

THE EUROPEAN  
UNION  
EXPLAINED

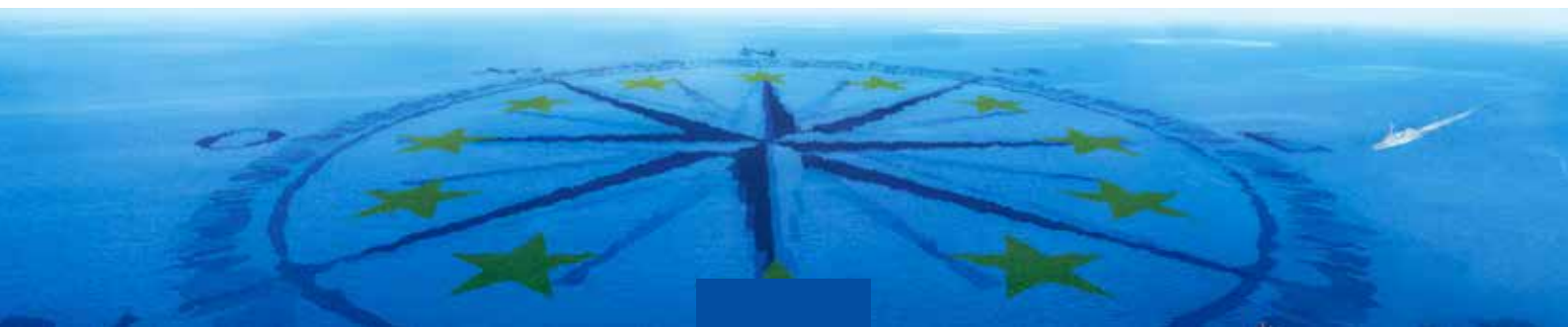
Safeguarding  
the future of  
our seas,  
generating  
new prosperity



# Maritime affairs and fisheries

‘When it comes to managing the seas and oceans we have to be smart; smarter than we have ever been.’

Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for  
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries



# THE EUROPEAN UNION EXPLAINED

*This publication is a part of a series that explains  
what the EU does in different policy areas,  
why the EU is involved and what the results are.*

You can see which ones are available to download at:  
[http://europa.eu/pol/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/pol/index_en.htm)

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How the EU works  
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### **The European Union explained: Maritime affairs and fisheries**

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## A smart maritime economy is a lasting maritime economy

Seas and oceans are essential to human life in more ways than one. They regulate our climate and through the centuries have given us food, transport and recreation. Now, thanks to technological progress, they can also give us pharmaceuticals, minerals and possibly infinite energy — as long as our exploitation is responsible, our methods are safe and our trading is cautious and fair.

Equally crucial is the economic value of the sea in our society. Today, 3 % to 5 % of the EU's gross domestic product (GDP) comes from the maritime sector. Some 90 % of foreign trade and 43 % of intra-EU trade take place via maritime routes. European shipbuilding accounts for 10 % of global production — and it is number one in the world for value of production. Almost 100 000 boats are in operation around Europe, either in fisheries or aquaculture. And next to these traditional industries, other more recently developed activities, such as mineral extraction and wind farms, are evolving fast.

However, unsustainable exploitation threatens the fragile balance of marine ecosystems, the competition for the use of sea space is becoming increasingly fierce and both the wildlife and the human activities that depend on the sea suffer from environmental damage and biodiversity loss.

The European Commission works to ensure that our exploitation remains rigorously sustainable and the rich maritime heritage of Europe grows nonetheless. The premise is that the two — environmental protection and economic growth — are intertwined and interdependent rather than opposed.

While an updated common fisheries policy remains the cornerstone of a rational and fair harvesting of seafood, our integrated approach to the sea 'system' seeks to respond coherently to the multitude of challenges that Europe's seas face today: from pollution to overfishing, from urbanisation to coastal erosion, from safety to security. To achieve this, the Commission facilitates the cooperation of all maritime players across sectors and across borders for an environmentally sound development of the European maritime economy; it tailors management for each different sea-basin; and when it makes sense it provides common tools that can help EU countries apply modern and appropriate national strategies.

