Press release | 13.07.2011

Fisheries policy reform

Key challenges for EU fisheries not solved under Commission's timid proposals

The European Commission today presented long-awaited proposals on reforming the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. The Greens believe the communication does not properly address the core challenges facing EU fisheries, notably by failing to set environmental sustainability as the underlying goal of the CFP and by proposing a market-based system for the right to fish, which treats fish as commodities, rather than a common good.

Commenting on the overall approach of the Commission, Green MEP and fisheries expert **Isabella Lövin** said:

"Without abundant fish stocks, there will be no fishing industry or fishing communities. The main priority of any overarching fisheries policy should therefore be to set environmental sustainability as a prerequisite for economic and social sustainability related to fisheries. Politicians need to provide concrete guidelines on what to do when these goals collide. The failure of the Commission to adopt this approach will ensure the continued failure of the CFP to conserve either fish or jobs and livelihoods related to fishing. This is a fundamental shortcoming."

Commenting on the proposals on the rights to fish Green MEP and fisheries expert **Raül Romeva** said:

"The Commission's proposal to set up a market-based system to determine who has the right to fish is nothing short of scandalous. Granting tradable fishing rights (like quotas) could lead to speculation and the concentration of fishing rights in the hands of those who can afford to pay the most. Worse, if fishing permits are granted based on historical participation in the fishery, the system will reward those who have been most responsible for over-fishing in the past.

"Fish stocks are not commodities however; they are natural, renewable resources, which are part of the common good. Instead, those involved in fishing activities should be required to demonstrate that their activities do not damage the marine environment and that they make significant contributions to coastal fishing communities, in order to gain the 'right' to fish."

Commenting on the proposals on fish quotas and discards, **Isabella Lövin** concluded:

"The current wasteful system of discards clearly needs to be ended. While it is welcome that the Commission

has recognised this, its timid approach does not go far enough. Not only does the proposed "ban" only apply to a limited number of fish species that are commercially exploited, it also fails to establish a link between the ban and the necessary improvements in fisheries techniques to improve selectivity and ensure that unwanted fish are not caught in the first place."

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