THE EUROPEAN UNION EXPLAINED

Fisheries and maritime affairs

Safeguarding the future of our seas

‘To people who say that fisheries is a question of jobs versus the environment, I say, no, it’s not either–or. For the fisheries sector more than most, the environment is the economy! The maritime economy will open the way to new products, services and jobs — and for new, dynamic entrepreneurs to grab the chance and drive the economy forward.’

Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs

THE EUROPEAN UNION EXPLAINED

CONTENTS

Why we need a maritime affairs and fisheries policy 3

How the EU goes about it. 4

What the EU does 6

What's next — reform 10

Find out more. 12

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 online which ones are available and download them at:
http://europa.eu/pol/index_en.htm

How the EU works
Europe 2020: Europe's growth strategy
The founding fathers of the EU

Agriculture
Borders and security
Budget
Climate action
Competition
Consumers
Culture and audiovisual
Customs
Development and cooperation
Digital agenda
Economic and monetary union and the euro
Education, training, youth and sport
Employment and social affairs
Energy
Enlargement
Enterprise
Environment
Fight against fraud
Fisheries and maritime affairs ✖
Food safety
Foreign affairs and security policy
Humanitarian aid
Internal market
Justice, citizenship, fundamental rights
Migration and asylum
Public health
Regional policy
Research and innovation
Taxation
Trade
Transport

The European Union explained: Fisheries and maritime affairs

European Commission
Directorate-General for Communication
Publications
1049 Brussel
BELGIUM

Manuscript completed in January 2013

Cover and page 2 picture: © European Union

12 pp. — 21 × 29.7 cm
ISBN 978-92-79-23996-0
doi:10.2775/52365

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013

© European Union, 2013
Reproduction is authorised. For any use or reproduction of individual photos, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Why we need a maritime affairs and fisheries policy

We all make use of our seas and oceans. The seas have immense intrinsic value. Unlike our cities, they provide us with a free horizon, we enjoy clean coastal and marine environments and the wildlife they support and we benefit from their role in keeping our climate stable.

The seas also have a crucial economic role to play. Today, 3 % to 5 % of the EU's GDP comes from the maritime sector, employing around 5.6 million people and generating € 495 billion for the European economy. 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 alongside these traditional industries, other more recent activities are developing fast, such as mineral extraction and wind farms.

However, the unsustainable use of our seas threatens the fragile balance of marine ecosystems, human activities that depend on the sea suffer from damaged ecosystems and the competition for the use of sea space is becoming increasingly fierce.

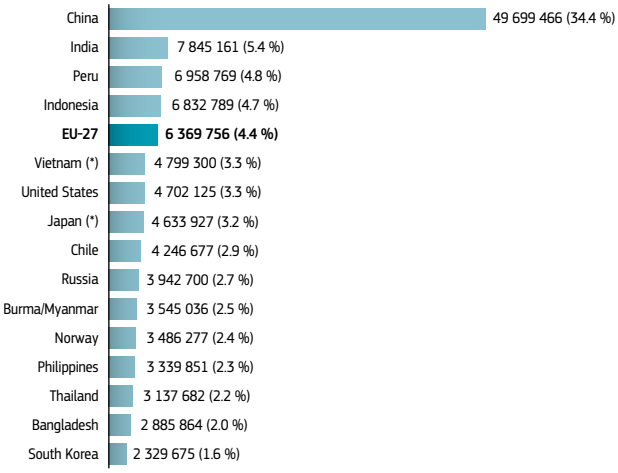
The European Commission works to protect and develop the rich maritime heritage of Europe, while ensuring that our exploitation of marine resources remains sustainable.

This involves formulating, developing and implementing the common fisheries policy — the cornerstone of our actions for a sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources — and promoting an integrated approach to all maritime policies.

In addition, our maritime policy seeks to respond coherently to the multitude of challenges that European seas face today: from pollution to environment protection, from coastal development to job creation and from border control to surveillance. It facilitates the cooperation of all maritime players across sectors and across borders for an environmentally sound development of the European maritime economy — the premise being that Europe's seas and oceans can be a rich source of innovation, growth and employment, if used sustainably.

