



Sea Fisheries Protection Authority

Consultation on Reform

Of the

Common Fisheries Policy

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Background to this submission

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) was established on the 1st of January 2007.

The SFPA was set up as an independent fisheries control authority and is charged with the enforcement of fisheries legislation and the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The SFPA has a dual regulatory role in seafood safety and in sea fisheries conservation. Our role in sea fisheries conservation is to ensure compliance with Irish legislation and legislation which gives effect to the [European Union's Common Fisheries Policy](#). The objective of the Common Fisheries Policy is to 'ensure exploitation of living aquatic resources that provides sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions' in other words to secure a profitable future for the fishing industry.

The SFPA's regulatory role in seafood safety is to protect public health and consumers' interests by ensuring that seafood consumed, distributed, marketed or produced in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene and enjoys the highest reputation in the market place.

The SFPA is committed to moving forward with the industry and is mindful of its responsibility to provide guidance and help whenever possible and at all time promote a culture of compliance. Central to this commitment is the SFPA's determination to protect the interests of lawful fishermen by detecting and deterring the activity of non-compliant fishermen whose illegal fishing activity damages commercial fish stocks, is unfair commercial competition and jeopardises the sustainability of fishing business.

Conservation & Sustainability.

Conservation and Sustainability are both central pillars of the CFP and will continue to have an important role in the reformed CFP. To achieve conservation and stability the CFP reform envisages a number of key targets, each of which will influence the business model the SFPA will adopt to meet its responsibilities under national and European legislation under a reformed CFP.

1. Attaining Maximum Sustainable Yield as conservation target by 2015 deadline

Attaining MSY in the timeframe suggested will require reduced fishing mortality, reduced fishing effort resulting in less revenue for fishermen until fishing opportunities improve over time. It has been estimated to meet the 2015 MSY target that fishing mortality may have to be reduced by up to 50 %. These are conditions that may result in non compliance. SFPA will need to implement rigorous risk assessment and risk management regimes to identify and monitor the vessels in Irish waters that provide the greatest threat of non compliance. Achievement of MSY will require the introduction of multi annual management plans and recovery plans. Compliance with these plans

by all vessels fishing in the Irish EEZ will require active and focused surveillance, monitoring and control.

Well managed fisheries that provide a sustainable living for producers and processors is a key goal of a reformed Common Fisheries Policy. The economic security for fishers and processors who base their business model on well-managed fisheries has the benefit of increasing the potential for “buy in” by these participants into overall compliance with the rules. The lack of belief in the current CFP (as a policy that will lead to sustainably exploitable fisheries) is used as a rationale for illegal fishing as currently many producers and processors see no tangible benefit to be gained from complying with the regulations of the CFP.

The trend of increasingly complex technical measures coupled with the almost inevitable annual reduction of quotas militates against longer-term thinking by fishermen and cultivates a “catch it while you can” mentality. The current focus of many fishermen is on maximising catches to meet short-term objectives while disregarding the damage this can do to fish stocks and the resulting lower prices paid for fish in a marketplace where prices are primarily dictated by volumes for sale.

Sustainable yields from fishing effort will promote the responsible participation by stakeholders over a longer time horizon and provides the strong basis for the promotion of the benefits of compliance with all of the legislative burdens on the sector; control; food safety; employment and marine safety law.

Role of the SFPA

The CFP places a legal responsibility on each Member State to ensure that the rules of the CFP are complied with by all fishing vessels operating within fisheries limits of the coastal Member State (in the case of Ireland the lucrative fisheries within our 200 mile limit) and to ensure compliance with the rules of fishing agreements with Third Countries, by all Irish registered fishing vessels regardless where they operate.

Effective conservation, control and compliance promotion requires that the fisheries enforcement regime in place is credible both within Ireland (with fishers, processors and consumer interests) and at a European level. Nationally there must be a belief that the SFPA is consistent and fair in the application of control across the industry and will act against those determined to operate illegally. Internationally there must be a belief that fishing operations within “Irish” waters requires compliance with the rules of the CFP and failure to operate lawfully will bring with it a high risk of sanction imposed by an Irish conservation and control system that has both the capacity and competence to detect offenders and take appropriate measures when required to do

so. In this regard there may be lessons to be learnt from the respect given to the Norwegian Authorities by fishers who operate within Norwegian waters.

