

Draft resolution regarding the EU Common Fisheries Policy

Proposed by Kristdemokratiska Ungdomsförbundet (KDU), Sweden

Through the common fisheries policy, most aspects of the EU ocean fishery are regulated. The policy regulates the allowable catch, the market for fishery products and the funding provision aimed at increasing the productivity. But the policy also regulates actions far outside the EU borders. Many of the fishery nations of the EU are currently fishing in the fishing grounds of other countries – above all developing countries – through agreements that have been negotiated by the EU. These bilateral and multilateral agreements became necessary when the international boundaries were expanded and remote fishing ships no longer had access to their traditional fishing grounds. Fishing rights for such ships have been negotiated by many ‘third party agreements’ in exchange for alternative trading rights with the EU.

Today, there is little information on the size of the fish stocks in fishing grounds where EU has third party agreements. This increases the risk for dwindling fish stocks, which probably already is the case in many places. The agreements often lead to a negative effect on the livelihood of the local fishing communities, since the EU funds the European fishery, which is also benefitting from a higher level of technology.

The EU fishery agreements is hence currently in conflict with the development goals for developing countries. The big catches of the offshore industrial fishery in many cases lead to a substantial decrease of catches for the local fishery closer to the coast. Thus, it is of great importance that the consequences of the fishery for the local communities always are considered when EU negotiates with third parties.

Iceland is an example of how the Common Fisheries Policy can be sustainable on a longer term, by making market economic principles a starting point for the view on the oceans. The problem is that the oceans have been unowned . No one pays for the right to fish. This means that many fishers take as much as possible without considering the future fish stocks. The Icelanders realized that the solution is the natural system of a resource sustaining economy: property rights. Step by step, a system where fishers and trawling companies were permanently granted the right to fish a certain share of the total catch. If the total catch increases, the value of the quota will thus also increase. Since the quotas are permanent, they can be bought and sold on a free market. Hence, the fishery industry will have an interest in a long term increase of fish stock.

Those who use boats and resources ineffectively will benefit from selling their quota to more effective fishers. The over investments are cleared out, and resources are moved to other parts of the economy. In short, the Icelandic system means that effective fishing is beneficial, and that dwindling the fish stocks is not. The concrete

result is that the fish stocks slowly but surely has increased in the Icelandic fishing grounds.

The EU has chosen another path – the one of planned economy. Here, the fish not only is unowned and free, the trawlers that decrease the fish stocks also are funded by more than 1 billion euro per year. The European Commission is of course aware that this has to change. But its reform proposal is watered-down in every meaning of the word. Instead of letting the market and property rights rationalize and reduce the fishing fleets, the Commission prefers to dictate from above how the fleets should be reduced and concurrently create new inefficiencies by drastically reduce the allowed offshore time for ships. Hence, the EU Common Fisheries Policy must find new ways that lead to sustainable fish stocks and a restructuring of the fishing industry.

The Youth of the European People's Party states that

The Common European Fishing Policy should build upon property rights instead of public funds