

## PRESS RELEASE

### Making the CFP work for Low Impact Fisheries

Brussels, 23rd November 2011. At an event organised by Seas At Risk in the European Parliament yesterday, broad support was given by participants, including Commissioner Damanaki, for the inclusion of policy measures to encourage low impact fisheries in the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It is now up to MEPs and Fisheries Ministers to seize this once-in-a-decade opportunity of the reform of the CFP to give low impact fisheries the attention they deserve.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), Permanent Representatives, NGOs and industry figures attended the oversubscribed lunch time event, hosted by MEPs Anna Rosbach, Isabella Lövin and Christofer Fjellner. The presentations and discussions highlighted that fisheries have significant environmental impacts and noted that the Commission's proposal for the reform of the CFP fails to encourage the use of fishing methods that would have a lower carbon footprint, that are more selective and that would result in less damage to ecosystems.

**Commissioner Maria Damanaki**, giving the key note address, said: "We need the fish, but we need to fish in a smarter way...We will generously finance the selectivity of the gears."

**MEP Isabella Lövin**, also speaking at the event said: "There is a lack of a level playing field for low impact fisheries. Best practices should be applied and bad practices should be prohibited. So far, bad practices have in fact been subsidised by the EU and this must stop."

**Dr. Monica Verbeek, Executive Director of Seas At Risk** said: "The huge turnout for this event just shows how much interest there is in supporting low impact fisheries. The time is now for MEPs and governments to ensure the new Common Fisheries Policy includes incentives to continuously improve the environmental performance of the European fleet - promoting low impact fisheries. The most cost-effective and efficient way to do this is granting priority access to fisheries resources to operators with low impact. "

Speakers at the event presented the following key recommendations for policy measures that should be inserted into the new CFP:

- The introduction of Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFCs) should not be mandatory. Such a system may be efficient from an economic perspective but, on its own, it is unlikely to encourage and will probably act as a disincentive to the uptake of low impact fisheries.

## PRESS RELEASE

- Member States adopting TFCs should make use of a range of management tools to restrict or counter the negative effects on low impact fisheries. Clear guidance on appropriate tools should be included in the Basic Regulation. Preference in the allocation of TFCs to those vessels deploying low impact fishing gear and practices should be one of those tools.
- The proposed possibility for Member States to reserve up to 5% of national fishing opportunities for allocation according to eligibility criteria should be expanded gradually to a mandatory reserve of at least 25% of national fishing opportunities. Guidance on allocation criteria should be agreed at EU level to ensure this 25% reserve serves to promote low impact fisheries.
- There needs to be an explicit link between the proposed discard ban and selectivity to ensure that the discard ban is not just an encouragement to catch and land everything, but rather contributes to increased selectivity. Higher selectivity should be encouraged by prioritising the allocation of fishing opportunities to those who fish in the most selective way.

### For more information:

Brochure: [Turning the Tide for Low Impact Fisheries – Ways to improve the CFP reform Proposal](#)

Webpage: [Seas At Risk's green house gas emissions and fisheries webpage](#)

### For media enquiries:

Chris Carroll, Communications Officer at Seas At Risk: +32 2 893 0967

### NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

1. Seas At Risk is a European association of non-governmental environmental organisations working to protect and restore to health the marine environment of the European seas and the wider North East Atlantic.
2. Fisheries can have detrimental impacts on the marine environment, both directly on marine species and habitats and indirectly through the emission of greenhouse gases. These impacts can be reduced significantly by using more environmentally-friendly, low impact alternatives to common fishing methods. [2009 Low Impact Fisheries report](#)