In the context of CFP reform the SFPA will continue to provide effective controls in Irish ports through a combination of providing a physical presence to conduct direct inspections of fishing vessels and fisheries establishments and the increased use of remote sensing and automated data verification techniques to identify high-risk non-compliance targets.

This land-based conservation and control strategy will operate in conjunction with the further development of effective cooperation and coordination with our national and international enforcement partners. Over the next few years the SFPA will continue its programme of agreeing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with other Member States to facilitate the management of fisheries cases, exchange fisheries data and inspector exchange programmes. It is also anticipated that the SFPA will participate with Joint inspection Deployment Programmes (JDP) with other Member States and the Community Fisheries Control Agency (CFCA)

The CFP reforms that are likely to reduce fishing effort and the continuing need to record catches and related fisheries data accurately point to the increased use of remote monitoring, automated cross-verification of fisheries data and coordination and cooperation with other Member States by the SFPA. The emergence of remote sensing systems such as Electronic Logbook systems (ERS), the placement of VMS on more fishing vessels and the use of Automated (vessel) Identification Systems (AIS) along with other remote surveillance systems currently under development will provide the SFPA with the means to identify fishing vessels who associated fisheries data indicates probable illegal fishing activity.

There are many reasons why a Member State must ensure that there is a “level playing field” internationally when it comes to application of the CFP. The protection and improvement of fisheries stocks through compliance by one or more Member States is easily undermined by non-compliance or misbehaviour by another Member States or by their fishing fleets. These primary negative effects are further compounded by a sense of unfairness on the part of those fishermen who are subject to firm fisheries control but see commercial advantage going to competitors operating under less stringent control systems. This sense of unfairness significantly undermines a culture of compliance that is an essential part of a well managed fishery. To meet this challenge the SFPA is placing more emphasis in developing transparent working relationships with the control authorities of other Member States that promote coordinated strategies to detect and deter illegal fishing.

2. Elimination of discards through landing obligation and necessary management rules with timeline for introduction.

A key feature of CFP reform will be the reduction of discards of fish at sea with a view to eliminating the practice of discarding to the greatest degree possible through the use of more selective fishing gear, more real-time fishery closures and adjusted fish quota profiles. It is anticipated that the discard ban will be introduced gradually and will focus initially on single species fisheries moving to the more challenging mixed species fisheries over a longer time frame. It is also envisaged that incentives to facilitate compliance will be provided to the industry. Compliance with the discard rules in the Irish EEZ will be policed effectively by the SFPA, Naval Service and AirCorps. This control effort must be supported by vigilant implementation of the discard ban by other Member State to ensure that non-compliance does not generate economic advantage. It should be recognised that it is difficult to police illegal practices of high-grading or slipping and this could afford fishers an opportunity to use these illegal practices to maximise the value of catches taken from restricted quotas.

A discard ban may have a positive effect on the environment. It should lead to a lower level of fish mortality as fishers will have to use gear which is more selective. There will require changes in the current quota system & by-catch regulations.

Gear selectivity as means of eliminating discards has a cost to the industry and will lead to loss of valuable by catch for example in 'Prawn fisheries', however, this may be compensated for in awarding additional effort days. In other fisheries there are indications of cost reduction from larger mesh sizes in respect of fuel consumption.

Area closures could place a disproportionate cost on small-scale operators who rely on adjacent fishing grounds. Additional technical measures to eliminate discards could place a significant burden on marginal operations. Area closures which exclude operators for the purpose of preventing discards should make provision for sentinel or highly selective fisheries.

Discard rules in relation to minimum sizes are effective measures to prevent or deter the creation of a market in undersize species, transparent market control will be necessary in all markets to protect juvenile marine organism.