### MAIN WORLD PRODUCERS (2011) (CATCHES AND AQUACULTURE)

(volume in tonnes (live weight) and percentage of total)

Total	177 632 194	100 %
China	65 903 381	37.1 %
Indonesia	13 601 723	7.7 %
India	8 879 499	5.0 %
Peru	8 346 461	4.7 %
EU-28	6 143 294	3.5 %
United States	5 559 838	3.1 %
Vietnam (*)	5 555 000	3.1 %
Philippines	4 971 799	2.8 %
Japan (*)	4 755 093	2.7 %
Chile	4 436 484	2.5 %
Russia	4 391 154	2.5 %
Myanmar	4 150 091	2.3 %
Norway	3 572 608	2.0 %
South Korea	3 260 930	1.8 %
Bangladesh	3 124 677	1.8 %
Thailand	2 868 436	1.6 %

(\*) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimate

Source: Eurostat and Eumofa for EU-28 and FAO for other countries.

*Most of the EU's catches are taken in the eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea.*

## How the EU goes about it

As the sea is an elaborate system in itself, made even more complex by the multitude of human activities around it, the Commission is advancing on several fronts at the same time. It has reformulated its common fisheries policy so that harvesting is cut back to levels determined by scientists, long-term plans allow for the recovery of weakened stocks and discards are phased out through a series of tools and technical solutions. Management is tailor-made for each sea-basin and region. When we fish outside the EU, we only fish within scientifically safe margins and only once the local populations have satisfied their seafood needs.

We have made it a priority to improve our knowledge not only on the state of stocks (indispensable for any management decision), but also on the sea in general: its depths, its living organisms, its sediments and currents and so on. We are creating the conditions for all surveillance authorities to share data in real time, so as to improve rescue operations and the fight against crime. And we have created a legal framework for EU countries to plan their use of sea space or multiple uses of the same space.

*There are almost 100 000 fishing boats in operation around Europe.*



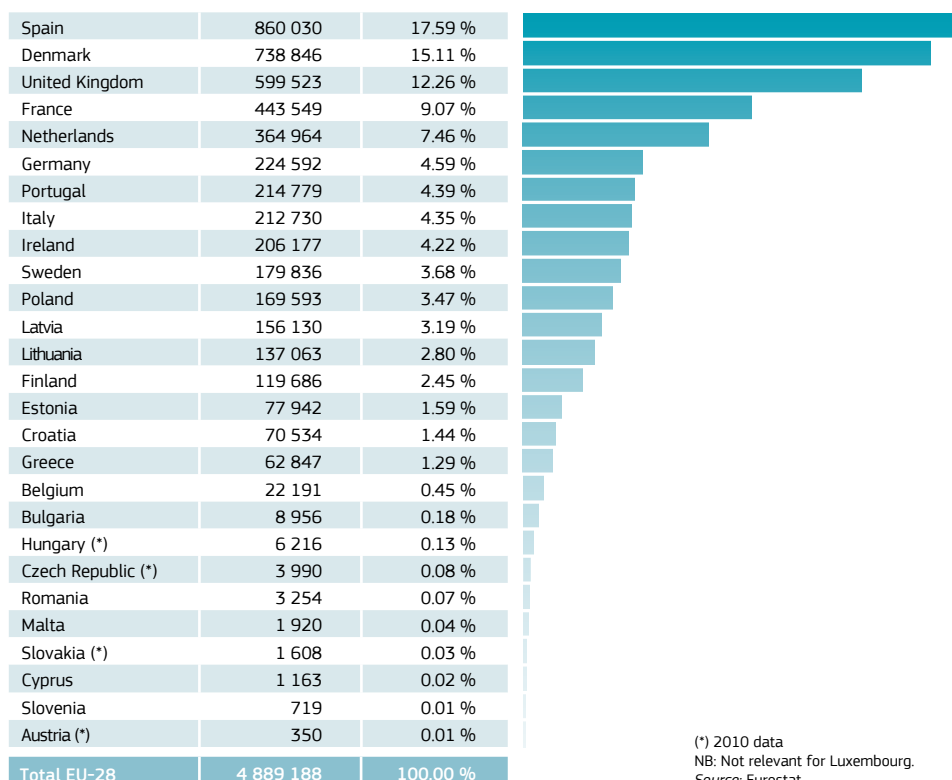
*The EU promotes sustainable fisheries.*

