

European Parliament, PECH Committee, 24th January 2023

The video recording of the PECH to our report:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/committee-on-fisheries_20230123-1500-COMMITTEE-PECH

- **Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union
Exchange of views with Mr Peter Kullgren, Minister for Rural Affairs**

Mr Peter Kullgren, Minister for Rural Affairs presented the priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the Council. Under the current political situation, the overall priorities are security, unity, as well as food protection and security. The European Green Deal will be high on the agenda. With reference to fisheries, he referred to such priority topics as the review of the CFP, the Control Regulation, energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture. He welcomed the EP draft report on the CFP (under discussion later). He also mentioned control and enforcement as important issues. The Swedish Presidency will participate in various fisheries meetings and will facilitate the debate on the CFP, Control Regulation and energy transition.

Several MEPs asked questions.

A MEP from Spain underlined that the fisheries sector is a strategic sector to the EU. She underlined that some issues pertaining to control still need discussion, such as: traceability, recreational fisheries, digitalisation. A MEP from France referred to the landing obligation and the discussion needed on 10% margin of tolerance.

Several MEPs expressed hope that the work on the new Control Regulation will be finalised under the Swedish Presidency. Some other MEPs mentioned the need to include fishers in the discussion of the extension of protected areas and underlined the critical situation of the fisheries sector in the EU. They also referred to the need to work on a smooth energy transition, using the EMFF and the EMFAF. Social dimension of the CFP was brought up. It needs to go hand in hand with the environmental dimension.

The Vice-Chair of the PECH said that the fisheries sector is in a tight corner. A MEP from Denmark asked the Presidency to deal with the Baltic cod stocks.

Minister Peter Kullgren answered the questions. He underlined that the Swedish Presidency will try to be as effective and constructive as possible and work with all stakeholders. The Commission's report on the functioning of the CFP will be analysed and the Council will prepare comments to the report. Control issues are one of the priorities, with focus on the outstanding issues such as traceability, REM and recreational fisheries. The Presidency will pay attention to the socio-economic dimension of the CFP. In the Baltic, the impact of cormorants and seals on fish stocks and fisheries will be tackled.

- **The state of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives**

Rapporteur: G. Mato.

[LINK to the draft report PR_INI \(europa.eu\)](#)

Consideration of the draft report

MEP Gabriel Mato referred to the draft report on the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and highlighted some points. The draft report explains that the CFP needs to shift from unrealistic goals to more achievable goals. At present, the goals are political and rigid. Fisheries needs to be recognised as a strategic sector. Ten years after its implementation, the CFP needs to be revised. It is difficult to achieve goals set back in 2013. According to the report, the implementation of the CFP has primarily focused on the environmental aspect, at the expense of socioeconomic and food security considerations. The resulting negative impacts on the fishing sector have been exacerbated since Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, and that these negative impacts continue to increase and have become unsustainable due to recent international geopolitical developments. The report calls on the Commission to carry out systematic impact assessment before deciding on strategies which have impact on fishers and fisheries.

G. Mato stated that the CFP reform should aim to reach a re-equilibration between its objectives. The CFP's socioeconomic and food security dimensions should be strengthened.

He further pointed out that the introduction of MSY as a fisheries management reference point has been a driver for improving the overall state of fish stocks; considers, however, that the MSY objective should be implemented in light of the practical reality and in consideration of the socioeconomic, proportionality and food security dimensions. The implementation of the landing obligation should be improved and applied in a flexible manner, taking into account the specific characteristics of each fishery.

G. Mato informed that the MEPs can submit amendments to the report until the beginning of March.

The shadow rapporteur MEP Avram stated that the CFP does not need a reform, but needs to be adapted to the new reality. There needs to be an assessment of the measures. The impact of certain fishing techniques needs to be reduced. Social dimension is important, also to encourage young people to join the fisheries sector.

Message from the PECH Chair Karleskind (who was absent): there is a need to give more importance to fisheries. Climate change has huge implications on the marine

resources. There is a need to consider Article 17 of the Basic Regulation¹. Involvement of stakeholders through Advisory Councils is also important.

A MEP from Portugal underlined that the implementation of the CFP depends on the environmental situation, and therefore the environmental aspect is an integral part of the CFP. We have to make sure that fish stocks are healthy. Implementation of the CFP is the main problem. There is no fisheries without fish. Climate change is a huge problem for fisheries.

A MEP from the Netherlands underlined that the CFP needs to focus on the main targets and needs to be simplified. Fishery plays an important role of fisheries in food security. The landing obligation could be replaced by a registration obligation.

Several MEPs praised the role of the ACs is important in involving the stakeholders. Technical Measures should be in focus. **A MEP from Spain** stated that the goals of the CFP are not balanced. The CFP has failed to deliver the socio-economic goals.

Some MEPs underlined that the environmental objectives cannot be pushed away, we need them to achieve a more resilient ecosystem. The conclusions of Mato's report go into wrong direction.

A representative of DG Mare stated that the general awareness and ability to manage the current situation had increased. The EP report calls for changes in MSY. The Commission considers MSY to be the right approach. Stocks are improving and impacts on environment have decreased. It is, however, premature to say that the landing obligation is not working. There are problems but it needs a thorough assessment. COVID and the war have proved that socio-economic considerations play a central role. Support is granted from EMFF and EMFAF. The ACs are essential in engaging the stakeholders. The Commission will publish the report on the functioning of the CFP on 20th February, together with the Action Plan and energy transition strategy. These files are aimed at fostering a debate and not triggering a reform of the CFP.

G. MATO stated that the report was never aimed at calling for a full reform of the CFP. never called for a full reform of the CFP. There is a need to change some elements and focus on key issues.

He underlined once again the fundamental role of the ACs.

Referring to the report, he stated that the CFP needs to be well-balanced. Debate on this should be encouraged. The major deficit of the CFP is the lack of socio-economic dimension. He stated that there is a need to preserve biodiversity, but also the

¹ Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the common fisheries policy stipulates the following: 'When allocating the fishing opportunities available to them, as referred to in Article 16, Member States shall use transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature. The criteria to be used may include, *inter alia*, the impact of fishing on the environment, the history of compliance, the contribution to the local economy and historic catch levels. Within the fishing opportunities allocated to them, Member States shall endeavour to provide incentives to fishing vessels deploying selective fishing gear or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact, such as reduced energy consumption or habitat damage'.



fisheries. The CFP is not meeting the goals now. It has to be recognised that many of them had been too ambitious, such as the MSY.

The PECH vice chair reminded that the MEPs can submit amendments to the report until 6th March 2023. The PECH Committee looks forward to the Commission's report on the functioning of the CFP.