Role of the SFPA

New legislation will be required to allow SFPA to take the necessary action to deter and prevent discarding, high grading and slipping by all vessels operating in the Irish EEZ – a task that should not be underestimated. Any incentives provided to fishers to comply with the new discard rules e.g. additional fishing effort, will require active monitoring and control. The policing of the elimination of discards is likely to be difficult and in this regard the trials being conducted to

develop remote monitoring systems (e.g. CCTV) are to be viewed with interest. Alternative means of ensuring compliance could include observer programmes but such programmes are resource intensive and are impossible to apply to large numbers of fishing vessels.

Increased inspection and enforcement effort will be needed to ensure compliance with new technical requirements including more checks on fishing gear during direct inspections of fishing vessels in the ports. In this regard checks on mesh sizes, separation grid characteristics and the placement of other escapement features of fishing gear are likely to be more complex and time consuming.

New regulatory roles for SFPA will include the monitoring of landings of un-marketable catches or catches taken in excess of a quota to ensure these fish are not placed on the market in competition with regular fish. It is possible that the SFPA could have a role in management of the disposal of these products but as yet this role is not defined.

3. Multi-annual plans focused on essential objectives, targets, boundaries and time frames, based on the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management

The success of multi-annual plans can depend greatly on there being a level playing field in regard to the consistent enforcement of management measures amongst Member States. The EU Commission are understood to be developing recovery plans for 28 % of pelagic stocks & 32 % of demersal stocks. Fishers frequently complain of the lack of a level playing field in the application of Community Fisheries Law (such complaints are not confined to Ireland). In a case where a Member State make a genuine effort to put in place an effective system of fisheries control the fishers operating in that Member State may end up being at a commercial disadvantage in comparison to the fishers of a Member State where the fisheries law is not so rigorously applied. This commercial disadvantage can be further compounded by damage to fish stocks done by the non-compliant fishers, sometimes leading to the collapse of key commercial fisheries.

This scenario applies particularly in fisheries where the participants are from many Member States, the lucrative fishing waters West of Ireland being a prime example within the EU.

The SFPA recommends that consideration be given to introducing a system for incentivising Member States to have a robust system of fisheries control in place. This would involve annual assessment and independent audit by CFCA based Community Fisheries Inspectors or Commission auditors. Member States found to be meeting their obligations under the CFP might be eligible to get bonus fishing quota or fishing effort allocations above the fishing opportunities currently allocated according to the proportions established under the relative stability model. This would have the potential to minimise the ecosystem impacts of illegal fishing and prioritise long-term-sustainability. However experience has shown that recovery plans have had differing

levels of success. The Northern Hake Recovery Plan has been a great success, however, the Cod Recovery Plan for the North Sea, Irish Sea & Western Waters has had mixed success with no recovery evident in the Irish Sea to date.

The Irish citizen endures a significant cost in order to exercise jurisdiction in western waters, measures to provide the jurisdictional state with compensation for cost incurred where OMS are exploiting opportunities must be considered.

Joint Deployment Programmes have provided a basis for standardisation of approach among enforcement agencies, shared resources supporting Multi annual plan have potential for increasing effectiveness of enforcement effort at a reduced cost

Role of the SFPA

SFPA will continue to coordinate the National enforcement response and manage cooperation with neighbouring jurisdictions. Effectiveness of Multi Annual Plans may require increase monitoring of fishing activities outside the Jurisdiction, including landing controls and or entry exit measures. In this regard the recently adopted Control Regulations provide for secure websites where Member States can post sensitive fisheries data and other information. The SFPA would like to see these websites used to post data on the management and distribution of fish quotas within national management systems so that this information can be included with other fisheries data to identify high risk non-compliance inspection targets. In a similar vein the SFPA would like to see the findings of EU audit missions published on these secure websites to increase transparency and confidence in the systems of control in place in the different Member States operating under the CFP. The realistic comparison of performance between different Member States is facilitated by the new definitions for fishery control inspections as contained in the Control Regulations.