Internationally and through its bilateral relations the EU promotes the principles of sustainable fisheries, of biodiversity protection and of good governance, and projects them onto a worldwide scale. It is the driving force behind the recovery of bluefin tuna stocks and the global fight against illegal fishing. On illegal fishing in particular the EU applies not only its political weight but also its market weight, by refusing to import products that do not comply with international rules.

The transition to sustainable fishing and the creation of smart marine and maritime sectors (the 'blue economy') obviously need investment, and the Commission fuels that with adequate financial support. Between 2014 and 2020, €6.5 billion will go to finance projects that span across the maritime domain and foster diversification, innovation and sustainable growth (see also 'What's next?').

## TOTAL CATCHES PER MEMBER STATE (2011)

(volume in tonnes (live weight) and percentage of total)

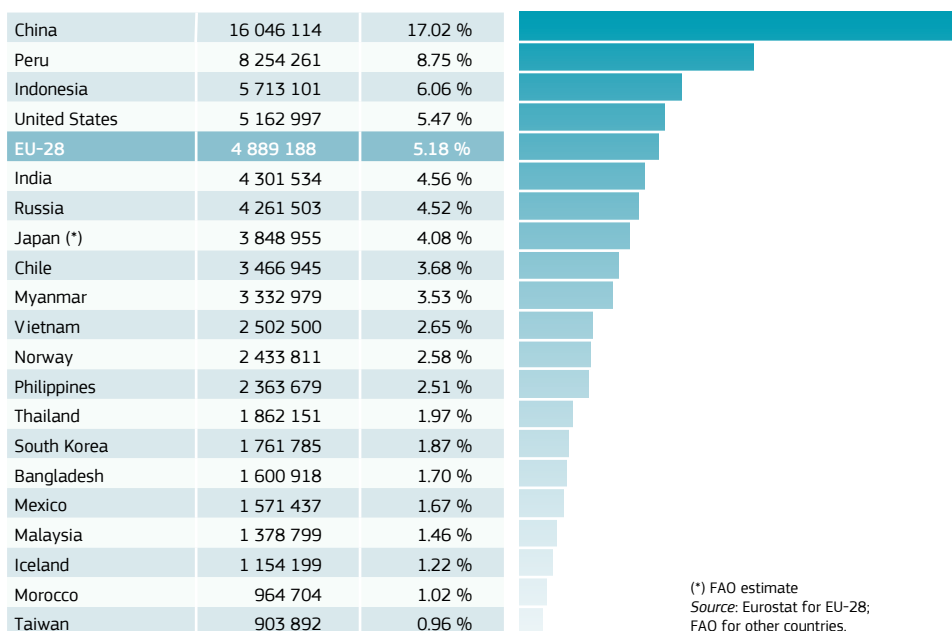


(\*) 2010 data  
NB: Not relevant for Luxembourg.  
Source: Eurostat.

Four countries account for almost half of the EU's total catches.

## TOTAL CATCHES OF WORLD'S LEADING PRODUCERS (2011)

(volume in tonnes (live weight) and percentage of total)



(\*) FAO estimate  
Source: Eurostat for EU-28;  
FAO for other countries.

## What the EU does

### Switching to sustainable fisheries: the reform of the common fisheries policy

The new common fisheries policy has been in force since 1 January 2014. Its overall objective is to make fishing sustainable from an environmental, economic and social perspective. The new common fisheries policy seeks to let stocks recover, do away with wasteful practices, empower the sector and boost the aquaculture industry.