MAIN WORLD PRODUCERS (2009) (CATCHES AND AQUACULTURE)

Volume in tonnes live weight and percentage of total



(*) Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN estimate from available sources of information or calculated based on scientific hypotheses.

Sources: Eurostat and FAO.

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

THE EU AND THE WORLD (2009) (CATCHES AND AQUACULTURE)

Volume in tonnes live weight and percentage of total

Sources: Eurostat and FAO.

EU production has gone down over the last 20 years, with the EU the fifth biggest producer worldwide.

How the EU goes about it

The common fisheries policy has come a long way since its creation in 1982 — or indeed, since the first instruments of European fisheries policy were established in the early 1970s. What began as a set of tools to manage traditional fishing patterns between a handful of countries is now a comprehensive legal and scientific framework, which seeks to protect a natural resource whose finite, though renewable, nature can no longer be ignored.

Fish move across borders and seas, and fishing fleets have done the same for centuries. As the activities of each fishing fleet affect the opportunities of other fleets, EU countries have decided to manage their fisheries in collaboration. This common policy brings together a range of measures designed to achieve a thriving and sustainable European fishing industry.

The most important areas of action of the common fisheries policy are:

- laying down rules to ensure Europe's fisheries are sustainable and do not damage the marine environment; there are three types of fishing rules:
  - **Fishing effort limitations** restrict the size of the fleet that sets to sea and the amount of **time** it can spend fishing.
  - **Catch limits** restrict the **quantity of fish** that can be taken from the sea before fishermen need to stop fishing.
  - **Technical measures** regulate **how and where** fishermen can fish. They can, for example, be used to protect young fish (juveniles), encourage the use of more selective fishing gear or prevent serious damage to the marine environment.
- providing national authorities with the tools to enforce these rules and punish offenders;
- monitoring the size of the European fishing fleet: all EU fishing vessels are registered in the Community fleet register, which is updated every quarter;
- providing funding and technical support for initiatives that can make the industry more ecologically and economically sustainable;

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

- negotiating on behalf of EU countries in international fisheries organisations and with non-EU countries around the world;
- helping producers, processors and distributors get a fair price for their produce and ensuring consumers can trust the seafood they eat;
- supporting the development of a dynamic EU aquaculture sector (fish, seafood and algae farms);
- funding scientific research and data collection, to ensure a sound basis for policy and decision-making.

All of this is mostly done with funds channelled through the European Fisheries Fund, which was endowed with € 4.3 billion for the period 2007–13. The fund supports a series of measures to reduce overcapacity, to support aquaculture as well as processing and marketing, to sponsor collective actions by the fisheries sector and to strengthen the economic development in fisheries areas. But it is the EU Member States that select the projects to be financed and follow up their implementation.

Other financial measures aid EU countries in data collection and in the control and enforcement of the common policy. Externally, funds are provided for the fishery partnership agreements, which allow EU fleets to access non-EU countries' waters and fish surplus stocks and which support the development of the fisheries policy of those countries. Contributions to regional fisheries organisations, which are an essential part of ocean governance, are also covered.

© iStockphoto/Ivan Bajic

The EU promotes sustainable fisheries.

In maritime policy, the Commission promotes the interconnection between the authorities of different countries and of different sectors: when maritime players cooperate across sectors and across borders we avoid costly duplication, we improve resource efficiency, we boost innovation and we make better use of public money. The cooperation of maritime surveillance authorities, for instance, lowers surveillance costs and improves situational awareness at sea. The Commission also organises conferences and seminars and funds several international projects that span the maritime domain. The sustainability of maritime activities and the safeguard of Europe's biodiversity have been improved by the marine strategy framework directive, which seeks to effectively protect the marine environment across Europe. Previously fragmented marine data have been made freely and publicly available for businesses and researchers. Region-specific maritime strategies have been launched for the Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. And to ensure fair access to maritime space by the various sectors competing for sea use, the Commission has developed maritime spatial planning.

To support the development of an integrated maritime policy, € 40 million was allocated for the years 2011–13 to cross-cutting actions in the fields of maritime surveillance, maritime knowledge and maritime spatial planning. Such programmes have been proven to harness the untapped potential of Europe's oceans, seas and coasts and to benefit the economy at large.

