



Discard ban: MEPs delay enforcement of sanctions on fishermen who fail to comply

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Fishermen will have two years to “adapt” before sanctions for failing to comply with the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) discard ban take effect, under a tentative deal struck by Parliament and Council on Thursday, with European Commission help. The agreement amends the “omnibus” regulation setting out detailed arrangements for enforcing the ban.

"I am satisfied that the Council has accepted my proposals. Parliament must be able to assess how the landing obligation is put into effect. I have won an undertaking that the Commission will draft an annual implementation report, based on information supplied by member states. The landing obligation can now be applied with the necessary legal clarity. We will have concrete ways to assess and thus respond appropriately to the inevitable difficulties that fishermen and national authorities will face in complying with this new rule", said rapporteur Alain Cadec (EPP, FR).

Enabling fishermen to adapt

MEPs sought to make small fishermen's lives easier by restricting the obligation to keep a fishing logbook listing all quantities of each species caught and kept on board to catches above 50 kg of live-weight equivalent.

They also deleted a requirement to separate out undersized catches in different boxes. Other changes to the original Commission proposal include introducing a mechanism to prevent the development of a parallel market for non-marketable catches.

These rules are urgently needed because the discard ban is already in force, since 1 January, for pelagic species, and the "landing obligation" regulation is needed to adapt seven current EU laws which conflict with the new rules. The ban is to take effect gradually, in stages, between now and 2019.

Next steps

The compromise text will be submitted to a first reading vote in plenary in April at the earliest, after which the Council must formally approve it. It will then be published in the Official Journal of the EU.

Note to editors

The discard ban, or landing obligation, is one of the central objectives of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy, approved by the European Parliament in December 2013. Discards are fish thrown back into the sea, usually because they are of an unwanted species or size. Most of the discarded species die, thus making it a wasteful practice.

Further information

- Committee on Fisheries: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/pech/home.html>
- Text of the political agreement reached between Parliament and Council: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/pech/dv/omnibus/_omnibus_en.pdf
- Press conference with Alain Cadec (EPP, FR) on the outcome of the inter-institutional negotiations: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/video?event=20150129-1200-SPECIAL-UNKN>

Press release

- Profile of rapporteur Alain Cadec (EPP, FR):
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/96849/ALAIN_CADEC_home.html;jsessionid=4C2462D3BD6F2227F364EEB370637569.node2
- Procedure file:
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0436\(COD\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0436(COD)&l=en)
- Commission web page on "Discarding and the landing obligation":
http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/discards/index_en.htm
- EP Press release "Paving the way for the discard ban: Members of the Fisheries committee approve urgent rules" (03/12/2014): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20141203IPR82635/html/Discard-ban-Members-of-the-Fisheries-committee-approve-urgent-rules>
- EP Press release on the adoption of the Common Fisheries Policy (10.12.2013):
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131206IPR30075/html/Green-light-for-new-sustainable-EU-fisheries-policy-from-2014>
- Fisheries Committee meeting documents:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/organes/pech/pech_8leg_meetinglist.htm
- Previous Fisheries Committee meetings on VOD: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/search?legislature=8&start-date=01-07-2014&end-date=27-01-2015&committee=PECH>

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