



GREENPEACE

Manifesto for fair fisheries

Joint declaration between Greenpeace, NUTFA, UK Fishermen's Associations and fishermen on the reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy.

We, the undersigned organisations (Greenpeace UK, the New Under Ten Fishermen's Association (NUTFA), and various UK Fishing Associations), make the following declaration:

The EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has not worked and is not working for fish, fishermen, the marine environment, coastal communities, or consumers. The system is broken and the 2012 reform process is our best, last chance to fix it.

The CFP favours the most influential parts of the European fishing industry, often those operating with the highest environmental impact and least benefit to society. Meanwhile, responsible fishermen, who use sustainable methods, are in real danger of losing their livelihoods. The CFP currently threatens the future of our fish, our fishermen and the coastal communities that rely on them. The UK's maritime heritage is at stake.

Under both current and past policies – and with the agreement of the UK government – taxpayers’ money and the majority of quota (the right to fish) has been funnelled to large scale fishing operations across Europe, increasing the catching capacity of Europe’s offshore fleet, whilst at the same time, disenfranchising smaller scale, sustainable fishing operations. Funding has also bought European vessels the right to fish in developing countries, where highly industrialised operations are threatening the livelihoods of millions of local fishermen who depend on their inshore fishery for food and income. Subsidies continue to go to operators who have been convicted of infringements, putting even greater pressure on hardworking fishermen who abide by laws that are already unfairly stacked against them.

Sustainable, low impact fishing is being put at risk at home and abroad by the bad design and poor implementation of the CFP. Over three quarters of the boats in the UK fleet are under 10 metres in length, and the vast majority of these vessels use seasonally diverse, selective methods that produce high quality fish, and that have little impact on the marine environment. The small scale fleet also contributes 65% of full time employment at sea, and generates many shore based ancillary jobs, as well as being integral to the social, economic and cultural fabric of coastal communities.

Yet despite the many benefits it provides, this fleet has suffered under an unjust and imbalanced policy, which threatens the very future of these UK fisheries and communities. The under 10 metre UK fishing fleet was disadvantaged on entry to the European Union, discriminated against when quotas were introduced and is now being disenfranchised through lack of fair access to fishing opportunities.

The new CFP must support sustainable, low impact fisheries, including those in the small scale fleet and apply the responsible principles and practices implemented by these fisheries to the allocation of all fishing access. This was recognised in the European Parliament resolution on the Common Fisheries Policy Green Paper adopted in February 2010.¹ This resolution highlighted that, while local fishing communities should be given primary access to fish stocks, access rights should no longer be based solely on the criterion of historical catches. Rather, environmental and social criteria should be introduced to determine who should have access to publically owned fishery resources.

We all have a common interest in the future of our oceans and our fishing communities, large and small. A recent study² showed that restoring just 43 out of over 150 fish stocks would increase the number of UK fishermen by 46%. The value to the UK of restoring these stocks was calculated at over £400 million a year.

This is our last chance to create a CFP that will deliver genuine ecological sustainability, in order to ensure social and economic benefits now and in the future. The health and wellbeing of future generations are dependent on the decisions made today.

1. European Parliament report and resolution on the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (2009/2106(INI), Paragraph 40 .

2. Crilly, R and Estaban, A. (2012) Jobs lost at sea. Overfishing and the jobs that never were. London: nef.

We call on the UK government, the fishing industry, retailers, restaurateurs and all those for whom fish is an integral part of life, to show support for local, sustainable, coastal fishermen and be a voice for radical reform of the CFP. Together, we demand reforms to the CFP that will:

1) Give the right to fish to those who fish in the right way.

- The new CFP must grant priority access to those fishermen who have the least impact on the environment and add the most value to local fishing activities. The granting of fishing quotas, licences and concessions for days at sea must be linked to the performance of individual operators based on environmental and social criteria, and not rely on the operator's economic power (as is often the case under the current quota system in the UK, and would occur under the European Commission's proposed transferable fishing concessions).
- The CFP reform package includes proposals to reserve a proportion of fishing opportunities for operators who provide high levels of social and environmental benefits to the community. This provision must cover all or at least a significant proportion of fishing rights.
- In the UK, the government must acknowledge that quota (the right to fish) is a public good, not a private property right; and allocate its own quota in a way which rewards sustainable fishing methods and protects coastal communities.

- Member States, including the UK, must be able to apply conservation measures to any and all boats fishing in their inshore waters (up to 12 nautical miles [nm]). At present foreign vessels with historical rights under Annex I of the CFP fishing between 6 and 12nm are not subject to these restrictions. This is bad for the UK's inshore marine environment and both discriminates against and threatens local low impact, sustainable fishers. The new CFP must provide a level playing field for all operators in this respect.

2) Stop supporting destructive fishing practices in Europe and around the world.

- The European fleet receives several billion euros in direct and indirect subsidies every year, much of it still spent on destructive and sometimes even illegal fishing operations. The new European Marine and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) must instead focus on helping fishing communities transition to a more sustainable approach, including support for the collection and management of the data needed to underpin this approach. Penalties for those who contravene EMFF regulations must be severe yet proportionate, with a requirement to repay contributions where serious abuse is proven.
- European vessels that fish outside European waters often fish in less regulated fisheries or ignore local rules, putting at risk the health of local ecosystems and the livelihoods of local fishermen. Under the new CFP, European rules must apply equally to all European vessels wherever they fish.

3) Put the health of our seas and oceans – and the fish stocks they support – at the very heart of the CFP.

- 72% of European fish stocks are overfished. This is putting the future wellbeing of Europe's seas and our coastal communities at risk. We must have clear deadlines and goals to restore stocks to significantly healthier levels. The new CFP must ensure that, by 2015, all fish stocks, for which scientific advice is available, are at population levels above those that can produce Maximum Sustainable Yield, and by 2020 for all other fish stocks. The implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management should be a prerequisite of the new CFP.
- 1.3 million tonnes of fish are discarded from European vessels in the north east Atlantic every year. It has been shown that this is entirely unacceptable to the public and to fishermen alike. The reformed CFP must contain clear, fixed and enforceable timescales for an end to this practice. At the same time, sufficient support through the EMFF must be provided to ensure that fishers and scientists can continue to work together effectively to meet the deadlines set.
- It is estimated that EU fishing fleets can, in many cases, exert fishing pressure on stocks that is two to three times the sustainable level.³ The CFP must make provision to achieve a full and detailed understanding of overcapacity, ensuring that fishing capacity is assessed in relation to the state of stocks in target fisheries. Member States must establish programmes to tackle overcapacity where it exists, and be consistent with regional fisheries management plans.

These in turn should include clear targets and support for capacity reduction, alongside measures to ensure that fishing rights are given only to those who fish sustainably.

This manifesto is supported by:

Aldeburgh Fishermen's Association
Eastbourne Fishermen's Association
Felixstowe Ferry Fishermen's Association
Hardway Fishermen's Association
Hastings Fisherman's Protection Society
Hayle Fishermen's Association
Land's End Inshore Fishermen's Association
Mevagissey Fishermen's Association
Mudford and District Fishermen's Association
Plymouth Fishermen's Association
Poole & District Fishermen's Association
South West Commercial Rod and Line Fishermen
Swanage Fishermen's Association
Thanet Fishermen's Association
The Orford and District Inshore Fishermen's Association

3. Commission Working Document (2008): Reflections on further reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.