

Minutes of the Fisheries seminar on the landing obligation

Vigo (Galicia) – 26/27 June 2017

1. Context:

During the last reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, the European Commission introduced two new measures in the new [Regulation 1380/2013](#): the discard ban and the obligation to land all catches in port. Article 15 of the Regulation stipulates that the landing obligation will be applied progressively between 1 January 2015 and 1 January 2019, which is the deadline for all fish species of subject to TACs and quotas.

This seminar aimed to present the impacts of this landing obligation in the Atlantic Arc Regions that are active in the fisheries sector in order to draw up political actions.

It extends the CPMR's work in this area, having echoed the concerns of the sector on several occasions. A meeting on this issue was held in Brussels on 7 December 2016 between the President of the Atlantic Arc Commission and President of Pays de la Loire Region, Bruno Retailleau and the EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella. On 8 February, a meeting organised by DG MARE gave the political representatives of the CPMR Regions the opportunity to express their views regarding the measures that does meet the needs of the fisheries sector.

On 3 March 2017, the Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly approved a Final Declaration "[Les Sables d'Olonne 2017](#)" outlining the major challenges for fisheries for the Atlantic Regions, particularly in Articles 17 to 24.

On 10 March 2017, the CPMR Political Bureau approved a Policy Position on [the Seas and the Oceans](#), focusing on the main principles of the future CFP and its financial instrument, the EMFF, for the post-2020 programming period.

The next Inter-Ministerial Conference on the implementation of the EMFF, scheduled for 12 and 13 October 2017 in Tallinn, will be the next step in the CPMR's political work on this issue.

2. Results of the seminar:

Several comprehensive studies presented by the Regions and the representatives of the Atlantic fisheries sector have demonstrated that this measure of "zero discards", although laudable, proves in practice to be untenable for several reasons:

- The implementation of the landing obligation does not bring any added value to achieving the objective of managing fish stocks in a way that can ensure their exploitation at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) level. In addition, it weakens the efforts made up to now by the sector following the reductions in quotas in order to reach the MSY;
- The management and storage of discards creates difficulties that worsen on-board working conditions and generate efficiency losses that impact the economic viability of businesses;

➔ *According to a study carried out by Brittany Region, in 2016 and 2017, the landing obligation generated a loss of approximately €17k/year/vessel for gadidae fishing;*

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- ➔ According to the REDRESSE project (Pays de la Loire), the potential losses for the sector would stretch up to 20% of the wealth benchmark. The landing obligation could also make it necessary to recruit additional manpower for the management of discards even though it creates a reduction in turnover for fishing enterprises. The option of using selective instruments on board vessels is not the most cost-effective solution for fishing enterprises as these instruments result in a decline in the catch volumes of marketable species of fish;
- The thresholds imposed by the measurement rule remain the same despite the need for additional space on board for the storage of discards. Paradoxically, shipowners are obliged to order the construction of new vessels with constant measurements, even though there is a need to guarantee greater storage capacity. These constant measurements could cause the adverse effect of limiting the volume of marketable species on board per tide;
- The European system of TACs and quotas cannot prevent the occurrence of phenomena of species with limiting quotas (choke species). The solutions proposed by the European Commission (the *de minimis* rule, quota up-lift, transfer of quotas between species and from one year to the next) do not seem to guarantee viable solutions, in particular for mixed demersal fisheries;
- ➔ The Region of Galicia estimates the imbalance between the allocation of quotas and the uptake of these quotas to be 1,000,000 tonnes of unused fish and 31,000 jobs lost between 2008 and 2014.

Faced with this situation, the EMFF is not able to effectively support the implementation of the landing obligation. The most frequent difficulties / obstacles identified by the Regions include:

- The ineligibility of funding of new vessels;
- The phasing-out of measures in favour of demolition from 2018;
- The absence of a critical mass of funding to ensure a diagnosis of all socio-economic impacts by fishery in each European maritime basin.

The United Kingdom's forthcoming exit from the European Union aggravates an already critical situation. It risks undermining the TACs and quotas system, prompting tense relationships between the 27 Member States, as well as making it difficult for professionals to estimate their future financial returns and plan investment in their enterprises.

➔ For further information on the impacts of the landing obligation, refer to the [speakers' presentations](#):

- 1) PowerPoint presentation by Galicia;
- 2) PowerPoint presentation by Region Brittany;
- 3) PowerPoint presentation by Nantes University and Pays de la Loire's *Comité Régional des Pêches*.

Despite these difficulties, fishing professionals have been proactive in finding solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of the landing obligation's implementation. For example, the Technological Centre of the Sea in Galicia (*Centro Tecnológico del Mar-CETMAR*) has implemented the Life-iSEAS project, offering innovative tools for fisheries management, to reduce discards and enhance the marketing of species with a low commercial value.

➔ For further information on the projects presented during the seminar, consult [the PowerPoint Presentations](#):

- 1) PowerPoint presentation by CETMAR;
- 2) PowerPoint presentation by the Shipowners Association of the City of Marín;
- 3) PowerPoint presentation by CONXEMAR.

4. Conclusions and next steps

The CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission Member Regions, meeting in Vigo, agreed on the following actions to be undertaken:

- 1) Develop and co-sign a joint political manifesto between Atlantic Regions and fishing professionals. It will advocate a moratorium on the implementation of the Landing Obligation in order to allow the financing of socio-economic impact studies and / or be able to envisage other solutions going beyond the tool-kit proposed by the basic CFP Regulation;
- 2) Requests that the European Commission finance socio-economic impact studies arising from the landing obligation within each sea basin and covering the fisheries which are Most at risk;
- 3) Ensure a strong presence of Regions and professionals in the European political and technical debate during key events on the European agenda, namely the Inter-Ministerial Conference on the future of the EMFF, to be held on 12 and 13 October 2017 in Tallinn as well as the Conference organised by the European Commission (DG MARE) on the state of play of the implementation of the landing obligation by the end of 2017;
- 4) Step up lobbying actions with the European Parliament and national governments to ensure that joint requests from the Regions and professionals regarding the landing obligation can be heard and taken into account in the negotiations that will take place throughout the coming months.