The Landing Obligation:

State of the art in fisheries policy and science

Pr. Clara Ulrich

IFREMER / DTU Aqua
I. Policy: Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

*Progresses on the regulatory side / regionalisation ....*

Regional discard plans (DP) adopted annually laying down the calendar of implementation (species*fisheries) and the exemptions (high survivability, de minimis)
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Progresses on reaching common understanding on discard causes and quantification of risks of choke species ....

Choke categories:

- Category 1: Sufficient quota at Member State level, but poorly distributed within a country issue at PO/individual level
- Category 2: Sufficient quota at EU level but insufficient at Member State level, relative stability issue
- Category 3: Insufficient quota at EU level, overfished stock
- Category 4: Economic choking large quantities of low value fish.

NorthWestern Advisory Council 2017
Rihan 2018
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Stakeholders’ perception: A slow evolution

DiscardLess conference Table Discussions 30/01/2019

- Awareness and dialogue
- Collaboration with scientists / authorities
- Mindset shift and new eyes on old issues
- Can improve the reputation of the sector
- Level playing field
- Aiming at reducing discards make sense…
- …. 
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Some progresses on compliance monitoring ....

European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and Member States conduct Joint Deployment Plans of patrol vessels (Last Haul analysis)

EU Com SWD(2019) 205
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But in reality VERY small progresses so far ….

EU Com SWD(2019) 205: «the results of the last haul analysis point in the direction of a very poor implementation of the landing obligation and of a generally widespread non-compliance”
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Member States report annually to EU Com, results summarised by STECF PLEN 19-01

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**Key**

- **No information**
- **Significant information**
- **No change**
- **Significant change**
I. Policy: Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

**TACs are increased....**

If TACs are increased and discarding continues there is a risk that fishing mortality increases!

Borges et al, 2019
II. Science: Building knowledge on discards and on mitigation options

Discard Mitigation Strategies

- Avoiding Unwanted Catches
  - Selectivity (Gear Technology)
  - Avoidance (Fishing Strategies)

- Using Unwanted Catches
  - Market use (Value Chain)
  - Onboard handling (Ship design)

Policy Analyses

- Policy and governance
  - Experiences elsewhere

- Stakeholders perception
  - Interviews and meetings
  - Landing Obligation stories
  - Monitoring of changes

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
Azores: DeepWater
- Species identification catalogue
- J-shaped hook better than circle hook
- Handline better than longline
- Spatial measures difficult but depth stratification promising
- Better handling for better survival

Iceland and Norway: Learning from experiences
- Development of UUC markets and logistics
- Evolution of Control and Monitoring
- Flexible regulation

Celtic Sea: Choke species
- Selectivity catalogue
- Challenge experiment
- Maps and Apps
- Management-related choke
- Information sharing

Bay of Biscaye: Best Use of UUC
- Valorisation catalogue
- Prioritisation methodology
- Pilot trial
- Sorting at shore
- Genetic tests

West Med: Juvenile hake
- Scope for improved selectivity
- Sensitive habitats
- Maps and Apps

East Med: small harbours
- Increase mesh size
- Little scope for avoidance strategies
- Investigation of small treatment units at shore (fishmeal, silage)
- Main barrier is transport costs

North Sea WoS: Diversity of issues
- Selectivity catalogue and analyses of trawl components
- Industry-led experiments
- Genetic Monitoring
- Electronic Monitoring
- Genetic tests

Eastern Channel: Spatial use
- Diversity of species
- Challenge experiment
- Maps and Apps
- Limited options for displacement

Discard Mitigation Strategies analysed in DiscardLess

MANY OPTIONS TO REDUCE DISCARDS... NO SIMPLE ONES!
III. Looking ahead? The crucial importance of monitoring ALL Catches

Well designed EM trigger positive changes in selectivity and avoidance

BUT will not solve all the fundamental causes of discarding in mixed fisheries, incl. inequal access to quota, choke species and technical interactions.

-> Mix of actions needed
Conclusions

- A lot has happened in policy and science – The landing obligation has triggered an intense dynamic of dialogue and awareness that wouldn’t have taken place otherwise.

- but 2019 objectives likely not reached and only little visible discards reductions yet...

- The LO has remained very unpopular in the fishing industry, and not fully supported by national authorities. Incentives to comply have remained weak.

- There are many options for reducing discards. But no simple and one-size-fits-all ones... Multiple actions and proper incentives needed.

- TACs have been increased and exemptions have been given but discarding continue. This goes against the MSY objectives. Also, uncertain catch data undermines the quality of stock assessment.

- Recognition that control and enforcement are absolutely unsufficient. The current procedures cannot control the LO effectively.

- There is a major push towards the use of REM but reluctance remains strong. Control regulation still in discussion.