



European
Commission

2010 to 2012

Two and a half Years of Change

**in Fisheries
and Maritime Affairs**

*Maritime
Affairs and
Fisheries*

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Preface

Maria Damanaki

With the first half of my mandate as European Commissioner already gone by, this is probably a good time to see where we are in fisheries and maritime affairs – and where we are headed.

We are certainly in a time of change. Most of my mandate so far has revolved around giving our policies sustainable foundations, breaking with past practices, responding to modern challenges, driving innovation...

In the field of fisheries, I am proud to have set the reform in motion. We are now on our way toward a system that will be more respectful of eco-systems and at the same time more rewarding for fishermen. Our international action will be more decisive than ever.

In maritime affairs, I have been driving forward several projects that will help smart and green growth. I have no doubt that our Integrated Maritime Policy will play a key role in helping Europe out of the recession.

Change is never easy, and it requires time. But the support that is gathering around my plans is striking, and I know we are doing the right thing.

Read on to see where this interesting journey has taken us so far. And stay with us to make sure we reach our destination: driving Europe out of the recession and make our policies fit for the 21st century.



What is new in fisheries

Since 2010 I have been leading the change toward a new Common Fisheries Policy, with the full support of the College – but without neglecting to improve the current policy at the same time.

One of the main novelties is the way in which we now negotiate fishing possibilities with EU Member States. Significant progress has been made in setting the fishing opportunities for each year: decisions on Total Allowable Catches and quotas for the most commercial fish stocks are now firmly **based on scientific data**.

From now on, **science** will be behind each and every policy move. Unless we take the time to look at the hard data on the state of fish stocks in our waters, no informed – or indeed credible – decision can be made.

Today, 22 out of 38 stocks are being fished at sustainable level – four times as many as in 2009. This has meant an extra EUR 135 million for fleets and fishermen over just one year.

So we have asked the scientific community to bridge any data gaps for as many stocks as possible by the end of 2012 – my ultimate goal being the long-term, science-based approach for all stocks and for mixed fisheries that I promised when I took office. We are now about to propose new long-term plans for pelagic fish and cod in the Baltic Sea.

For the **Mediterranean** region, we have been implementing the Mediterranean Regulation and getting Member States to comply and introduce their own management plans. For some stocks, we have started multiannual plans that phase out destructive fishing practices. One of my main concerns is that the consumption of juvenile fish and its illegal fishing have devastating effects on fish stocks, preventing them from reproducing at a normal pace. And this awareness is now growing among consumers too.

At **international level**, we were able to enforce legislation more systematically now that all seas and all European vessels are covered by a single, overarching control framework. If a Member State exceeds its quotas, it will not escape a rigorous system of quota deductions. We have also introduced a catch certification system for the fish we import from outside the EU. We have carried out dozens of inspections and audit missions in third countries to evaluate and improve their certification systems.

We set out to close existing loopholes in the legislation concerning the **banning of shark finning** and a proposal on this is due to be adopted soon. A strict control and inspection programme on **bluefin tuna** has also been carried out every year to monitor all aspects of the fishery, enforce the rules and ensure the stock's recovery from overfishing.

Deep-sea fish, that are extremely vulnerable to fishing pressure, have been at the centre of our efforts to phase out destructive practices. Although the state of important stocks like black scabbard fish and roundnose grenadiers has been improving lately, we want to make sure that their fishing is fully sustainable and has minimum impact on the fragile deep-sea environment. In 2012 the EU became the first fishing party in the world to envisage the protection of the deep-sea environment at regulatory level by adopting a proposal to phase out bottom trawling and bottom-set gillnets in this particular fishery.



Maria Damanaki making the push to protect sharks.

The Fisheries Policy of the future: Intelligent, Flexible and Fair

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy has been a vital part of my job. I have argued that environmental, economic and social sustainability are intertwined and interdependent. I have been promoting an even more democratic decision-making process and an ever important role of European fisheries in the world.

The core of our reform plan is the concept of **Maximum Sustainable Yield**: harvesting as much as possible while allowing the population to continue to be productive. By limiting catches to scientifically set levels, we actually make sure that stocks are able to reproduce and ultimately produce higher yields for fishermen. The challenge we have set is achieving maximum sustainable fishing levels by 2015.

