



THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY



TUTORIAL 2

Discover the set of rules established to manage European fisheries and how LIFE can make your voice heard!

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The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the set of rules established to manage the **European fishing fleet and to conserve fish stocks**.

It has had a difficult evolution since its creation in 1983, with many fishers blaming it for the loss of thousands of fishing jobs and the reduction of many fish stocks.

It is subject to a reform process every ten years, and its latest incarnation came into force in 2014. This was the first time that it was subject to co-decision making between the Council and the European Parliament, making it more reflective of the view of the public who overwhelmingly support small scale fishers across Europe.

Within its 51 Articles, the current CFP contains **3 main pillars** :

1) The Basic Regulation: the main regulation dealing with fisheries management and policies within **community and international waters**. It sets objectives such as long term sustainability of fish stocks through reaching Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for all stocks by 2015 where possible, and by 2020 at the latest.

Measures to reach these objectives include the Landing Obligation (Discard Ban), Multi-Annual Plans for each fishing Region, allocation of fishing opportunities, the management of fishing capacity and the implementation of ecosystem based approach to fisheries management.

2) The Common Organisation of the Market: an instrument designed to strengthen the role of producers and consumers in providing healthy, sustainable, affordable, fishery products through setting appropriate rules for producer organizations, marketing standards, consumer information, competition rules and market intelligence.

3) The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF): a financial instrument allocated via Member States to provide stakeholders with the funding necessary to support the CFP in achieving its objectives.

For small scale fishers using **low impact gears**, there is much in the latest CFP to celebrate. The Basic Regulation now includes the **promise to contribute to a fair standard of living for small scale coastal fishers** and the **promotion of coastal fishing activities** in its objectives, and calls on Member States to give **preferential access to small scale**, artisanal or coastal fishermen in the 12 miles' zone. Most importantly **Article 17** obliges Member States to use transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature when allocating fishing opportunities, and to provide incentives to fishing vessels deploying selective fishing gear or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact, such as reduced energy consumption or habitat damage.

Tutorial 1 explained the role of the Council of Ministers in fixing the TACs on an annual basis. TACs, based on scientific advice from ICES [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea], are the share of fishing rights distributed among Member States who in turn allocate those fishing rights to their own fleet. However, the majority of Member States, rather than following the spirit, or for that matter, the letter of Article 17, tend to base quota allocations only on the historic track records of fishing companies. **This system rewards those who fished the most during the reference period, rather than those who fished in the most sustainable way and who were often not asked or required to record their catches to develop track records.**

What is the role of LIFE and what can LIFE do for you?

The latest CFP is not perfect but does now offer hope to smaller scale operators, but only if it is implemented effectively. The role of the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) is to ensure that you, as a small scale fisher, have a voice at EU level in the decisions made there that directly affect your livelihood both now and in the future.

At LIFE, we believe that those who fish sustainably and have a strong economic and social value to their local community should be **rewarded** by being granted preferential fishing rights as required under Article 17. In this respect, **Art. 17 is one of LIFE's priorities** but we will only succeed with your help and support – we can't do it alone!

LIFE works with and for its members. We are your voice at European level and wherever else you need us to be to support you.

