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European Commission
Directorate-General for Maritime
Affairs and Fisheries
«CFP Reform»
B-1049 Brussels

December 31, 2009

Requests to the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the European Union

(Translation of the original German version)

Dear Sir or Madam

The fair-fish association established in 2000 and based in Switzerland is active mainly in German speaking Europe. The mission of fair fish is to leverage animal welfare in fisheries and aquaculture while accounting at the same time for sustainability and fair trade criteria. fair-fish informs the public and intends to cooperate with interested circles of experts, producers and marketers as well as organisations involved with related objectives. fair-fish defines guidelines for its label and directs a pilot project with artisanal fishermen in Senegal.

We acknowledge that the Commission has pointed out some of the crucial flaws of the present CFP and is willing to set up a reform which finally shall lead European fisheries towards sustainable practice. Being not the first resolute attempt of this kind, our optimism with regard to the implementation of the newest reform in reality is however limited. Our scepticism is also due to the fact that from our point of view – which several European organisations and experts are sharing – the analysis of the Commission excludes some of the main reasons for the bankruptcy of the present CFP (and of other sustainable fishery policies):

- a) Consumption of fish is excessive, or as the renowned marine biologist Prof. Daniel Pauly puts it in the documentary «The End of the Line»: The fish did not just vanish like that – we simply ate it!
- b) Aquaculture does not solve the problem but rather intensifies it – as long as species are fattened which feed on more fish than they provide on our plates.

- c) European fleets have largely depleted the European seas. As long as this may be repeated on seas far away, there is no compulsion for change.
- d) So far, the CFP has partially supported industrial fisheries and thereby created capacities which are not only much too powerful but are also ill-suited for conversion into more sustainable ways of fishing.
- e) Due to this partiality the present CFP has destroyed lots of livelihoods, namely just the small fisheries which are technically the easiest ones to be converted and which are – owing to their local anchoring – the most interested ones in the sustainability of their catch.
- f) Until now, the present CFP has dealt with fish as if it was a commodity like corn or sugar. As long as fish are not treated as sentient beings it will be hard to end up at considerate fishing. Methods that do not allow rapid stunning and killing of the fish caught are as a general rule neither considering the protection of the resources.

In order that the new CFP will really reach the goal set by the Commission – *to establish sustainable fishery and aquaculture in an intact and species-rich environment which can bear an economically viable industry and offers jobs and chances to coastal populations* –, the following measures are indispensable from our point of view:

1. The EU does not support in any form the propaganda advocating high consumption of fish for health reasons. Omega 3 fatty acids can be sourced directly from where fish get it themselves, namely from algae.

Instead, the EU fosters initiatives which inform consumers about the interdependences

- between fish consumption and overfishing, as well as
- between reckless handling of fish and loss of quality of its products (see point 7)

2. Subsidies and research funds for aquaculture will only be accorded to projects and farms which

- feed importantly less wild fish than the fish they provide and
- keep their animals under species-appropriate living conditions according to the current state of knowledge in order to foster animal welfare and reduce stress and harm as much as possible (see point 7).

3. European vessels do fish in EU territorial waters only: To reach this goal, the CFP defines resolute and clearly timed steps. If developing countries and emerging markets want to export fish to Europe, the EU encourages and enables them to catch and process it themselves. This way only local fishermen and fish factory workers will get the value added they deserve. In the same time this will offer incentives in Europe to take care of its own seafood resources.

3.1. In order to prevent redundant European vessels from continuing to operate in non-European waters under changed flags and under probably even less strict obligations, the capacity of European fleets must be reduced to the size appropriate to sustainable fishing in European waters. To reach this goal within a short time, the EU establishes a one-off scrapping fund. The scrapping premium can be applied for within a determined time frame and will be paid after evidence is given that the ship has been scrapped. The premium will be fixed in a way that it is more profitable to scrap a fishing vessel than to sell it.

3.2. In order to help developing countries to effectively protect and exploit their marine resources themselves, the EU provides aid and technical support for these countries to enable surveillance of their waters and fish stocks and for the careful transformation and distribution of the catch.

4. Ban of fishing of overexploited stocks and endangered species such as Bluefin tuna and several shark species, as requested by many conservationist organisations, e. g. IUCN.
The EU insists on the protection of these species under the CITES convention.

