



GUE/NGL MEPs on the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee (PECH)



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GUE/NGL is a confederal group in the European Parliament made up of 35 MEPs from 12 EU Member States working for peace, solidarity, social justice, equality, democracy and human rights in Europe and beyond.

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For a sustainable fisheries policy: Protecting the interests of people & coastal communities



- Ensuring **proximity of management**, which takes into account diversity in terms of fleets, fishing gear and fish stocks in each country and fishing area; recognition of the sovereign rights of Member States over their territorial waters, exclusive economic zones and adjacent seabeds;
- **Maintaining 12 miles as a zone of exclusive access** to the national fleet of each Member State as well as the possibility of extension to adjacent areas, conforming to continental shelves;
- Providing Community support for the **renewal and modernization of fishing fleets**, especially for **small-scale coastal fishing**; promoting more environmentally sustainable crafts and techniques;
- Guaranteeing **non-transferability of fishing quotas**, to avoid the creation of a quota market in the Member States that will severely hinder traditional fishing.

The debate on the future of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is underway. Rehashing old proposals such as the drive to privatise our seas, the European Commission has announced details on some of the guidelines that will shape the reform due to be implemented by 2012.

The GUE/NGL considers the Commission proposals an inadequate response to the main problems facing the fisheries sector and advocates measures to secure the economic, social and environmental future of this important activity.

Reform of the CFP – Prospects and threats

A first point in this discussion on the CFP is the institutional framework in which debate and decision-making are taking place. The Lisbon Treaty established “exclusive competence” for the EU over “the conservation of marine biological resources under the CFP”. This institutional set-up runs contrary to the need for local management – the key to guaranteeing sustainable and responsible fisheries.

A second consideration relates to the attempt to modify the CFP’s management system, introducing (albeit in a phased manner) a community system based on fishing rights. This would entail the unacceptable establishment of private property rights over a public good - fisheries resources. This option was considered by the Commission during the 2002 reform but was dropped following resistance from the sector in several countries.

A third aspect concerns the need to ensure fair returns in the sector. This is a key concern that must be addressed; otherwise any fisheries policy will fail in its objectives. There are several factors that encourage insecurity in income levels: for example, the natural constraints inherent in the activity, the market, and the uneven distribution of added value along the value chain.



Stop the privatisation of marine resources!

The main objective of fisheries policy should be to ensure the public supply of fish and the development of coastal communities, promoting employment and improving the living conditions of fisheries workers within a framework of ensuring resources sustainability.

The GUE/NGL firmly rejects attempts to introduce property rights over fish stocks. The economic and social consequences of privatising the seas would be disastrous, with the inevitable concentration and domination of the market by big business, without guaranteeing the sustainability of stocks.

GUE/NGL proposals for the protection of the fisheries sector:

- Improving the first-sale price of fish and the incomes of fisheries workers; introduction of mechanisms to ensure minimum guaranteed prices and maximum profit rates;
- Introducing mechanisms of subsidy or compensation for fisheries workers affected by the economic and social repercussions of the recovery plans, multi-annual management and measures for the protection of ecosystems;