We have already made progress in a number of areas. In the North East Atlantic, in the North Sea and in the Baltic Sea overfishing has gone from 72% in 2010 to 47% in 2012; in the space of the last year only, we have brought the number of stocks being fished sustainably from 13 to 19; and the percentage of stocks covered by scientific advice from 14 to 24.

But the reform has many other facets too. For instance, we need to come to an agreement on how to eliminate **fish discards**, as this wasteful practice erodes the fishermen's potential revenue as well as the production capacity of our marine ecosystems. In the course of negotiations, the Council took an important step forward and agreed to phase out discarding by 2018, with specific start and end dates for each fishery.

A first step to phase out discards was the high-grading ban in the North Sea, **Skagerrak** and Kattegat, extended to all ICES areas in 2010.

For the Skagerrak, the Commission, two Member states and Norway are working on a discard ban which could be implemented as early as 2013.

The Commission is also the driving force behind new selective gears in whitefish and nephrops fisheries.



Maria Damanaki
looking at
the Fish Fight
counter.

We, the policy makers, carry a dual responsibility here: we must make sure that populations are sustainably fed on one hand, and that the industry is competitive on the other. Aquaculture can solve a big part of both challenges.

Maria Damanaki,
Salzburg, March 2011

In parallel, we are changing EU rules that favour discarding and we are urging Member States to deter their fleets from discarding fish. We also started developing **multi-species approaches**, an important element in the management of mixed fisheries. With the scientific community, we started work on a multi-species plan for the Baltic Sea and a mixed-fisheries plan for the North Sea.

The reform also has ambitious projects for European **aquaculture**. The natural productivity of the oceans has its limits; even if capture fisheries were well managed and thriving, they would not be able to meet a demand for seafood that is constantly rising, both in the EU and in the rest of the world. Moreover, I believe that fish farming drives innovative, sustainable and inclusive growth – and that brings us closer to the Europe 2020 objectives.



During the discussions on the new fisheries policy, the participation of civil society was both unprecedented and invaluable.

Notable examples are: the alliance for sustainability called *Fish2Fork*, in which European chefs mobilised to provide sustainable seafood to their customers and show their support for an urgent reform of the CFP; the *FishFight* campaign; and the *Alliances for sustainability* in many European countries.

We have therefore made aquaculture one of the key pillars of the fisheries sector, to be strongly supported by new funding principles. We plan to modernise the decision-making process through a voluntary cooperation process, called 'open method of coordination'. We are preparing a set of strategic guidelines for 2013, and for this we have launched a public consultation in the spring of 2012. We will enable the industry to build on its assets and to keep developing according to the highest standards in environmental protection, animal health and food safety. We will also see to it that proper labelling enhances public awareness on the qualities of locally farmed, fresh produce.

Finally, the reform calls for a decentralised management that sees all social parties more closely involved in policy-making. I am convinced that decisions should be taken at a level that is closer to the people they affect and I have already started working in this sense: I discussed the reform proposals directly with the social partners in the Social Dialogue Committee on Sea Fisheries and with the European Transport Workers' Federation. We have gathered the support of small-scale vessel owners associations, of processors, retailers and concerned citizens; and we have informed the public at large through the media.



A Maritime Policy Favouring Growth

Smart growth is the name of the game today, as set out in the EU's growth strategy for 2020, and has been the focus of my efforts as Commissioner. We have started a maritime spatial planning exercise that will enable us to exploit maritime space rationally and give adequate room to alternative energy, low carbon transport and blue biotechnologies.

To foster growth and employment, we are promoting maritime skills and attractive jobs in this field. By integrating different maritime surveillance systems, we are cutting costs, helping to fight crime and reducing the risks for businesses operating at sea. Finally, we are reinforcing our knowledge base by completing the seabed mapping of the EU waters together with the best European marine researchers.

As an Integrated Maritime Policy cuts across a number of sector-specific areas, such as Regional Policy, Transport, or Environment, the past two years have seen us working closely with other Commission departments to fine-tune our policies and maximise their effects.

To maximise the economic potential of each of these sectors, we have launched our **Blue Growth** initiative, which will help us understand where to focus for the next few years. Take tourism, for instance, which holds huge economic promise for Europe and for which we are now preparing a concrete strategy; or offshore wind energy, where employment numbers could potentially reach 170 000 by 2020 – that is to say a fivefold increase over ten years. And ocean energy from currents, tides, thermal potential or algae could

be equally promising, if we play our cards right. I think Blue Growth will be capable of letting these new activities emerge and prepare younger generations for the jobs of tomorrow – this is why I promote it.