TOTAL CATCHES PER MEMBER STATE (2009)

Volume in tonnes live weight and percentage of total

Denmark	777 747	15.35 %
Spain	760 725	15.01 %
United Kingdom	586 645	11.58 %
France	439 922	8.68 %
Netherlands	382 094	7.54 %
Ireland	269 080	5.31 %
Italy	253 001	4.99 %
Germany	250 347	4.94 %
Poland	223 894	4.42 %
Sweden	203 413	4.01 %
Portugal	199 006	3.93 %
Lithuania	172 689	3.41 %
Latvia	163 211	3.22 %
Finland	154 596	3.05 %
Estonia	97 423	1.92 %
Greece	82 764	1.63 %
Belgium	21 719	0.43 %
Bulgaria	8 979	0.18 %
Hungary	6 366	0.13 %
Czech Republic	4 112	0.08 %
Romania	4 020	0.08 %
Slovakia	1 761	0.03 %
Malta	1 587	0.03 %
Cyprus	1 411	0.03 %
Slovenia	1 031	0.02 %
Austria	350	0.01 %

NB: Not relevant for Luxembourg.
Source: Eurostat.

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

What the EU does

Switching to sustainability: the reform of the common fisheries policy

For the last couple of years, in addition to managing and implementing the fisheries policy, the Commission has been carrying out a thorough review of the whole system. The purpose of the upcoming reform is to ensure the economic viability of European fleets and the conservation of fish stocks and provide high-quality food to consumers.

EU fisheries are currently suffering from the overexploitation of many fish stocks. Three out of four stocks are overfished, our fishing fleet is too large for the sustainable use of fish resources and the industry is experiencing smaller and smaller catches. Fishing-dependent coastal communities are vulnerable to external factors such as high fuel prices and competition from abroad.

Our aquaculture industry is also stagnating, despite an ever-increasing demand for seafood. In past years, decision-making favoured short-term and top-down approaches that were detrimental to natural resources and gave fishermen little incentive to use resources responsibly.

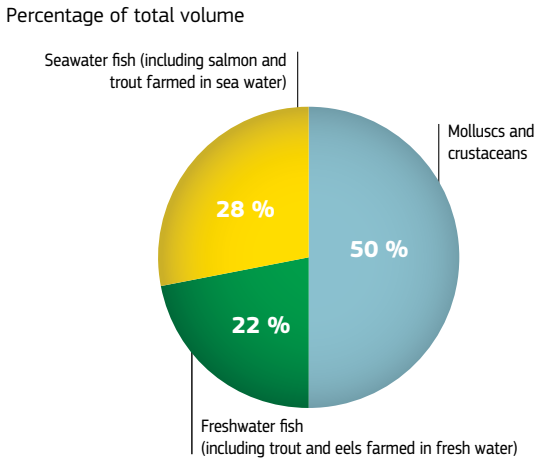
The Commission has therefore initiated a process that will make fishing environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. In 2011, it tabled a reform that has sustainability at its heart, with clear targets and timelines to stop overfishing and discarding, with market-based approaches to adapt the fishing fleet to the fishing possibilities and with clear strategies to promote sustainable aquaculture in Europe.

By bringing fish stocks back to sustainable levels, the new system will provide EU citizens with a stable, secure and healthy food supply for decades to come. It will bring new prosperity to the fishing sector, end dependence on subsidies and create new opportunities for jobs and growth in coastal areas. At the same time, it will foster the industry's accountability for good stewardship of the seas.

The main ideas in the reform are as follows:

- The practice of throwing fish overboard will be phased out. To avoid a waste of valuable resources, all catches will be landed.
- Fish stocks will be fished at sustainable levels by 2015, so as not to jeopardise their natural capacity to reproduce.
- Fishermen will make their own economic decisions to adapt the fleet size to the sustainable fishing possibilities, without public aid.
- There will be improved performance of small-scale coastal fleets, income diversification and socioeconomic strengthening of coastal communities.
- Fishermen's organisations will help fishermen to gain a stronger position on the market and get more money for the fish they catch.
- When buying fish, consumers will receive more information on the quality and sustainability of the product that they buy.
- EU funding will go to support sustainable initiatives and will only be given to those operators who comply with the rules.
- To simplify the policy and adapt it to regional specificities, Member States will be able to take the conservation measures of their choice under umbrella EU laws.

