

Multiannual plan for fish stocks in the western waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks

2018/0074(COD) - 25/03/2019 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a multi-annual plan for stocks fished in western and adjacent waters and for fisheries exploiting these stocks.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2019/472 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for stocks fished in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulations (EU) 2016/1139 and (EU) 2018/973, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007 and (EC) No 1300/2008.

CONTENT: the Regulation establishes a multiannual plan for the demersal stocks listed below, including deep-sea stocks, in the Western Waters, and, where those stocks extend beyond the Western Waters, in their adjacent waters, and for the fisheries exploiting those stocks.

Objectives

The multi-annual plan shall provide for the long-term management of fishing activities in the western waters, which include both northern and southern western waters, as well as the waters surrounding Madeira and the Canary Islands. The demersal stocks concerned are roundfish, flatfish, cartilaginous fish and Norway lobsters (*Nephrops norvegicus*) living at or near the bottom of the water column.

The Regulation sets fishing objectives for the main target species. These shall be fished according to the principle of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) while by-catches will be managed in accordance with the precautionary approach. The new rules take into account the fact that the most important demersal stocks are caught in mixed fisheries.

The plan shall contribute to ending discards, avoiding and reducing unwanted catches as much as possible and implementing the landing obligation. It shall implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries management to ensure that the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem, in particular on vulnerable habitats and protected species, are minimised.

Measures under the plan shall be taken in accordance with the best available scientific advice. Where there is insufficient data, a comparable degree of conservation of the relevant stocks shall be pursued.

The Regulation also provides for:

- the possibility for an appropriate advisory council to recommend to the Commission a management approach to limit year-to-year variations in the fishing opportunities for a particular stock. The Council may take any such recommendations into account when fixing fishing opportunities provided that these fishing opportunities comply with the plan;
- the introduction of appropriate safeguard measures in the event that the stock size falls below these levels. Safeguard measures shall include the reduction of fishing opportunities and specific conservation measures when scientific advice states that remedial measures are needed;

- the possibility of taking technical measures in western waters for all stocks.

Recreational fishing

Where recreational fishing mortality has a significant impact on a stock managed on the basis of MSY, the Council could set non-discriminatory limits for recreational fishermen based on transparent and objective criteria. Where appropriate, Member States should take the necessary and proportionate measures for monitoring and data collection in order to make a reliable estimate of the actual levels of recreational catches.

The landing obligation would not apply to recreational fishing,

The Regulation also provides that the TACs for sole in the Western Channel (ICES Division 7e) under the plan would be subject to fishing effort limitations.

Regional cooperation

Member States with a direct interest in management in the northern western waters could submit common recommendations for the northern western waters and Member States with a common interest in management in the southern western waters could submit common recommendations for the southern western waters. These Member States could also jointly submit common recommendations for all these waters.

By 27 March 2024 at the latest, and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and the Council on the results and impact of the plan on the stocks to which this Regulation applies and on the fisheries exploiting those stocks.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 24.3.2019.