There can be no one-size-fits-all policy for a maritime continent as diverse as Europe. In the past two and a half years, we have produced tailored approaches for each of our sea basins.

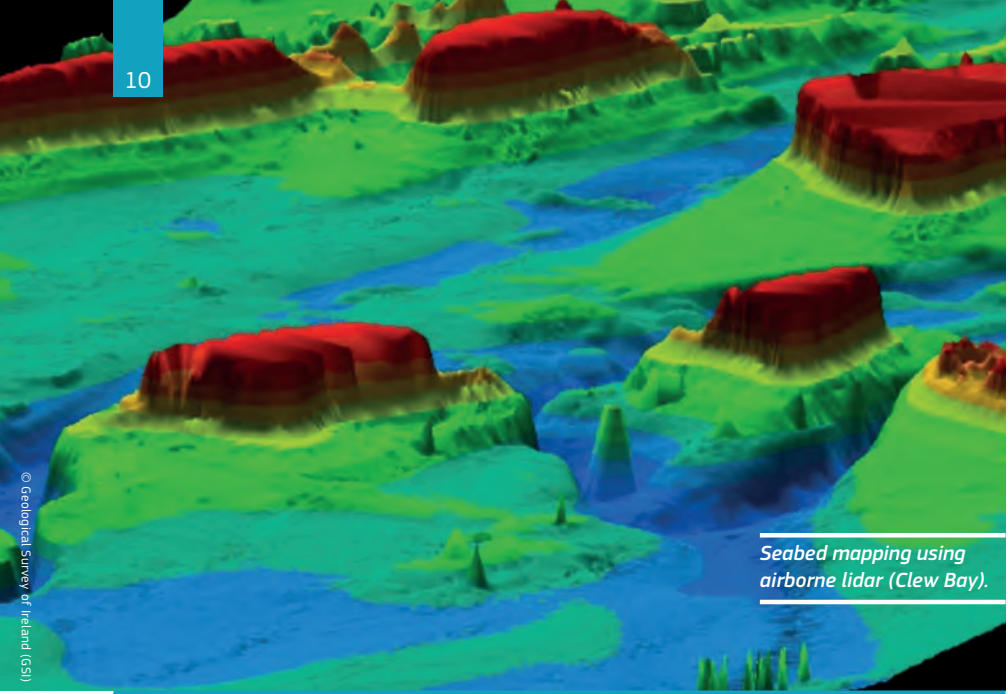
On a proposal by Vice-President and High Representative Catherine Ashton and myself, the Commission adopted a Communication refining the EU's policy towards **the Arctic**. Our priorities: combating climate change, developing green technologies and

supporting Arctic research. We will engage with our Arctic partners and the indigenous population in an open and frank dialogue to boost the economic development of the region while making sure that the highest environmental and safety standards are met.

For the **Black Sea** region, we have rekindled the Black Sea Synergy Initiative, launched the Environment Partnership in 2010, organised a Stakeholders Conference in 2011 and multiplied the opportunities for cooperation and exchange – be it with Member States or candidate countries. We are working to create a specific Working Group for the Black Sea.

Two projects, **MARSUNO** and **BluemassMed**, are identifying obstacles and solutions for the exchange of information exchange across sectors and across borders. Their results will feed into the **Common Information Sharing Environment** for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain, which will enable over 400 authorities in Europe to communicate with each other. Along with maritime surveillance, our policy initiative on **Maritime spatial planning** and integrated coastal zone management will improve our usage of the sea and enable investors to make accurate, informed decisions.





*Seabed mapping using
airborne lidar (Clew Bay).*

In the interest of the knowledge economy, we have been completing the seabed mapping. We have put together data from twenty different providers and 113 different surveying bodies and have produced a low-resolution map of water depth in most European waters. We have made it available to anyone who needs it, be they private companies, public authorities or researchers. But I have bigger goals for this project: by the end of 2014, we will have covered all European waters at higher resolution.

On the **Atlantic Ocean**, we adopted a maritime strategy in 2011 that identifies challenges and opportunities and takes stock of existing initiatives supporting growth and jobs in the area. We are now working with stakeholders and Member States, within the framework of the Atlantic Forum, to deliver an Action Plan in 2013. Our discussions focus on applying the ecosystem approach, reducing Europe's carbon footprint, exploiting seafloor resources sustainably, dealing with risks and emergencies and promoting socially inclusive growth.