EU AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION PER PRODUCT TYPE (2009)



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

- In international bodies and in bilateral relations, the EU will promote the principles of sustainable fisheries and good governance, projecting the environmental principles on a world-wide scale.

Negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the reform proposals are currently underway and will continue well into 2013.

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

Managing the increasing impact of maritime activities on each other and on the environment: maritime spatial planning

While globalisation gives a boost to shipping, ports and shipbuilding on the one hand, new ways to use the sea, such as wind parks or fish farms, are materialising on the other hand. This leads to competition for space and degradation of the marine environment.

Without coordination, the ambiguity surrounding the interplay between policies can delay projects, make return on investment unclear or lead to expensive legal fees. Through the transparent and collective involvement of all players, maritime spatial planning 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.

Cost-effective synergies between maritime policies: integrated maritime surveillance

Compartmentalisation often leads to duplication. This is the case for maritime surveillance, which, for instance, monitors commercial traffic, illegal fishing, drug smuggling or human trafficking. Thanks to EU support, 16 countries have been testing technical solutions to improve the flow of information between their maritime authorities while preventing unauthorised access.

Once this project is completed, authorities monitoring the transport of dangerous goods will be able to share their data with inspectors checking illegal fishing. Coast guards, police and the navy will share information to 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. Integration will also mean that public money is better used.

The clear commitment of Member States and stakeholders to this project shows that they fully understand the benefits of cooperation. To combat international crime we have Interpol and Europol. We need to integrate more effectively surveillance against the pirates that plague our seas.

Sharing marine knowledge across sectors to support innovation and sound policymaking: Marine Knowledge 2020

It is often said that we know more about the surface of the moon than the depths of our oceans. It's true: there are large gaps in our knowledge of the sea and huge areas that have not yet been explored. The real paradox, however, is that we are not even using the knowledge that we already have, because data is scattered among a multitude of incompatible and incomplete sources.

Marine Knowledge 2020 aims to pool good quality and coherent marine data and make it freely and publicly available. Today, European scientists and engineers are working with the European Commission to gather together the existing data and thus increase our understanding of our seas and oceans.

It should not be forgotten that entrepreneurs need data to develop their ventures and increase their competitiveness. We reckon that Marine Knowledge 2020 will save around € 300 million a year for the EU as a whole.

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

© iStockphoto/Gary Stokes

© European Union/Catrin Owen

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

Freer access to data is not only for professionals. It is also about the democratisation of marine knowledge. It will help ordinary citizens to get involved in decisions concerning their coasts and seas, rather than blindly accepting top-down plans for the future development of their neighbourhood. This may foster a sense of ownership and prevent some of the environmental atrocities that have been committed in the past.

The winning governance structures: sea basin strategies

If you look at the Earth from space, you see no national or regional borders: only ocean and sea. And it is easy to see how people living along the coasts of one sea basin may have more in common amongst themselves than with their fellow nationals further inland.

Modern, integrated policies such as our maritime policy place the EU, national governments, local authorities, operators, industry and NGOs on a par and make them all partners in ensuring coherent outcomes for maritime policies. Such partnership does not take place in a vacuum but in Europe's sea basins.

By putting the players together, sea basin strategies target the needs of operators and people on the ground precisely and directly. Sea basin strategies align funding from Member States and different European sources on commonly agreed objectives and targeted specific measures. They move steadily toward social goals like employment, accessibility and quality of life.

The early success of the Baltic Sea strategy shows us that sea basins can be economic drivers. A sea basin strategy 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's a form of smart management.

'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 marine and maritime sectors — the 'blue economy' — have an important role to play in the overall road to Europe's economic recovery. They represent roughly 5.6 million jobs and account for a gross value added (GVA) of € 495 billion. They range from established sectors such as coastal tourism (€ 121 billion GVA), through developing sectors such as cruise tourism (annual GVA of € 14.1 billion) to prospective sectors such as blue biotechnology.