As management plans are a central feature of the reform of the CFP and science is seen as a vital component of the management plan it is essential that SFPA continue to develop effective systems for the collection and analysis of data on fish catches and discards. This data is used to inform our control and enforcement activities as well as providing a basis for scientific evaluation on the state of the fish stocks.

4. Authorisation for Member States to take measures under EU law on multi-annual plans and technical conservation measures

A Member State currently has discretion to apply additional controls on its own Flag vessels.

However the proposal to authorise Member States to take measures on multi-annual plans and TCMs suggests the development of additional powers to impose controls on other flag vessels.

Provision of such autonomy by Member State in decision making would provide more control

over the fisheries in jurisdictional waters and could be of benefit to achievement of MSY. Ireland is a good example of a Member State with Jurisdiction over a large portion of lucrative European fisheries a move towards providing the Member State with additional Authority to proactively take conservation measures could have many potential benefits, e.g. Monk Fish / Sea Bass fisheries are an example of controls that have a positive benefit as stock management tools but also adversely effects Irish fishers, the application of these management rules to other Member State fishers within the Irish Jurisdiction might be a more rational approach and a welcome outcome of CFP review.

JDP and recent work on control programs with other Member States provide a basis for developing enforcement measures close to the fishery and in cooperation with other interested Member States.

Role of the SFPA

The SFPA will continue to develop close working relationships with key Member States where either Irish registered fishing vessels operate or the fishing fleets of these Member States operate within the Irish 200 mile limits. Through the agreement of MoUs and cooperation in JDP operations it is envisaged that the regular exchange of fisheries data, information on fisheries cases and inspections, more pro-active cooperation between the Fisheries Monitoring Centres (FMC) and inspector exchanges will provide a firm platform to develop coordinated fisheries control programmes.

5. Fast-track procedures to adopt fisheries measures needed under environmental management (Natura 2000)

In order to progress this goal Ireland will first have to assess whether there is a need for fisheries management measures to be applied to the most micro level within certain Natura 2000 sites. The current focus of the Natura measures is to conserve marine habitats and birdlife. Accurate and complete scientific advice is required together with consultation with the industry & RAC's on the appropriate management of Natura sites.

Traditionally, these measures have taken time to be fully processed so fast-tracking may be beneficial to the environment interests and fishers alike coupled with a 3 month time-frame as envisaged to allow adoption of more permanent protection measures. Combining a fast track procedure with authority to 'take measures', has the capacity to ensure that effective environmental management measures to the benefit of all citizens are achievable in a timely manner. It is important to ensure that this does not lead to over regulation or an excessive compliance burden on the taxpayer.

Role of the SFPA

The geographical dispersion of Natura 2000 sites and the development of environmental assessment will continue to make increasing demands on the inspection resources of the SFPA as more sites are included in environmental assessment. The need for local self policing measures and automated fisheries monitoring systems is clear in the context of ensuring cost effective controls. The SFPA is currently monitoring two low cost purpose designed remote monitoring systems that are being developed for use by inshore fishers operating within or adjacent to established SACs. Unlike the monitoring systems currently deployed on larger fishing vessels monitoring systems for smaller inshore fishing vessels must have the capacity to report more frequently (i.e. 5min intervals), be suitable for installation onto very small fishing vessels and be low cost for the fishers to operate. It is the view of the SFPA that such systems are essential to monitor the activity of these inshore fishing fleets given the large number of such fishing vessels and the need to have spatial data on their activity to review and to prosecute illegal fishing and to have a rational basis to deploy inspection resources.

Data and Science

1. Obligation for Member States to collect and provide data and to prepare (regional) multi-annual data collection programmes.

The State has invested heavily in adopting the EU regulatory programmes which introduced the data capture of fisheries, IFIS/VMS/ERS etc. The State has the right to expect that Other Member States (OMS) have the same commitment to there obligation under EU Law. Fishers who comply with data recording have an expectation that OMS fishers are under the same obligation.

Transparent and timely access to all data is necessary and must be seen as a basic condition of access to fishing resources.

