

**Question for written answer P-010464/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**María do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**

Subject: Commission TAC and quota proposal for 2013

As regards the 2013 TACs of given fish stocks, the Commission has proposed that they be reduced in 48 cases, maintained unchanged in 5 cases, and increased in 11 cases. The proposed reductions in the TACs range between 3% and 80%, amounting to at least 20% in 36 cases (that is to say, 75% of the stocks for which TACs are to be lowered). These projected cuts across the board are not, moreover, an isolated occurrence, but part of a mounting trend, as can be seen from the fact that the TACs of several stocks have plummeted in the last decade, with the result that many quotas are exhausted by the middle of the year, making it completely impossible to manage the fisheries sector rationally, sustainably, and profitably. Finally, and to make matters still worse, fisheries agreements (FPAs) have almost invariably reduced fishing opportunities for the EU fleet in the waters of non-member countries.

Generally speaking, the latest TAC cuts appear to have been dictated by the aim of achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2015, an approach which the Council considers impracticable and has already rejected. Given the ever decreasing fishing opportunities, seas are, in practice, increasingly being closed to fishing; the emphasis is being placed on environmental considerations alone, at the expense of economic and social aspects, which, however, carry equal weight within the common fisheries policy (CFP); a further aggravating factor is the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), whose chief purpose is to encourage fishing operators to stop fishing.

In the light of the foregoing:

1. Bearing in mind that the reform of the CFP is based on three equal strands (environmental, social, and economic), whereas the current proposal is focused solely on the environmental strand, does the Commission intend to conduct a study on the social and economic implications of its measures?
2. When there are scientific studies on fish stocks, does the Commission assess the validity of the methodologies used and hence the credibility of the studies?
3. In cases where no scientific studies are available, what steps will the Commission take to add to the body of data and obtain better information about the stocks concerned?
4. As far as 'data-poor' stocks are concerned, does not the Commission consider that the combined effects of successive 20% cuts go well beyond the precautionary principle?