

Conservation of fishery resources: stock of cod in the Baltic Sea, multi-annual plan

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The Council held a policy debate on cod stocks in the Baltic Sea in order to provide the necessary guidelines for the work ahead, pending the opinion of the European Parliament which was not expected until early-June.

On the basis of a questionnaire Ministers concentrated in their debate on the general objectives of the multi-annual plan for cod recovery in the Baltic, on different options for effort-management and associated control provisions and on how to take sufficient account of the specific needs of small scale fisheries.

The Council noted general support for the objectives of the plan.

- As regards the type of effort-management and control provisions, several issues were mentioned, namely the outcome of the Baltic Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting¹, the fight against illegal fishing, the need for revision of the biomass reference and cross reference to the electronic logbook Regulation.

- With regard to small-scale fisheries, the Council took note of the unanimous request for the system to be made flexible and simple, taking into account of safety at work, days at sea and summer closing in relation to the biology of Baltic cod as simple means of control and bearing in mind the principle of not to creating unnecessary burdens on fishermen or control authorities.

The Council gave a mandate to the Council's preparatory bodies to continue the examination of the proposal, with a view to its adoption in June, subject to and pending the opinion of the European Parliament.

Commissioner Borg welcomed the wide support for the proposal's objectives and indicated that the Commission would cooperate with the Presidency to achieve the adoption of the proposed Regulation in the proposed timeframe.