

Fish stock conservation: multiannual plan for the Baltic salmon stock

2011/0206(COD) - 12/08/2011 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a multiannual plan for the Baltic salmon stock and the fisheries exploiting that stock.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the Salmon Action Plan, adopted through the International Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission in 1997, expired in 2010. Contracting parties to the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) have urged the EU to develop a long term plan for the management of Baltic salmon.

Recent scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF) state that some Baltic salmon river stocks are outside safe biological limits and that a multiannual plan should be developed at European level.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the Commission considers that the proposed measures will achieve the following objectives:

- rebuilding all wild Baltic salmon rivers' stocks to safe biological limits and favourable conservation statuses by limiting the fishing pressure on weak salmon river stocks;
- re-establishing self-sustaining salmon populations in rivers with extirpated or very weak populations which would lead to higher overall wild salmon production;
- safeguarding the genetic diversity of wild salmon as stocking of reared salmon with potential negative genetic effect will be substantially decreased;
- predictability of fishing opportunities as a result of clear harvest control rules;
- increased production of wild salmon and recovery of all wild rivers stocks which will in the long term give increased fishing opportunities;
- benefits for the tourism sector with the potential to grow due to increased fishing opportunities of wild salmon both at sea and in rivers.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 43 (2) of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the objective of the proposal is to establish a multiannual plan for the management of the fisheries on the salmon stocks in the Baltic Sea to ensure that the conservation status of the entire Baltic stock, i.e. including all salmon rivers' stocks, is favourable and provide for sustainable exploitation.

The specific objectives of the initiative shall be to ensure that: (a) the Baltic salmon stock is exploited in a sustainable way according to the principle of maximum sustainable yield; (b) the genetic integrity and diversity of the Baltic salmon stock is safeguarded.

The main elements of the plan are:

- objectives, and targets (reach 75% of potential smolt production in each wild salmon river within ten years after the entry into force of this regulation);
- TAC based on constant fishing mortality rate of 0.1. The TAC will only cover marine fisheries but will include masters of non-fishing vessels offering services for recreational fisheries;
- obligation for Member States to define and implement technical conservation measures such as closed areas and seasons to protect migrating spawners in their coastal waters not later than 24 months from the entry into force of the plan;
- a phasing out of release of salmon in rivers with man made obstacles and without potential for re-establishment of self sustaining wild salmon populations in order to protect the genetic diversity of the wild stocks;
- financial assistance from the EFF for direct restocking of rivers with potential for self-sustaining wild salmon populations as a conservation measure for the wild salmon stock.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: this proposal has no budgetary implication for the Union budget.

DELEGATED ACTS: the proposal contains provisions empowering the Commission to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.