Any measures that provides assurance that there is not disproportionate burden on a particular Member State is to be welcomed.

Role of the SFPA

The SFPA has a critical function in the management and provision of fisheries data, this role will continue and develop in response to any new obligations, full scoping of the additional work load and reporting obligations on the Authority will be required.

SFPA will be required to take enforcement action against any vessel operating in the Irish EEZ where the data required is not provided in the format and time allowed.

It can be anticipated that in a reformed CFP there will be increased reliance on the use of fisheries data to monitor the fishing activity of fishers and there will be an increasing responsibility/obligation on individual Member States to have in place automated cross-checking and verification systems to monitor this fisheries data. The SFPA will continue to work to develop existing fisheries data systems to ensure that Ireland's data systems meet our EU obligations and provide a platform for the cooperation between fisheries enforcement agencies within Ireland and within the EU.

2. National fisheries research programmes with regional coordination among Member States

Co-operation is growing among Member States with adjacent waters and in areas where their fleets have common access and therefore common responsibility for sustaining their common resource targets. Research leads to a greater understanding of the fish stocks, their breeding patterns and ultimately their sustainability. Greater understanding may lead to more effective harvesting on a sustainable basis benefiting the Irish economy and the environment. Effective research combined with accurate and timely catch reporting are necessary to accurately assess the sustainable level of out take from a fishery. Regional coordination of such activities may offer the opportunity to benefit from efficiencies of scale and prevent duplication of effort.

Role of the SFPA

Catch reporting provides valuable data for scientific research into the sustainability of fisheries - the role of the SFPA as a primary source of such raw data and capacity to identify weakness and or inconsistency in the data will be an ongoing commitment. Enforcement measures act as a means of supporting the accuracy of data which supports research.

The SFPA will continue to make best use of the existing fisheries data management systems and seek to improve data exchange with key Member State partners.

Access to resources and fleet capacity

1. Transferable fishing concessions mandatory for large-scale fleets — with transferability at national level.

With a large resource rich area on our doorstep in which our national fleet operate using relatively speaking low fishing quotas the introduction of ITQ's has the potential to have a negative effect for Ireland with the risk of other Member State setting up companies in Ireland and buying ITQ's, as has been the experience in the UK.

Individual Transferable Quotas were first introduced in Iceland in the early 1980s and are now used in many countries worldwide. They are seen as a means of reducing fleet capacity and thereby removing the biggest problem within European fishing: that of fleet overcapacity. In Iceland and New Zealand the ITQ has led to consolidation of the industry into the hands of a small number of owners controlling the majority of the fleet and has led in some instances to the national resource of a country being controlled from overseas with the host country receiving little or no return from its resource.

At present the Irish fleet is segmented in such a way that the 'large scale fleet' (RSW - pelagic) is highly concentrated in a small number of operators, any further concentration would be likely to reduce the economic dividend as larger vessels may tend to process onboard.

Concentration of resources may act to move processing out of the jurisdiction and or to onboard processing. Transferable quotas must take account of the economic benefit to marginalised communities where seasonal processing has provided low grade but nonetheless vital onshore employment.

Role of the SFPA

Fewer operators prosecuting a fishery with greater access to the resources may reduce the motive to breach the rules of a fishery, however this does provide the means and opportunity where considerable reward for undetected breach is possible. The move to concentration may in time necessitate the deployment of Control observers on a large scale and may require enhanced role for the SFPA. On balance the SFPA considers the adoption of ITQ as a system of managing fishing opportunities as having the potential to creating more problems than it might solve.

Aquaculture

1. National strategic plans 2014-2020 on promotion of aquaculture

Ireland is well situated geographically to take advantage of the aquaculture industry. Ireland currently has a well-established multi-species industry which is very competitive and any further expansion of the industry must be positive. Aquaculture takes place in Ireland in socio-economic disadvantaged areas such as the along the Gaeltacht coastline in the west of Ireland and in Donegal. There is the potential that the aquaculture sector can help the recovery of Ireland's economy. Aquaculture developments have the potential to have a negative impact on the environment. Care will have to be taken in regard to site location, stock levels, chemical treatments used etc. The current proposal by BIM for offshore fish farms is positive as it has been shown that the impact on the environment is minimal with this type of system. Cages sited in

inshore lochs, in areas of little water movement have the potential for creating localised pollution of the water column and benthos.