Fishing sustainably means fishing at levels that do not jeopardise the fish population's ability to reproduce. In time, healthier stocks give better yields, and this reduces the time and effort (and fuel!) necessary to fish: instead of fishing desperately on dwindling fish stocks, we can fish rationally on abundant ones. This is bound to bring new prosperity to the fishing sector and end its vulnerability to external factors and its traditional dependence on public subsidies. Citizens, on the other hand, can count on a stable supply of healthy protein and be reassured on its origin.

Next to the sustainability targets, another essential part of the policy is the timeline to stop discarding, that is throwing away, undesired fish after it has been caught.

Deadlines vary according to the fishery and the sea-basin, starting gradually from 2015 with fish living in the upper water layers and covering all fish by 2020. To simplify and localise management and adapt it to regional specificities, countries are able to take the conservation measures of their choice under EU umbrella laws; this process takes due account of the industry's know-how and of its fundamental role in the good stewardship of the sea. Market-based approaches allow fishermen's organisations to gain a stronger position on the market and get more money for the fish they catch. In any case, the longer-term approach of recovery plans that span across a few years is bound to improve market predictability and thus investment and planning.

Meanwhile, the underlying strategy is to promote income diversification, help small operators and boost the fish-farming industry as a high-quality complement to wild fisheries. When fishing outside our waters, EU fishermen are bound by the same sustainability rules as at home: they fish within scientifically set limits and in a way that does not harm the local fleets.

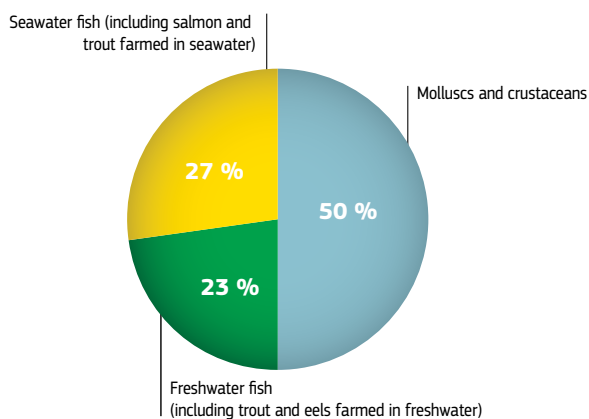
In addition, since reliable and exhaustive information about the state of marine resources is essential to support sound decision-making, new obligations bind EU countries to collect and share scientific data about fish stocks and the impact of fishing at sea-basin level.

Healthier stocks — and a more varied economic fabric of coastal areas — work in favour of robust economic performance, inclusive growth and enhanced cohesion in coastal regions, thus contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy for economic growth.

For more information on the reform, please see the CFP reform website: [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.htm).

#### EU AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION PER PRODUCT TYPE (2011)

(percentage of total volume)



Source: Eurostat and Eumofa.

*Aquaculture accounts for around 20 % of total EU fisheries production.*

## Blue growth: marine and maritime sustainable growth

To make it through the crisis, Europe needs the contribution of all sectors of its economy. In this context, the 'blue economy' has a role to play. It represents roughly 5.6 million jobs and accounts for a gross value added (GVA) of €495 billion per year.

But it can produce many more jobs if we invest in the right field at the right time. And this is what the Commission's blue growth strategy does. We have identified the most promising sectors, the most rewarding investments and the trains — so to speak — that Europe should catch lest someone else does. These range from established sectors such as coastal tourism (€183 billion GVA per year) or aquaculture to developing sectors such as marine biotechnology (€14.1 billion GVA per year), to prospective sectors such as deep-sea mining or ocean energy — and they appear to carry huge employment potential.

Tourism has an expected average annual growth of 2 % to 3 % (the cruise sector is predicted to grow by 60 % in this decade, generating 100 000 jobs), ocean renewable energy is expected to grow nearly tenfold before 2020 (the offshore wind sector should grow sharply from 35 000 jobs in 2010 up to a possible 170 000 by 2020) and seabed mining's global turnover could rise exponentially in the next 10 years.

