

# Common Fisheries Policy: Commission proposes new rules to step up enforcement

An effective control system is key to ensuring that the EU's fisheries are sustainably managed, which in turn guarantees the long-term viability of the EU fishing sector and protects the livelihoods of our fishermen.

Commissioner Karmenu **Vella**, responsible for the Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: *"The EU's [Common Fisheries Policy](#) has already gone a long way towards making sure our seas are healthy, while building a strong fishing industry and thriving coastal communities. At the same time, we need to keep up the work and make sure the commonly agreed rules are enforced across the EU. This is why we are proposing improvements to modernise the existing control system to make it more efficient and ensure that all operators in the fishing industry in the EU are treated equally."*

The Commission's proposal includes:

- Measures to improve the enforcement of the Common Fisheries Policy, with a common list of criteria for what qualifies as a serious infringement and corresponding sanctions and strengthening of the existing point system for licenced vessels to work as the systems for traffic offences to motorists in most Member States;
- A more reliable and complete fisheries data system, including fully digitised reporting of catches, applicable to all EU fishing vessels (including vessels below 12 metres), an electronic tracking system for all vessels, new weighing procedures for fisheries products and reinforced catch registration rules for recreational fisheries;
- Enhanced traceability of EU and imported fishery and aquaculture products. Due to digitisation, controls will be made possible all along the supply chain for all fishery and aquaculture products whether imported or coming from the EU;
- Reinforced rules on fishing gear. Abandoned, lost or disposed fishing gear is a source of marine litter in European seas. The Commission is proposing to improve reporting on lost fishing gear, in line with the [proposal](#) to reduce the impact of certain plastic products in the environment in addition to producers helping cover the costs of waste management and clean-up of fishing gear;
- Revising the mandate of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) to fully align its objectives with the Common Fisheries Policy and upgrade its inspection powers.

The revised rules will strengthen compliance, modernise data management and ultimately make control more efficient to the benefit of EU fisheries. Improving the way in which the EU can monitor the enforcement of EU rules on fisheries will intensify the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. It will further support the effective implementation of

the landing obligation, which comes fully into force as of next year and requires that fishermen land all catches to stop the wasteful practice of throwing unwanted fish back to the sea.

## **Background**

The current Control Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009), which entered into force in 2010, has played an important role in stepping up compliance by Member States with the commonly agreed rules of the Common Fisheries Policy. It has also helped foster a level playing field among operators. The control system has been designed to:

- ensure that that only the allowed quantities of fish are caught and [illegal fishing](#) is prevented
- allow data collection to manage fishing opportunities
- clarify [the respective roles of EU countries and the Commission](#)
- ensure rules and sanctions are uniformly applied across the EU
- enable the tracing and checking of fisheries products throughout the supply chain, from net to plate.

The Commission's proposal will now go to the European Parliament and Council for adoption.

## **For More Information**

[Commission proposal](#)

[Questions and Answers](#)

[EU's Common Fisheries Policy](#)

[European Fisheries Control Agency \(EFCA\)](#)