Ireland as a net food producer stand to benefit from exports in a move to 'aquaculture' - fishermen may benefit from enhanced aquaculture and generate viable alternatives to catch fisheries.

Of its nature aquaculture tends to be located in remote regions and may become a source of valuable employment

Role of the SFPA

SFPA has a role in ensuring that seafood consumed, distributed, marketed or produced in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene and enjoys the highest reputation in the market place at home and abroad. This applies to the aquaculture industry particularly in respect of the bivalve sector and includes compliance with traceability requirements under the Fisheries Control Regulations.

2. Set up of a new Advisory Council for Aquaculture

Aquaculture development as a substitute for catch fisheries must be in a balanced manner which protects the quality of the marine littoral environment and protects the economic interests of all operators. Measures which may provide for the environmentally sensitive economic development of aquaculture industry may assist by reducing costs and easing the burden of compliance.

The development of a proactive advisory council would be seen to provide structure for a coordinated approach to aquaculture development which provides economic benefit to the regions would be something the SFPA would be pleased to support.

Market policy

1. Empowerment of Producers Organisations and Inter-branch Organisations to increase their role and responsibility on production and marketing planning with emphasis in sustainable fishery resource management and reducing the impact of aquaculture activities.

Better marketing and value added may make Ireland more competitive, there may also be opportunities to be explored for new markets of by-catch species. The progressive elimination of discards will inevitably lead to a significant increase in by-catch species being landed and sold.

The new commercial activity raises the possibility for the money raised to be re-invested into funds for down time periods or periods where stocks are scarce or vulnerable. This system is already in place in Norway. Giving the industry ownership over the management of the

commercialisation of by-catches this could be a very positive step and help to achieve industry buy-in to the less palatable elements of a sustainable fishery management plan.

Current management of quota places a significant burden on the taxpayer in the management of the States fishery resources – greater involvement of PO's may provide a means of reducing the burden, however it carries the risk of a lack of control. PO's in the State tend to support the larger better organised operators, marginal operators may tend to have reduced voice in a scenario where power moves to Producer Organisations.

Role of the SFPA

SFPA currently liaise with the larger fisherman's representative organisations, with a move to empowerment of PO's additional structures may need to be put in place to formalise the management of the relationship and may need to be supported by legislation.

2. Modification of intervention regime, by setting up one single intervention mechanism for storage

Ireland currently avails of the present intervention system both in the operation of the carry-over and disposal facilities provided. A simplified single storage scheme has the potential of being a positive development.

Intervention acts as a price support, the SFPA would support simplification of intervention mechanisms particularly those that would tend to reduce support for unwanted fisheries products. Price supports provide a necessary floor for fishery products where supply exceeds demand; measures to reduce supply would better serve the interest of the taxpayer.

3. Fixing intervention prices at decentralised and adequate level.

Prices may fluctuate within markets dependant on particular species and catch availability. If market intervention prices were set locally they would more accurately reflect local market conditions and the true market price attainable for fish placed on the market. Care will be needed to avoid decentralised intervention prices being abused. There is an increased risk that larger commercial operators could artificially reduce prices to access intervention pricing and the subsequent storage and transport costs support. It would be the view of the SFPA that measures which may incentivise intervention should be avoided.

4. Strengthened consumer information and review of marketing standards.

Strengthened Consumer information may provide a marketing opportunity for consumers who value an ethically managed and sustainable resource, the costs of providing this information with a high level of granular detail is becoming less cost prohibitive. Review of marketing standard may have a value in some fisheries.

