should be built into maritime spatial planning to take such changes on board.

9. Achieving coherence between terrestrial and maritime spatial planning

It is important to ensure coherence between maritime spatial planning and terrestrial planning of coastal zones, which serve as a 'hinge' between maritime and terrestrial development, and cooperation between the respective administrative services.

10. A strong data and knowledge base

Maritime spatial planning has to be based on sound information and scientific knowledge. Planning needs to evolve with knowledge (adaptive management). The Commission has put in place a number of scientific and data gathering tools that will assist maritime spatial planning in this process (the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODNET), a database for maritime socio-economic statistics, the European Atlas of the Seas and the Kopernikus Global Monitoring for Environment and Security).

In brief

ICCAT cuts fishing opportunities for bluefin tuna

The ICCAT (1) meeting, held in Marrakesh last November, focused on the adoption of measures for the management of bluefin tuna. The recovery plan for **bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean**, adopted in 2006, was substantially strengthened. In particular, the fishing season for seining vessels is reduced to two months (15 April to 15 June), TACs are cut from 28 500 tonnes in 2008 to 22 000 tonnes in 2009 and 19 950 tonnes in 2010, and fishing capacity reduction plans and fattening plans are put in place. A special meeting of the ICCAT Compliance Committee will be held in March 2009 to review compliance with obligations and adopt sanctions if necessary. The recovery plan for **bluefin tuna in the Western Atlantic** was also strengthened.

Other conservation measures were adopted on a proposal from the European Union. For **swordfish in the Mediterranean**, the ICCAT followed scientific advice, agreeing a major reduction in catches of immature fish (50% to 70% of specimens caught) and extending the closing period from one month to two (1 October to 30 November). For **porbeagle shark** (*Lamna nasus*), a joint ICCAT and ICES (2) scientific session will meet from 29 June to 3 July 2009 to assess North Atlantic stocks and to adopt management measures without delay. Lastly, **big-eye threshers** (*Alopias superciliosus*) must from now on be released live by fishing vessels.

TACs and quotas 2009: Baltic and Black Seas and deep-water species

Fishing opportunities in 2009 for the Black and Baltic Seas were adopted last autumn by the Council of Ministers, on proposals from the Commission.

For **Baltic Sea** stocks, the Commission had proposed a reduction in TACs for most stocks, in accordance with scientific advice, particularly for Western cod (which is the subject of a recovery plan) and Western herring. In the latter case, TACs higher than the levels recommended by scientists have caused a decline in recruitment since 2003 and recruitment has now reached the

lowest level ever registered. For Western cod, the TAC was reduced by 15% (16 337 tonnes), while Eastern cod, which has good recruitment and has improved under the recovery plan, will be open to higher catch levels, with a 15% increase in TACs (44 580 tonnes). For Western herring, the Council partially followed the Commission's proposal: it adopted a 39% reduction in TACs (as opposed to the 67% level proposed by the Commission) but agreed to establish a multiannual plan for this stock and for all Baltic pelagic stocks.

For the **Black Sea**, two species are subject to TACs: sprat and turbot. For sprat, TACs will be reduced by 15% (12 750 tonnes), in accordance with the Commission's proposal. TACs for turbot remain unchanged at 100 tonnes divided equally between Bulgaria and Romania, with a revision clause in the light of new scientific advice. This TAC is matched with a spring closing of the fishery (15 April – 15 June) and two technical measures: minimum mesh size of 400 mm (to be phased in) and minimum landing size of 45 cm.

For **deep-water species**, TACs are set every two years. For 2009 and 2010, the Commission's proposals corresponded to scientific advice, which was particularly alarming. The Commission endorsed the commitment made by the European Union in 2006 to reduce the TACs of certain stocks to zero within four years. Catches of deep-water sharks will therefore be banned in 2010, apart from by-catches limited to 10%. TACs for large-eye brems were cut by 50% for 2009 and will be set at zero in 2010.

A brochure on Mediterranean and Black Sea species

The European Commission published in February 2009 an informative brochure on the 54 most common species of fish, crustaceans and molluscs fished or farmed in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. An illustrated fact sheet on each species provides information about its origin, whether or not it is farmed, the fishing gears used for catches and the minimum legal catch size. The name of each species is translated into the 23 official languages of the European Union, in addition to the scientific name in Latin.

(1) International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

(2) The International Council for Exploration of the Sea is the international research centre for Northeast Atlantic fisheries.

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