

A large fishing vessel is shown from a low angle, with its complex superstructure and masts dominating the frame. The vessel is surrounded by a massive flock of seabirds, likely albatrosses, which are in various stages of flight, some landing on the vessel's deck and others soaring in the sky. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The overall scene suggests a high level of bird activity around the vessel, possibly related to a specific fishing practice or a natural phenomenon.

**IS EUROPE READY TO LEAD ON
INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES GOVERNANCE?
WWF RECOMMENDATIONS**

WWF RECOMMENDATIONS

While the EU has a key role to play in the development of a governance system that delivers legal, sustainable and equitable fisheries at global level, WWF believes that all parties need to contribute towards this end.

WWF therefore calls on the EU to:

- 1** Ensure key CFP objectives and principles are included in all SFPAs;
- 2** Insist on partner countries providing all information pertaining to their agreements with other foreign fleets. Transparency on the overall level of catches in their waters is essential to assess whether or not sustainable fishing is possible for EU fleets;
- 3** Refrain from signing accords where scientific data is lacking or outdated, or in the absence of agreed rules on regional management of shared and/or migratory fish stocks;
- 4** Urgently look to strengthen coherence and coordination among EU policies such as fisheries, development cooperation, and trade so as to strengthen the potential to deliver significant development and economic benefits under the accords. This would also tackle shortcomings that hamper CFP implementation such as lack of infrastructure, training capacity and expertise in partner countries. Improvements are necessary to ensure EU aid doesn't fall short of what should be achieved under the "mutual benefit" principle.



- 5 Hold Member States whose fleets benefit from subsidised fishing possibilities under fisheries agreements fully accountable for effective control of the activities of those fleets under the flag state due diligence obligation. Failure to do so exposes the EU itself to possible penalties and contributes substantially to the weaknesses identified in delivering greater benefits in the partner country. Poor data reporting and/or failure to employ local fishers, for example, undermine the principle of mutual benefit.
- 6 Support the Commission in insisting Member States act with diligence when national companies or private interests are, or have been, flouting CFP rules abroad under the cover of flags of convenience. It must also meet its core obligations and use the legal means at its disposal when Member States fail to meet their obligations.
- 7 Ensure consistency between all proposals in RFMOs and CFP principles and objectives. Support from and coordination with RFMO members need to be sought in the run up to meetings.
- 8 Do all it can to deliver on the above recommendations so that it is in a position to deliver on its ambition to lead the process towards sustainable and fair governance of international fisheries. This will also further strengthen its contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

ALL COASTAL STATES MUST COMMIT AND CONTRIBUTE TO GOOD GLOBAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Finally, just as all states are sovereign, so they all have responsibilities towards their people and the environment. Transparency and accountability are essential to sustainable and equitable fisheries. As an example of this best practice, WWF welcomes and encourages the steps by Mauritania and some other coastal states to work under the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) to achieve sustainable and responsibly managed marine fisheries.

WHAT IS FISHERIES GOVERNANCE?

Fisheries governance is the set of measures agreed among local, national or international authorities and/or stakeholders on how best to manage fishing activities so as to prevent human conflict and ensure sustainable fisheries.

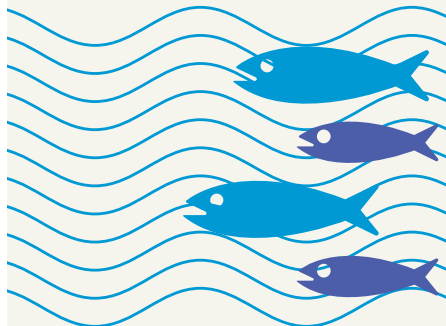
WHY IS IT NEEDED?

Fish are oblivious to lines drawn on maps. Some species, such as tuna, are constantly on the move through the waters of coastal states and the high seas. Fish are a shared mobile resource that requires cooperation on who can fish, how much can be fished and how it can be fished.

WHY EUROPE?

As a leading fishing power whose vessels fish in all oceans and the largest seafood importer and market, Europe has a fisheries footprint that spans the planet. It has a long-established common fisheries policy (CFP) which governs all European fisheries, both in the waters of member states and also in the rest of the world. Most importantly, measures to achieve legal and sustainable fisheries are complemented by obligations to promote sustainable development and ensure its accords with developing countries are of mutual benefit. In addition, Europe has declared its ambition to lead on international ocean and fisheries governance.

WORLD FISHERIES ARE FACING UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES



Why is this study important?

World fisheries are facing unprecedented challenges, including poor management (or none at all), conflict, overfishing, illegal activities and destruction of marine habitats. This destructive trend has to be urgently reversed, especially in the poorer coastal communities where fisheries contribute to livelihoods and, in many cases, food security. Given Europe's position as a leading maritime power, together with its commitments on sustainable development and ambition to lead on the governance of global fisheries, the question is whether it is ready for this task.

What does the study say?

The study concludes that while the EU is better placed than most to lead on international fisheries governance, it needs to adhere more closely to its obligations under the CFP and to its stated goal of sustainable development if it is to deliver on its ambition. The CFP – including its external dimension – is, it says, strongly focused on sustainability, good governance and mutual benefits. The study also highlights the progress being achieved at the international level under the EU regulation on combating illegal fishing and through providing support for capacity building in vulnerable countries. Together with aid for development from the European Development Fund, Smartfish and bilateral projects, the EU seeks to help these countries improve fisheries governance. The study finds that, overall, implementation of the CFP over the past three years shows some encouraging initiatives that it recommends the EU should extend.

What are the main problems?

The EU, the study shows, meets its obligations better at the multilateral level (Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, or RFMOs) than at the bilateral level (fisheries agreements).

Fisheries agreements: The study reports a number of weaknesses throughout the chain of responsibility by all parties involved. The shortcomings are to be found in negotiations between the European Commission, on behalf of the EU, and the government of the non-EU (partner) country, as well as in the implementation of the agreed measures by both sets of authorities and by European vessels fishing under the agreement. The main weaknesses include:

- **Negotiating stage:** the failure to enter all CFP environmental and good governance requirements in all protocols that set the conditions under the accords; cases when data is insufficient to assess the state of fisheries; lack of transparency in the overall catch levels in the partner's waters; lack of transparency in negotiations and in the involvement of local civil society organisations (CSOs).
- **Implementation stage:** lack of involvement of local CSOs by their authorities in the use of EU money and also in relation to who fishes for what; unsatisfactory reporting of catches by EU vessels; insufficient number of local seamen employed on board EU vessels; lack of clarity as to the extent and nature of implementation of the required principles of mutual benefit and sustainable development under the agreements.

RFMOs: From the examination of the EU's performance over the past three years, the study concludes that the EU makes proposals that address issues crucial to ensuring good fisheries governance through RFMOs. EU proposals also relate to key objectives under the CFP, such as improving fish data, promoting the precautionary principle, reducing discards, strengthening RFMOs, and increasing consistency between measures adopted in different fisheries forums. However, its record hasn't always been consistent, as seen in its proposal on fish aggregating devices which wasn't based on scientific advice. The EU should also engage more with other RFMO members between meetings to gain support for its proposals.

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