

# PRESS RELEASE



**International Office**  
P.O. Box 11232, 2301 EE  
Leiden, The Netherlands  
[www.eucc.net](http://www.eucc.net)  
+31 (0)71 5122900

---

**Subject: European marine experts:  
"Give fishermen responsibility in fish stock management"**

**Date: 14 December 2009**

---

**LEIDEN (NL) - The European fisheries policy must be fundamentally changed to avoid a collapse of fish stocks. Fisheries experts of the EUCC Marine Team wrote a policy paper with 21 essentials, asking for a rigorous catch allocation regime, limiting fish catch to maximum sustainable yield (MSY), taking all by-catch into account. On-board discards and high-grading should be banned. Fishing licences should be given to fishermen for a longer period, to enable them to manage the resource in a responsible way.**

"The fishing industry should participate in stock-assessment and in decisions on implementation of this new policy" says Msc. Šarūnas Zableckis, coordinator of EUCC's fisheries team. "With responsibility comes accountability; if they fish sustainably they keep these rights, if not they should lose them."

The EUCC Marine Team wants to get rid of political negotiations about quota, every December. They ask the European Commission and the member states to simplify the regulations. Zableckis: "Make them understandable and easy to use. We also ask to phase out fuel subsidies and to replace them by subsidies for certification, like MSC. A powerful incentive for sustainable fishing should be sought in a proper marketing of its harvest."

The best management regimes are those based on robust knowledge. A way to maximise the knowledge is to engage the fishing fleet together with the management authorities and research institutions. This will optimise the management regimes and potentially reduce the number of political conflicts.

A new policy is urgently needed. 88% of EU fish stocks are being fished beyond MSY. 30% of these stocks are even outside safe biological limits. European fisheries today depend on young and small fish that mostly get caught before they can reproduce.

The Marine Team expresses special concerns on the increasing and ongoing by-catch of small cetaceans. More than a quarter million dolphins die every year in fishing nets. By-catch of dolphins and porpoises remains the greatest threat to their survival in European waters. Considerable efforts should be made to prioritise the issue of by-catch, increase research and development in this area, e.g. research on 'pingers' – or rather the new generation Dolphin Savers - and continue trials of alternative gear and methods.

The marine experts realise the pressure of the global fish market: "The EU should apply the same principles in its dealings with third countries" says Zableckis: "a mechanism has to be developed that imports from third countries are also certified and sustainably caught".

The EUCC Marine Team launches its paper today, Monday 14 December, because today the EU fisheries ministers in Brussels start their fishery negotiations for the North Sea in 2010. It is expected that these will last the whole day, and they will hopefully be concluded by Monday evening or Tuesday morning. The Marine Team has been created by the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) as a platform for knowledge sharing in the field of marine management and maritime planning at EU-level.

---

ENDS

**Contact persons**

Coastal & Marine Union, Marine team:

Sarunas Zableckis (IT): +39 348 605 7873, [szableckis@gmail.com](mailto:szableckis@gmail.com)

Ate Oostra (NL): +31 (0)70 382 12 32 Monday 14/12 and Tuesday 15/11 till 11.00 o'clock  
+31 (0)6 511 97 494 Tuesday 15/11 after 11.00 o'clock

Download the report at: [www.kustenzee.nl/pers](http://www.kustenzee.nl/pers)

**Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)**

The Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) is an association with 2700 members and member organisations in 40 countries. It is dedicated to conserving and maintaining healthy seas and attractive coasts for both people and nature. EUCC advocates best practice by developing coastal and marine policies, mobilising experts and stakeholders, providing advice and information, and implementing demonstration projects.

[www.eucc.net](http://www.eucc.net)

[marine-team.eucc-d.de](http://marine-team.eucc-d.de)

[www.dolphinfund.eu](http://www.dolphinfund.eu)