'Blue growth' — sustainable growth from the oceans, seas and coasts — is about getting everybody together (from institutions and Member States to regions and SMEs) to overcome existing challenges and ensure the

Case study: the Baltic Sea basin strategy

The Baltic Sea strategy is a genuine success story for the regional approach: by interconnecting the players of a dozen countries and countless sectors, it has produced some 80 projects, ranging from transport to education. These are two examples:

Representatives of education institutions, maritime industry and maritime authorities from 10 countries have established a network of centres of excellence for maritime training. The project will help make maritime careers more flexible and offer tailored opportunities for young people.

A large number of passenger ships operate on fixed routes between north European ports. Member States have faced situations where several hundred people have had to be rescued and taken to one or more safe places for medical care and identification. If we want to promote this sustainable mode of transportation, search and rescue services must be optimised. Ten countries around the Baltic and the North Sea have improved the functions of distress monitoring, search coordination and medical evacuation through international cooperation.

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

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

most productive and sustainable use of what our seas and coasts offer.

We need to address framework conditions underpinning growth, such as maritime research and development, smart infrastructure, clusters, access to finance and necessary education, skills and training. We also have to address bottlenecks hindering economic development.

The 'blue growth' strategy will help all actors — Member States, regions, and the business sector — to adjust their focus towards areas that hold the greatest potential growth in terms of profits and employment. It will define concrete measures which can help stimulate the blue economy — and the European economy in general — in the coming years.

Areas of 'blue growth' potential include coastal tourism (with an expected average growth of 2 % to 3 %), the cruise sector (with a predicted growth of around 60 % in this decade), ocean renewable energy (expected to grow nearly tenfold in the years to come) and seabed mining (where global turnover could grow exponentially in the next 10 years). In addition, several 'blue growth' sectors have strong potential for generating employment. In the cruise sector, for example, 100 000 additional jobs are expected to be created this decade. The number of jobs in the offshore wind sector should also grow sharply, from 35 000 in 2010 up to a possible 170 000 by 2020.

'Blue growth' can make a real, tangible and positive difference for the economy and thus for the citizens of Europe.

What's next — reform

A new European fund for the EU's maritime and fisheries policies

In parallel to the reform of the common fisheries policy, the European Commission has proposed a new fund for the EU's maritime and fisheries policies for the period 2014–20: the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The fund will help deliver the ambitious objectives of the fisheries reform and will help fishermen cope with the transition towards sustainable fishing, as well as coastal communities in the diversification of their economies. The fund will finance projects that create new jobs and improve quality of life along European coasts. Red tape will be cut so that beneficiaries have easy access to financing.

This new fund will replace the existing European Fisheries Fund and a number of other instruments. The amount proposed for the fund is € 6.5 billion for the period 2014–20.

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will be instrumental for the fisheries reform. The transition to sustainability requires some radical changes in the way we fish — and the fund will give fishermen the incentive they need, so that fishing can be less damaging to marine ecosystems, overexploitation can be stopped and the decline of fish stocks can be reversed.

As we relieve pressure on the stocks and leave them time to recover, the communities depending on fishing will need to find alternative sources of income. The fund will help them find innovative ways to add value to their catches and diversify their economy.

But the fund is not just a catalyst for the transition to sustainability and good economic performance. It is also a vehicle to deliver the Commission's social agenda. Spouses often play a fundamental role in the family fishing business. Now they will be able to get support for training or other economic activities related to fishing. Producers' organisations will be helped to plan production and market their products in a way that meets the expectations of an increasingly discerning public.

Despite the € 1.7 billion spent on scrapping since the 1990s, the EU fleet still suffers from overcapacity, because year after year, the decommissioning effort was offset by the technological upgrade of the remaining fleet. Financial aid, therefore, should be redirected towards economically and socially productive activities. Diversification is one of them. Encouraging bottom-up initiatives has produced excellent results in areas connected to fishing, such as processing, catering or tourism. The new fund will reinforce this kind of community-led innovation. As small-scale coastal fleets remain the lifeblood of the economy of many coastal communities, the aid to support them will be intensified.

The new fund will also support innovative projects, such as replacing fishing nets with more selective gear in order to reduce discards, or developing new technologies that could lower the impact of fishing and fish farming on the environment.

