# FIT FOR FUTURE Platform Opinion

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| **Topic title** | Regulation on European Fishery Statistics |
| | 2021 AWP |
| | Regulation 1921/2006; Regulation (EC) No 762/2008; Regulation (EC) No 216/2009; Regulation (EC) No 217/2009; Regulation (EC) No 218/2009<br>*Legal reference* |
| **Date of adoption** | 10 December 2021 |
| **Opinion reference** | 2021/SBGR2/07 |
| **Policy cycle reference** | ☑ Contribution to ongoing legislative process |
| | CWP 2021, Annex II, Revision of the Regulations on European Fishery Statistics (EFS)<br>*Commission work programme reference* |
| | The aim of the revision is to streamline and simplify the data collections needed to produce European fishery statistics.<br>It will also align European fishery statistics with the data and information needs of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It covers statistics on catches and landings of fishery products and on aquaculture. The main targets are to use as much as possible administrative data collected for the Common Fisheries Policy and to reduce the burden on Member States. |
| | ☐ Contribution to the (ongoing) evaluation process |
| | Evaluation finalised in 2019. Evaluation of the European Fishery Statistics: SWD(2019) 425<br>*Title of the (ongoing) evaluation* |
| | An evaluation of European Fishery Statistics conducted in 2018-2019 found that they are an important and independent source of information for a wide range of users. However, the evaluation also showed their decreasing added value to managing the Common Fisheries Policy. In comparison, other fisheries data sources such as data collection under the Control Regulation and Data Collection Framework (DCF) better meet Common Fisheries Policy management and analysis needs. In addition, European Fishery Statistics only partially cover EU catches, landings of fishery products are not precisely and comprehensively defined, and the available statistics about aquaculture remain to a large extent confidential due to very |

detailed breakdowns of multiple statistical dimensions potentially allowing the identification of individual enterprises.

The outcome of the evaluation indicated that Eurostat should consider the improvement of the statistical regulations framing the European Fishery Statistics.

Concerning efficiency, the total cost of producing EFS in the EU was estimated at €5.6[1] million. The costs are higher for Mediterranean countries that have large small-scale fishing fleets whose fishing data is not recorded automatically for the CFP (this is because EU fishing vessels below 12 metres of length are not obliged by the Control Regulation to have electronic recording systems on board, so data is mainly recorded based on paper logbooks and must be fed into the electronic database).

The total cost of EFS represents only 0.05% of the total production value of the sector. This is very low compared, for example, with the cost of the agricultural census, which alone is about 0.6% of the production value of the agriculture sector.

The reason behind the limited cost is the widespread use of the 'single collection, multiple use' principle: in most countries, catch and landing statistics are compiled from Control Regulation data, which are collected primarily for managing the CFP. Eurostat compiles fleet statistics directly from the EU fishing fleet register, without further involving the Member States. In most countries, the source data for aquaculture statistics are collected jointly with data needed for the DCF. Although the efficiency of EFS is very good, it could be improved further by:

- simplifying the EFS legislation; and
- streamlining the statistical system as a part of the overall fisheries data ecosystem at national level (in particular in countries currently carrying out separate statistical surveys for EFS), in the Commission and globally.

The current legislation on aquaculture requires too much detail for variables. This leads to:

- high costs, as some countries need a specific survey to collect the data; and
- a significant number of confidential values and a consequent inability to produce most EU aggregates; this

[1] These cost estimates are provided by the countries in the statistical cost data collections carried out by the ESS Resource Directors' Group for the reference years 2015/2016 and 2020. The Member States' cost for aquaculture statistics is 2.1 million €, for landing statistics 1.8 million €, and 1.5 million € for catch statistics. The estimated cost for Eurostat is 0.3 million €. The evaluation and subsequently the inception impact assessment erroneously quoted as the total cost of EFS the national costs of only catch statistics and the Eurostat costs,

