



Press Release

Sustainable fisheries present huge economic opportunity for Europe New study shows a wide range of benefits of cautious management

15 November 2016 - Brussels: 85 percent of the fish stocks in Europe are below healthy levels that can produce high catches on a long-term basis. A new study shows that their recovery and sustainable management could increase fishing harvests by up to five million tonnes per year.

This is a wake-up call to politicians to finally follow scientific advice in the implementation of the policy. "The recovery of the fish stocks by 2020 must be enabled by urgent conservation measures and multi-annual management plans. A cautious management of renewable marine resources is ecologically and economically beneficial, in Europe and in other parts of the world," concludes Dr. Cornelia E. Nauen, President of *Mundus maris*.

The first beneficiaries of sustainable management would be the fishing companies, which thanks to healthy stocks would have to resort to less effort in fishing and also cause less environmental damage, e.g. through avoiding by-catch. "Local production means fresher produce for consumers, good jobs in Europe, less fuel consumption and thus climate protection and an end to the competition for scarce fish with small-scale fishers in developing countries," continues Dr. Nauen.

The study shows the enormous potential for the full implementation of the reformed European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). "Our data show that only 12 percent of the stocks meet the requirements of the EU's CFP," explains Dr. Rainer Froese of GEOMAR, the head of the study commissioned by the environmental organisation OCEANA.

An international expert team analysed the data of 397 stocks of fish and other seafood in the European seas, from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, trying to understand the benefits of better management. "The result surprised me in its clarity," admits Dr. Froese. The study showed that overall yields could grow by 57 percent if the fish stocks were initially rebuilt and then cautiously managed. Stocks such as haddock and cod in the North Sea or cod and herring in the western Baltic Sea could even produce three times more!

Rebuilding of the stocks would take only a few years, depending on their current state of health. The "cautious fishing" proposed in the study would mean that the goal is only 90 per cent of the maximum sustainable yield of each species (MSY), because species interact with one another in nature.

The new scientific analysis method used by the researchers should be made available to the World Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, FAO, and especially to developing countries, so that sustainable fishing can become the norm.

Link: www.mundusmaris.org – *Mundus maris* – Sciences and Arts for Sustainability

Report: The complete report is available here: <http://oceanrep.geomar.de/34476/>

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