We have also reached consensus on strengthening maritime cooperation in the **Adriatic and Ionian Seas**. This maritime cooperation strategy can serve as a potential first step towards the launch of an EU macro-regional strategy for the area. On the **Baltic Sea**, we have been working on long-term management plans and we are aiming at setting joint quotas.

The Global Context

In this crucial time of change, the external dimension of the EU's common fisheries policy takes special importance. The EU is a major player, with a strong presence in all the world's oceans. Our fleets and investments, our bilateral agreements with third countries and our active participation in virtually all Regional Fisheries Management Organisations mean that we, too, are responsible for the sustainable management of international fish stocks.

Our international goals are set in the Communication on the external dimension of the reformed CFP, which is part and parcel of the reform: exporting our conservation principles to the rest of the world, enhancing the performance of Regional Management Organisations and laying a sound basis on which to build fair and sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements.

Meanwhile, we introduced new clauses for stock sustainability and economic profitability in all the **Fisheries Partnership Agreements** negotiated since 2011. Moreover, a new human rights clause allows for the suspension of the agreement in case of serious violation of these rights. In 2011,

for the first time, we brought together Ministers from the EU Member States, Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and Greenland and discussed together the future of the Agreements and the main aspects of the reform.

The past two and a half years saw some difficult negotiations to renew a number of protocols: Morocco, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau and Gabon. At the moment we have also initialled an Agreement with Kiribati which, for the first time, requests substantially higher fees from ship-owners, in line with the reform. A new three-year Protocol has been signed in 2012 to implement the EU-Greenland Fisheries Partnership Agreement and will enter into force in 2013. Our negotiations always aim to ensure sustainability, ethical fisheries, legal fairness and a science-based approach.

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) are key to sustainable management and the EU position in them consistently promotes sustainability and compliance. Again for the first time, in May 2012 a conference brought together representatives from fifteen RFMOs, the Commission and the European Parliament.



“ We need to project on the international scene the rules and principles of sustainability – and conversely of course, we should enrich our internal EU policy with inputs from the international experience. ”

Maria Damanaki,
Brussels, May 2011

An important stepping stone of our international relations was the Joint Statement I signed with the US government and with Japan, on behalf of the European Union, on efforts to combat **IUU fishing**. The combined impact of the USA, Japan and Europe is truly global, as we consume at least 30% of the world's fish supply. Now that the three powers are united in this combat, it is my aim to build on this initiative and eventually arrive at a global catch certification system that will enable us to track the origin of all traded fish.

In the Mediterranean region, substantial efforts went to reinforcing the **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean** – with the overall aim to create a level-playing field between the European fishermen and those fishing from the North African region.

After my visit there in 2010, we launched a 'Fisheries Dialogue' with **Turkey** with special focus on control issues. The European Fisheries Control Agency in Vigo agreed to increase control capabilities in the Turkish area. Even though the enlargement negotiations have not yet opened the chapter on fisheries, we have already been working with this country to achieve the standards required for accession.

We have developed good relations with **Norway** over the past 2 years. A new agreement for the management of shared fish stocks in the North Sea sets the total allowable catches and quotas for shared stocks in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat. An agreement was also reached on the exchange of fishing possibilities in each other's waters.

Despite intense efforts, we have not yet reached an agreement with **Iceland** on a fair sharing of mackerel stocks. But we are now close to adopting an innovative **trade instrument against countries which fish unsustainably**. This regulation authorizes the Commission to adopt, on top of existing IUU rules and in full respect of international law, other trade measures against countries that fish on shared stocks unsustainably.

Under the 'Trade and Sustainable Development' chapter of the **Free Trade Agreements**, we have been negotiating provisions to improve our trade partners' social and environmental behaviours; we also insist that they adhere to all international conventions and agreements in the area of fishery governance. Ensuring a genuinely level playing field means ensuring that imported products meet the same requirements that apply within the EU, to create fair competition.

Lastly, we have been moving forward with **Russia**. A lot remains to be done, but after my visit to Moscow the first Fisheries Dialogue was established as a first positive step.