We are therefore providing guidance and legal frameworks for EU governments to accompany this growth in a smart way and reap all the benefits as quickly as possible, but with no environmental damage.

Blue growth can make a real, tangible and positive difference for the economy and thus for the citizens of Europe. The items that follow are some, but not all, of the tools we are making available to EU nations for a better future.

## The winning governance structures: sea-basin strategies

If one looks at the Earth from space, no national or regional borders are visible but rather earth and sea. And it is easy to see how the people who live around a given sea-basin may have a lot in common. Our maritime policy is centred on sea-basins. By putting the players together, sea-basin strategies target the needs of operators and people on the ground precisely and directly. They align funding from different countries and various sources on commonly agreed objectives. They move steadily toward social goals like employment, accessibility and quality of life — as one of the more advanced sea-basin strategies, the one for the Baltic Sea, shows.

A sea-basin strategy places EU administration, national governments, local authorities, operators, industry and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on a par, as partners in ensuring coherent outcomes that benefit their people and their environment. This does not need any extra money: it is simply a mechanism to ensure that existing funds are spent consistently and within a long-term framework, so as to guarantee better and multiplied effects. In other words, it is a form of smart management.

*The EU is a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.*



*The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will help improve the quality of life along Europe's coastal regions.*



© European Union/Catrin Owen

## Planning the use of sea space as carefully as we do on land: maritime spatial planning

While globalisation gives a boost to shipping, ports and shipbuilding, new ways to use the sea are materialising, such as wind parks, fish farms and mineral extraction farms. This leads to competition for space and to a potential degradation of the marine environment. Without coordination, the ambiguity surrounding the interplay between policies can delay projects, make return on investment unclear or force expensive legal fees. By contrast, locating a wind farm across state borders can be more efficient and environmentally sounder than building two in two separate and more vulnerable spots. Relocating shipping lanes away from protected areas reduces the risk of environmental disasters. And so on.

For these reasons, we have created a framework for maritime and coastal spatial planning for our nations to plan their use of space and even multiple uses of the same space. Through the transparent and collective involvement of all players, the EU's maritime spatial planning framework ensures a stable and fair set of rules that enables all activities at sea to develop and grow. This tool has already been shown to accelerate investments and lower legal and administrative costs for companies.

## Controlling sea traffic as we do sky traffic: integrated maritime surveillance

Compartmentalisation often leads to duplication. The maritime surveillance bodies monitoring commercial traffic are distinct from those investigating illegal trafficking. But in the digital era there is no reason why they should not share information. Thanks to EU support, technical solutions have been developed that improve the flow of information between maritime authorities while preventing unauthorised access. This will enable authorities to better combat crime and protect merchant ships and fishing boats from threats. They will also join forces for interventions, and improve not just policing activities but also rescue operations. This kind of integration also implies a better use of public money.



*Europe's 'blue economy' contributes over 5 million jobs to the economy.*



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## Science and us: marine knowledge 2020

It is often said that we know more about the surface of the moon than the depths of our oceans. It is true, there are large gaps in our knowledge of the sea and the knowledge that we do have is scattered over a multitude of incompatible and incomplete sources.

Marine knowledge 2020 pools good quality and coherent marine data together and makes them freely and publicly available. We have already drawn a first digital

map of our seabeds and are working with European scientists and engineers to gather the existing data and thus increase our understanding of seas and oceans.

Clearly, entrepreneurs need data to develop their ventures and increase their competitiveness. But freer access to data is not only for professionals. It is also about the democratisation of knowledge and will help ordinary citizens get involved in decisions concerning their coasts and seas.

