

Theme Session O

Landings obligation as a pathway towards the integration of CFP and MSFD – lessons learned and forward look after 2015

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The year 2015 represents an important transition year for high level marine and maritime policies. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) set the global imperative to manage fish stocks according to the MSY concept by 2015. The European Common Fisheries Policy will start implementing its reform in 2015, with the objectives of attaining fishing mortality rates consistent with MSY and eradicating discards. At the same time, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) commits European Member States to implement management measures by 2015 in order to achieve Good Environmental Status of European Seas by 2020.

These policies interlink and overlap with regards to sustainable use of marine ecosystems and marine conservation, and all together they are expected to have major implications for current and future fisheries management. As one of the most radical changes, it is expected that the future landings obligation, which will shift from a history of landings quotas to the new paradigm of catch quotas (or catch limits), will transform European fisheries. The goals of such a policy are to (i) motivate selective fishing (thereby reducing the fishing mortality of fish previously discarded), and (ii) make the best use of unwanted catches. Potential side-effects of this policy might be useful, for example, unregistered fishing mortality may be reduced if all fish killed as a result of fishing are landed and reported. However, other side-effects might affect other policies objectives, such as increased overall fishing mortality, or less profitable and fuel-efficient fisheries.

Catch limits have been introduced in several other countries (e.g. USA, Iceland, Norway, and New Zealand), and experiences from these areas can inform on the likely changes to transpire in European fisheries. They have indicated that the success of catch limits depends on several factors, including among others: the practicality of regulations, the clarity of definitions (when is a fish "caught"?), the penal handling of illegal catches and their detection risk, and the economic incentives linked to the landing obligation.

This session will provide an opportunity to discuss the changes in fisheries management required to address the trade-offs between multiple high level policies upon us, with a more specific (but not sole) focus on the role of catch limits and landing obligation in achieving objectives is welcome, but not exclusive. Learning from the past in preparing for the future, we aim to review the implementation process for the policy transitions, assess the progresses achieved so far, address the challenges to science and explore how they could continue developing further in the future. We are looking for contributions from different disciplinary angles (social, economic, political, legal, ecological).

We invite contributions on e.g.:

- Integration of landings obligation programs into other high levels policies objectives

- Ecological impacts of landing obligation, including changes in the biodiversity and size range of catches
- Changes in fishing behaviour and incentives structure
- Social and economic costs and benefits as well as logistical and administrative issues in relation to landing previously unwanted catches
- Compliance with landings obligation and with other fisheries policies
- Fisheries data collection under new policies
- Managing catch limits in mixed fisheries
- The role of scientific advice in developing and implementing policy transitions.