Investing in People and Innovation

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Ever since taking office I have been making sure that the fishing sector and the coastal areas benefit as much as possible from our financial assistance by using the existing **European Fisheries Fund** to the full. But I have also focused my attention on the fund's successor for the period 2014-2020, the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**. I have proposed a generous envelope and an intelligent architecture that makes it fit for future challenges. Also, we have managed to give it a strong maritime focus, which could result in an increase of the funds available for coastal development.

Under the current European Fisheries Fund, there are several success stories of bottom-up development of aquaculture: for instance, a company in Andalusia was able to purchase new machinery and can now produce its own fishmeal with unwanted fish or fish waste from auctions.

I believe that local actors are the best placed to mobilise coastal communities: they are closer to the specific problems and bottlenecks of each community and they are by far the best source of new ideas and innovative solutions.

So we have been rewarding their inventiveness and have given them – and through them local businesses, associations and individuals – as much support as possible.

Between 2010 and 2011, we invested on some 300 local communities and over 1 600 projects, increasing the European Fisheries Fund's certified expenditure by 12% and helping coastal areas move toward a smart, green and sustainable economy.

We have also been promoting regular networking between local actors, as this is an essential source of inspiration for them. Networks such as FARNET remain a vital resource for those involved in community-led local development.

While managing the current Fund, we had to ensure adequate funding for future policies. As part of a **Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014–2020**, the College has proposed an amount of EUR 6.7 billion in 2011 prices (EUR 7.5 billion in current prices) to support our new policy objectives and our actions in the field of international fisheries.

This marks the birth of a new generation of funding mechanisms. The Fund is better aligned to other Commission Funds, is more user-friendly for beneficiaries and introduces significant changes. Subsidies that

have not proven useful are discontinued to the benefit of new opportunities for jobs and growth in coastal areas. The Fund strongly promotes new ideas and products that can reduce the impact of fishing activities on the environment and generate less by-catch. Last but not least, it gives more attention to small-scale fishermen, who receive a high co-financing share and can be granted 75% of the cost of a project.

FISHERIES LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

Fisheries Local Action Groups are localized entities that that can be helped by our Fund to find viable alternatives to traditional occupations and thus diversify into new sectors and activities, both within and beyond the strictly fisheries field. The last few years saw several examples of successful mobilisation of these groups.

- Two Danish FLAGs now exploit seaweed as raw material for a range of new products, including ice cream.
 - A Spanish initiative develops and markets original gourmet products, like barnacle pâté, from goose barnacles.
 - In Italy, 12 boats were equipped and approved for ‘pesca-tourism activities’. The fishermen now earn between 30 and 70% more for taking tourists out to demonstrate their profession (while fishing less and reducing pressure on the resource).
 - A German project enables fishermen to sell part of their catch directly to final customers. Fishermen text message details of their catch from their boats to a website on which customers can see what fish is available when. The project has turned buying fish into an experience for consumers, who can buy fresh, local, and ‘zero mileage’ fish; CO₂ emissions are cut and fishermen earn more through direct sales and self-marketing. Fishing companies have also expanded their product range by smoking and cooking part of the catch, and now have between 30 and 50% more customers.
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Outlook



We should not hesitate on account of the economic crisis: on the contrary, it is precisely to overcome it that we need to bet on the maritime economy. This will open the way for new products, services and jobs – and for new, dynamic entrepreneurs to grab the chance and drive the economy forward.

Maria Damanaki,
Göteborg, 2012

Bringing the fisheries sector to the next level is no longer a political choice for the EU: it is a must. We certainly cannot afford 'business as usual'. We must switch to a new way of fishing if we want to keep fishing. We must privilege environmental, economic and social sustainability, base decisions on science, promote innovation and extend our principles and practices into the rest of the world. We must make fisheries a source of wealth and wellbeing for fishermen, for coastal communities and for citizens. And we must ensure that our activities do not harm the seas and oceans in the long run. This is the lasting foundation that I have been building for our fisheries and maritime policies in the past two and a half years.

I have also launched concrete projects in maritime policy and set tangible goals for its development. Present times require courage and perseverance, but we must continue investing on growth, job creation and innovation. If we do, I have no doubt that our policy area will factor into the economic recovery of Europe.

We are now half way through this important journey. Our objectives are ambitious and we are well on track to achieve them.

Europe deserves more fish, more wealth and more jobs.

Maria Damanaki,
Brussels, 2011

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