*The Baltic Sea strategy is an EU success story, bringing countries together to work on common goals.*



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## Supporting mobility and career prospects across sectors

Maritime industries today cannot find enough people with the right qualifications, skills and experience. An increasing shortage of maritime professionals and officers stunts the growth of maritime industries in Europe — which is particularly unacceptable at a time of high unemployment. Our maritime policy is trying to tackle challenges such as training in one sector exclusively (for example fishing), opaque opportunities for mobility and insecure employment prospects.

To make maritime jobs more attractive, we will increase professional mobility between sectors and between countries. We will also focus on the maritime skills needed for the future rather than the levels of knowledge needed today.

## What's next?

### A modern and fit financial instrument

In parallel to the reform of the common fisheries policy, a new fund for the EU's maritime domain was developed to cover the period between 2014 and 2020: the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, worth €6.5 billion. This new fund replaces the existing European Fisheries Fund and also groups a number of other ancillary funds into a single instrument. Red tape has been cut so that beneficiaries have easier access to capital.

The fund helps achieve the ambitious objectives of the fisheries reform. As we relieve pressure on the stocks and leave them time to recover, the communities depending on fishing need support in coping with the transition and in supplementing their income. The fund helps operators to modernise their way of fishing, find ways to add value to their catches or find alternatives to fishing: for example they may choose to replace their nets with more selective ones in order to reduce by-catch or to develop new technologies that could lower the impact of fish farming on the environment.

In other words, projects that boost innovation and economic diversification, that create new jobs or improve quality of life are eligible. In the past, bottom-up initiatives in areas such as processing, catering or tourism have produced excellent results, so this is strongly encouraged now. And small-scale fishermen, young fishermen and local fisheries get special attention and intensified aid.

The fund also strives to develop European aquaculture in a sustainable way. It rewards innovation and promotes new strands, such as non-food aquaculture. It aims to improve data collection and control programmes, so as to ensure that the rules for responsible and sustainable fishing are complied with.

But the fund is not just a catalyst for sustainability and good economic performance. It is also a vehicle to deliver the Commission's social agenda. Spouses, who often play a fundamental role in the family fishing business, can now get support for training or other economic activities related to fishing. Producers' organisations get help to plan production and marketing in a way that meets the expectations of an increasingly discerning public.



*There is an ever-increasing demand for seafood.*



*Aquaculture employs around 65 000 people in the EU.*

Above and beyond fisheries, scientific projects such as creating a high-resolution map of the European seabed or making marine data available to firms and researchers all over Europe are equally contemplated. Projects such as maritime spatial planning, integrated maritime surveillance and marine knowledge, which can help avoid duplications and reduce costs through cooperation and coordination across sectors, are given particular priority.

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund is used to co-finance projects with Member States according to the principle of 'shared management'. Each national government draws up an operational programme for the time period in question, specifying how they intend to spend the money allocated to them. Once the programme is approved by the Commission, the Member State selects the projects that are to receive funds. Both project eligibility and programme implementation are monitored by the Member States and by the Commission.

**THE 15 MAIN SPECIES CAUGHT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION (2011)**

(volume in tonnes (live weight) and percentage of total)

Herring	509 951	10.46 %	
Sprat	413 415	8.48 %	
Mackerel	376 333	7.72 %	
Sandeels	335 023	6.87 %	
Sardine	307 963	6.31 %	
Horse mackerel	159 756	3.28 %	
Cod	146 634	3.01 %	
Jack and horse mackerel	133 531	2.74 %	
Anchovy	126 115	2.59 %	
Round sardinella	123 600	2.53 %	
Skipjack tuna	121 056	2.48 %	
Yellowfin tuna	102 132	2.09 %	
Blue shark	100 270	2.06 %	
Hake	85 256	1.75 %	
Plaice	82 668	1.70 %	

Source: Eurostat.

*The European sprat and the Atlantic herring are the most commonly caught fish in the EU.*

## Find out more

- ▶ **Reform of the common fisheries policy:** [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.htm)
- ▶ **Integrated maritime policy:** [http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/index_en.htm)
- ▶ **European atlas of the seas:** [http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/index_en.htm)

