

News release

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Seafish welcomes focus on sustainability in CFP reform

Seafish, the authority on seafood, welcomes the key principles set out by the European Commission in today's proposals to reform the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) but hopes the seafood industry will be significantly involved in developing how these goals are to be met.

Seafish Operations Director, Dr Jon Harman, says the reform of the CFP creates an opportunity for a "significant step towards long-term fisheries sustainability - as long as the details of the legislation allow for flexibility within their provisions".

Dr Harman continued: "We welcome today's proposals that will hopefully result in the CFP delivering better outcomes on its basic commitments to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

"In particular, we are pleased to see a move to a decentralised approach to fisheries management and rule simplification, coupled with a longer-term ecosystem approach to fisheries management. This will give more control and responsibility back to individual fisheries.

"We embrace the focus on discards, as a serious issue affecting sustainability and profitability, but we would like more clarification on the logistics of how a complete ban will be achieved and enforced. There is no "one size fits all" solution, especially for mixed fisheries around the UK, so we urge the EU to adopt a risk-based approach.

"While we are pleased that the proposals highlight the importance of scientific information to influence fisheries management, we are concerned that EU-wide budget cuts in these areas will restrict the provision of this information.

"New approaches to obtaining relevant fisheries data are needed urgently – and this is an area Seafish is pushing forward, harnessing the wealth of information that fishermen can provide, such as vessel monitoring system data.

"We firmly support the Commission's condemnation of IUU fishing and the work it has already carried out to create international agreements between nations to ensure fish are procured responsibly.

"The UK seafood industry has already made so much progress in the past ten years – with new initiatives like the Responsible Fishing Scheme (<http://rfs.seafish.org>), real-time fisheries closures, and the plethora of UK-landed species in good supply, such as hake, MSC-certified North Sea haddock and Scottish saithe.

"The reform of the CFP will hopefully continue this trend towards a sustainable future for seafood - and we will be doing our best to enable the UK industry to meet this ideal."

Seafish Chief Economist, Hazel Curtis, said: “We welcome the proposed shift to market-based management instruments which, in principle, are more likely to deliver an appropriate fleet size and create the incentives for sustainable exploitation of our fish stocks.”

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For more information contact:

Kate Doran
Marketing Communications Executive
T: 0131 524 8652
E: k_doran@seafish.co.uk
www.seafish.org

Notes to editor:

- 1) Seafish, the authority on seafood, was founded in 1981 by an act of parliament and supports the seafood industry for a sustainable, profitable future. Our services range from research and development, economic consulting, market research and training and accreditation through to legislative advice for the seafood industry.
- 2) We have produced a clear time-line to show the path forward for CFP reform – available at: <http://www.seafish.org/retailers/responsible-sourcing/protecting-fish-stocks/reform-of-the-cfp>