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| | is a major inefficiency.<br><br>The evaluation also indicated a need to simplify metadata reporting for aquaculture. The evaluation highlighted an important source of inefficiency in EU and global fisheries data systems. Each country has to report overlapping, slightly different datasets to several organisations (Eurostat, DG MARE, FAO, OECD, ICES, RMFOs, etc.). Although the source data are the same in most cases, each organisation has slightly different classifications, aggregation rules, validation procedures and data transfer formats. This can be burdensome for the countries, but (more importantly) can lead to discrepancies between datasets and thus create confusion among users. The evaluation points to a need for the Commission (Eurostat) to deliver EFS, on behalf of the EU/EFTA countries, at least to the other international organisations collecting fisheries statistics (FAO and OECD). | |
| | ☐ | Included in Annex VI of the Task force for subsidiarity and proportionality |
| | | No |
| | ☐ | Other |
| | | No |
| **Have your say: Simplify!** | *No relevant suggestions on this topic were received from the public.* | |
| **Commission follow up** | REFIT Scoreboard: | European Fisheries Statistics |
| | Have your say portal: | European Fisheries Statistics |
| | Annual Burden Survey: | The EU's efforts to simplify legislation |

## FIT FOR FUTURE PLATFORM'S SUGGESTIONS SUMMARY

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| **Suggestion 1:** | **Greater uniformity in the collection and digitalisation of data** |
| **Suggestion 2:** | **Efficient labelling, authorisation and reporting obligations** |
| **Suggestion 3:** | **Simplification and streamlining of EU legislation on fisheries statistics** |

## SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE LEGISLATION ANALYSED

European fishery statistics (EFS) have been produced since the 1950s to provide an independent data source on fish catches, landings, fleet and aquaculture in EU and EFTA countries. They are currently covered by five legal acts dating back to the 2000s. These regulations support the management and analysis of the performance of the Common fisheries policy and other important EU policies by providing framework for collecting, harmonising and publishing fisheries data. They prescribe common standards, definitions and methodologies to ensure efficiency, timeliness, reliability and overall quality of fisheries data.

**Further sources of information**

Have your say entry page

Public consultation and contributions for the evaluation

## PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

*Existing evidence suggests the following issues*:

The current legal basis of European fishery statistics has not fully evolved with user needs yet, as these have changed due to subsequent reforms of the Common fisheries policy and technological and economic progress in the fisheries sector. The detailed data requirements of the current legal basis necessitate large samples (in many cases censuses) and long and complex questionnaires, which place a heavy burden on respondents and are costly for statistical systems. This burden is exacerbated by frequent double reporting requirements of virtually the same fisheries data to different entities within and outside of the European Commission. The present legal and methodological structure of fishery statistics also does not cater for future needs and does not function in an efficient way. Without EU intervention to improve this situation, European Fishery Statistics would risk becoming obsolete, at least for Common Fisheries Policy purposes, and fisheries stakeholders would then have to rely on potentially less reliable and valid data sources than official statistics, impacting EU and Member State fisheries and other policies.

(Source: Inception impact assessment)

**The Fit for Future Platform has acknowledged the issues raised by the legislation concerned as follows[2]**:

*Regarding: modernisation and future proofing of existing laws, including via digitalisation, the efficient labelling, authorisation and reporting obligations, the simplification of EU legislation:*

- The level of effectiveness of the cited regulations is at risk, as the information spectrum is very limited from a technical, spatial and temporal point of view. The rationale of the regulations is collecting specifically processed data, which are needed to produce official statistics.

- At present, no particular implementation difficulties are envisaged, except for what concerns the transmission of statistics on aquaculture (Regulation 762/2008). In this context, it should be noted that the data are collected through the census method but since the transmission obligation falls only on the Member State, operators may possibly object to sharing.

- Regarding the fisheries sector, the costs for the extraction of data by the administration are reasonable since it deals with a subset of other data systems provided for by Regulation 2017/1004 on Data Collection Framework and, most importantly, from Regulation 1224/2009 establishing a system for the control, inspection and enforcement by national authorities of the rules of the Common fisheries policy. There may be some overlapping between several data calls and various requests envisaged by the above-mentioned Regulation 1004/2017 (DCF). In at least one instance, "production and revenues by species", data are submitted to several end users, all of which are expected to provide the same information. Otherwise, different levels of reporting requirements are envisaged for data collected pursuant to Regulation 762/2008 and Regulation 2017/1004. The latter collects socio-economic data and data relating to the sustainability of aquaculture through the sample survey. Furthermore, mismatches may derive from the fact that the socio-economic data of aquaculture are taken from the company turnover or from the financial statements while for the purposes of Regulation 762/2008, the volume and value of annual aquaculture production is calculated with more stringent parameters (e.g. exclusion of products from abroad, transferred to another plant or stored).

