

Fisheries

The legal basis of the Fisheries policy are Articles 32 to 38 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.

The EU is the third largest fishery producer in the world. More than half a million people work in the fishery sector in Europe, and the EU average consumption of fish stands at almost 25 kg per head per annum – a figure which is considerably higher than the world average of 16 kg per head per year. The priorities of the common fisheries policy are to conserve fish stocks, protect the marine environment, match fleet size to supply and provide consumers with quality fish at affordable prices. The Union is now looking beyond a common fisheries policy (CFP) to a maritime policy which will integrate policy on fisheries, the environment and marine-based industries. International cooperation and assistance Fisheries agreements with countries outside the EU and negotiations within regional and international fisheries organisations ensure that not only the waters of the EU, but those of the whole world, are not over-fished. At the same time, they give EU fishermen access to fish in distant waters.

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The maritime dimension

Maritime regions account for more than 40% of the EU's gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 3% of GDP is generated directly from marine-based industries and services. The figure is much higher when indirect contributions from tourism and property are taken into account.

While fisheries and environment policy are to some extent integrated, there is much greater scope to integrate all policies which affect the maritime environment. At the moment, fragmentation makes it difficult to weigh up the potential impact of one policy on another. Consequently, the European Commission has launched consultation on an EU maritime policy.