Role of the SFPA

The transparency of the supply chain from net to plate is already established in the new control measures, the SFPA has a regulatory role in ensuring compliance with traceability requirements - consumers of fisheries products may value the contribution of a trusted regulator in the provision of consumer information. The SFPA fully supports strengthened consumer information as it supports commercial advantage to law abiding fishers. The SFPA already plays a key role in giving independent information on the sustainable management of fisheries for fishers seeking environmental accreditation e.g. MSC.

Financial instruments

1. Full alignment with the Europe 2020 Strategy

Europe 2020 is an ambitious 10 year strategy proposed by the EU Commission for an Integrated Maritime Policy focused on promoting sustainable growth in maritime sectors and regions is planned. The plan looks at closing the innovation gap between fisheries and other sectors of the economy, allowing EU fishing fleets to become viable and competitive and to contribute to growth and jobs in fisheries dependent communities.

By increasing the focus on the viability of coastal and island communities depending on fishing, including through adding more value to fisheries-related activities and diversification towards other sectors of the maritime economy the programme should assist in sustaining the local coastal communities which are currently most impacted by financial contraction. A competitive and sustainable aquaculture which provides EU consumers with healthy and high nutrition products, sustainably grown would also provide much needed focus for these areas.

The policy moves towards large environmental developments each with its own implications: For example there is a pledge to cut greenhouse gases by 20%, to increase renewable energy use and to achieve 20% increase in energy efficiency. Vessels will have to improve their engines and use different fishing gear. Within the 0-12 mile zone greater restrictions are proposed for larger vessels. Fishing vessels < 10 m would have greater rights relative to larger fishing vessels. These small vessels are generally more environmentally friendly as they have lower fuel consumption as a proportion of the value of fish landed than larger vessels.

2. Conditionality provisions on compliance with the rules — both applicable to Member States and to individual operators

Making access to resources dependent on compliance ensures that the rights of the citizen are maintained across jurisdiction. The plan suggests a reward/risk mechanism to ensure compliance, which may ultimately develop to providing a basis for self regulation which may reduce burden on tax payer.

Governance

1. Expand the role of Advisory Councils in the implementation of the CFP at regional level.

The existing Producers Organisations (POs) and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) have a central role in bringing practical ideas and informed thinking into the decision-making arena. Consideration should be given to establishing an effective platform to disseminate information on initiatives for management or technical measures. Established industry bodies such as Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) and Producer Organisations (POs) can have a leading role in this area through specialist working groups or committees. The reformed CFP should provide for more structured engagement between the RACs and the Regulators to ensure the measures adopted are both practical and enforceable and provide for a harmonised control system across Member States.

Greater stakeholder involvement is welcomed but it will be important to get the correct balance of organisations involved in implementation. Not all organisations have sustainability or the environment as their number one concern. Within the RAC's, industry interests usually dominate, environmental NGO's tend to be sidelined which can lead to industry dominated decisions with NGO's refusing to endorse RAC recommendations.

Regionalisation of decision making brings the process closer to the citizens and is welcomed, a strong voice for the State is a prerequisite for participation. Establishment of a Western waters advisory Council may be a desirable outcome.

Role of SFPA

The Commission's view that regionalisation or as it is commonly called decentralisation will result in the development of key principles and the setting of targets centrally, by the Commission and decisions on implementation to achieve these targets being taken by the Member States with a direct interest in a particular fishery needs further consideration. A Coastal States National law, in the absence of EU legislation, cannot be enforced against other Member States fishing vessels.

2. New approach to stakeholder involvement on horizontal issues not covered by the Advisory Councils.

While the decision making process may appear to be a conflict between science and the rights of the fisher any expansion to other stakeholders ensures a more holistic governance of fisheries. Measures which may resolve issues across 'silos' may lead to better management of resources for all stakeholders and are welcomed as they may reduce cost and ease the compliance burden.

Role of the SFPA

As regulator the SFPA has a role in ensuring effective and enforceable measures are developed and that these measures are implemented consistently by all Member States equally. The SFPA has a good reputation amongst the fisheries control authorities of other Member States and is well placed to contribute to the debate on the on-going development of technical control measures.