[2] The suggestions are made based on the contributions from Platform's members (IT). The name of the MS will be removed in the final version;

## SUGGESTIONS

### Suggestion 1: Greater uniformity in the collection and digitalisation of data

**Description**: Various users of fishery data, also considering Regulation 2017/1004, utilize different IT platforms in order to carry out a range of activities aimed at collecting and processing data on fishing; various upload formats are requested by different end users. For example, the fisheries and aquaculture data that are submitted to Eurostat, FAO and OECD are highly aggregated while JRC, RCGs and ICES are analysing disaggregated data. There is a high variety in the variables and in the applied classification of the data including, for instance, metiér-based fisheries data, socio-economic variables, and measurements of biological characteristics of individual fishes. The current platforms are adjusted to cope with multitude of variables, with the varying level of aggregation of the data and they are well suited to for carrying out the task they are designed for in supporting data delivery processes. However, this plurality of end users and requirements implies numerous data aggregation operations, with the consequent need to manage a plurality of formats and outputs. Furthermore, with regard to transmission activities, this heterogeneity implies multiple operations of translation of the data and its upload in the various systems. All this could lead to errors, slows down and complicates the statistics process, impoverishing the data due to lower transferability. It therefore hampers interoperability. Consequently, integrating these platforms, lowering the above-mentioned inertia factors, should be an important improvement although its implementation would require a solid design, competence and resources. The challenge is not only technical as also the regulations on the use of these platforms should be adapted accordingly and be reinterpreted, to involve the many institutions and create incentives for cooperation, and to successfully communicate the outcome to the data providers, data processors, and data users. The regulations related to the use of these platforms (EDAMIS, JRC uploading tool, etc.) should follow this change and be reinterpreted for the normal use of an integrated system, where a modular access to information and information processing should be made possible, while preserving the integrity of the data.

**Expected benefits**: Uniformity in the collection and digitalisation of data could also improve the quality of catch and production data and make them more adapted to the status of the productive segments of fisheries and aquaculture. The stakeholders could have at disposal historical series of data more easily and less fragmented at national and international scale, as well as at the EU level. This would facilitate the enterprise policy and help the process of sustainable growth of both sectors, in line with “Blue Growth” strategy as improved with the new Green Deal provisions.

Concerning Regulation 762/2008 the digitalisation process is currently in an advanced stage of implementation. However, better harmonisation of both legal frameworks and submission data platforms, with aquaculture socio-economic data collection (Regulation 2017/1004) might bring benefits during the data collection process and improve a prompt and accurate reply to different data calls.

**Suggestion 2: Efficient labelling, authorisation and reporting obligations**

**Description**: Various conditions are necessary to carry out the obligations set out in the various regulations, including the obligations established by Regulation 2017/1004 or with reference also to Regulation 762/2008 relating to data on aquaculture[3].

**Expected benefits**: In order to improve representativeness of aquaculture data collection (by reducing the "No response error") it might be important that, in the further legislation framework, a way will be found involve all farmers in the provision of data (obligation or other) process since currently the response to production data are facultative.

**Suggestion 3: Simplification and streamlining of EU legislation on fisheries statistics**

**Description**: The cited regulations deal with the same subject and the same basic data set. Even if the end users of the data are different (EUROSTAT or the European Commission and other international subjects), a legislative simplification making the sources and uses of the data more coherent would be appropriate, taking into due consideration the provisions of Regulation 2017/1004.

**Expected benefits**: Streamlining of legislation.

[3] For example, in Italy, fishing statistics come from complementary sources: the catch and landings data collected through a sample survey (IC) and the monthly administrative data contained in the "Logbook" (LB-Reg. 1224/2009, which establishes a community control system to ensure compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy). There are some areas where both sources of data are used;

## ABSTENTIONS

- 1 Member State