© istockphoto/vm

There is an ever-increasing demand for seafood.

Fish farming carries a huge potential to reduce our dependence on imports. It provides high-quality jobs in rural areas and puts healthy food on European dinner tables. The fund will strive to boost this industry in a sustainable manner, rewarding innovation and promoting new strands of aquaculture, such as non-food aquaculture.

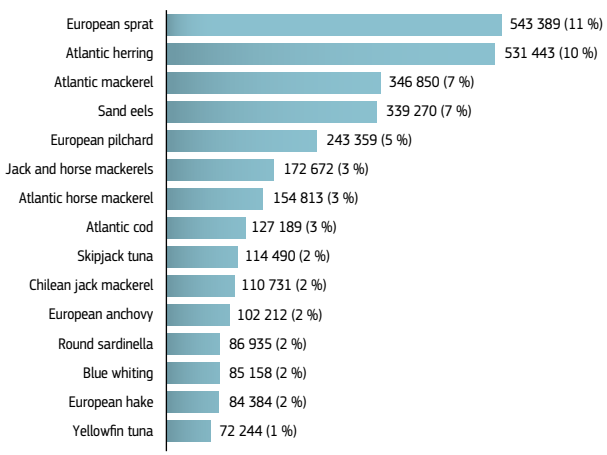
Having proper data on the state of fish stocks and the marine environment in general plays a key role in fisheries management, and the new instrument will allow for data collection, monitoring and control. As it does not make sense that those working on the sea (the fishermen) and those studying the sea (the scientists) should live in separate worlds, the fund will encourage them to work in tandem to find ways to exploit natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The fund will also provide support for maritime projects such as maritime spatial planning, integrated maritime surveillance and marine knowledge. These are examples where integration can help avoid duplication and reduce costs through greater cooperation and coordination across sectors.

The rules governing the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will be harmonised with those for other EU funds. This will make life easier for both beneficiaries and national authorities. The fund will be part of the new common strategic framework, which will ensure that all the various existing EU funds work consistently with each other, avoiding overlaps or duplications.

THE 15 MAIN SPECIES CAUGHT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION (2009)

Volume in tonnes live weight and percentage of total



Source: Eurostat.

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

The new fund will be used to co-finance projects with Member States. The total budget will be allocated to the Member States based on the importance of the fisheries sector in each country. Then the principles of shared-management between the Commission and the Member States will apply. Each Member State will draw up an operational programme for the period, specifying how they intend to spend the money allocated to them. Once the Commission has approved this programme, it will be up to the Member State to decide the actual projects to be financed. Both the eligibility of the actions to support and the implementation of the programme will be monitored by the Member States and the Commission. The Parliament and the Council are now discussing the Commission's proposal, and the fund is expected to enter into force by 1 January 2014.

Supporting emerging maritime sectors

Every other week we read or hear about possible new developments coming from the sea: tidal or wave energy, raw materials or algae used for cosmetics or drugs. However, because they do not fit into pre-established priorities of any given domain and need to be developed through across-the-board cooperation, these potential advances do not receive sufficient funds or political support.

The new 'blue growth' strategy of the EU analyses each domain to spot those that merit our immediate attention and means.

Can micro-algae growing facilities be sustainably industrialised for omega-3 and omega-6 oil production? What is the employment potential of marine renewable energies for coastal regions? What is the competitive advantage of Europe in the extraction of biomolecules for the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries, and how can we increase it?

The policy package proposed by the Commission will show that part of the economy of the future is the economics of the sea.

NA-70-12-018-EN-C

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 deep recession and high unemployment in Europe. Our maritime policy is trying to bridge existing gaps such as training in one sector exclusively (for example fishing), opaque opportunities for mobility and unknown employment prospects for the future.

To increase the attractiveness of maritime jobs, 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.

Aquaculture employs around 65 000 people in the EU.

Find out more

- **Reform of the common fisheries policy**: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.htm
- **Integrated maritime policy**: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/index_en.htm
- **European atlas of the seas**: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/index_en.htm
- **Questions about the European Union?**
  Europe Direct can help: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
  http://europedirect.europa.eu

Publications Office

ISBN 978-92-79-23996-0
doi:10.2775/52365