5. Ban of industrial fishing methods and gears such as bottom trawling which cause bycatch of endangered species, discard of unrequested fish or have a negative impact on the marine environment. In this we support the requests of many environmental organisations, e. g. WWF, or of small scale fishermen's associations like the Fishery Protection Union of Schleswig-Holstein.
The EU insists on the worldwide ban of such methods and gears.

6. Any EU fisheries support will be directed to fisheries only which comply with minimal standards of animal welfare and sustainability – as far as they still need it. In doing so, locally based artisanal fisheries which use small boats and gear are to be favoured. They not only create more job opportunities than industrial fisheries but moreover are easier to be framed in a way that fishing management can be socially and ecologically sustainable and ethically responsible.
We support the propositions of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers and the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements.

7. Europe's new CFP recognises that fish are sentient beings and that reckless handling of fish degrades the quality of their products. The new CFP is in line with the Scientific Opinion of the Animal Health and Welfare¹, which had been ordered by the EU Commission and on the basis of which the Commission has drawn the general conclusion that fish are sentient beings², and in line with the new requirements of the Lisbon Treaty³.

7.1. Fisheries and aquaculture are to be managed so as to reduce negative impacts on the welfare of the animals to an absolute minimum and to keep their suffering when bred, captured and slaughtered as marginal as possible. The EU fosters research supporting this objective. As far as the EU acknowledges or regulates schemes which certify the sustainability of fisheries or aquaculture, it adds to the criteria of certification the scientifically and field-proven measures which improve fish welfare or reduce the suffering of the fish.

7.2. In addition, the suffering must be numerically reduced by targeting bigger instead of smaller fish – and by reducing dramatically the feeding of fish meal and fish oil to farm animals including fish. We particularly point to the study of fishcount.

8. Establishment of interlinked marine protected areas which cover at least 40 percent of European marine surface, according to the requests of many marine biologists and environmental organisations such as Greenpeace. Any fishing in these areas is authorized exclusively to local fishermen which apply extensive fishing methods, comply with species protection, closed season and quota and which actively support the monitoring of their area. Where Europe sources fish from other continents, it fosters efforts to establish analogue marine protected areas there.

9. Europe's new CFP develops accompanying measures to facilitate these goals, according to propositions made by several organisations such as the European Green Party. Among other things, it fosters the training of people active in fisheries on ecological interdependences and sustainability and supports the certification of seafood products against independent sustainability standards.

1 AHAW 2004: Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission related to welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing the main commercial species of animals, The EFSA Journal (2004), 45, 1-29. Accessed on December 31, 2009 at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/45.htm> in

AHAW, 2009: Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from European Commission on General approach to fish welfare and to the concept of sentience in fish: The EFSA Journal (2009) 954, 1-26. Accessed on December 31, 2009 at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902344910.htm

2 Answer of the Commission (Commissioner Vassiliou) on April 3, 2009 to the Parliamentary Question of the Dutch MEP Maria Buitenweg (Greens)

3 Lisbon Treaty, Title II: Article 13 (CONSILIUM, 2008)

Dear Sir or Madam, we should be pleased to learn that you take our concerns and propositions into consideration, and we are gladly disposed to furthermore contribute our services.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

fair-fish association



Heinzpeter Studer
Director

The fair-fish association wants to thank several European organisations and experts who gave their opinion to the above requests, in particular to the organisations which support these requests fully or mostly:

- APECE Associação Portuguesa para o Estudo e Conservação de Elasmobrânquios, P-Lisboa, www.apece.pt
- fishcount, UK-London, www.fishcount.org.uk
- Stichting Vissenbescherming (Foundation for the Protection of Fish), NL-Heemstede, www.vissenbescherming.nl
- Project Blue Sea e.V., D-Herne, www.projectblueseas.de
- Deepwave e.V., D-Hamburg, www.deepwave.org
- Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, B-Bruxelles, www.cape-cffa.org

We support the requests of these organisations to the new CFP.

In addition, we support also the requests of the Fishery Protection Union of Schleswig-Holstein (www.fischereischutzverband.de) even though this Union does not agree with some of our requests for comprehensible reasons under their point of view.