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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy

{SEC(2026) 133 final} - {SWD(2026) 120 final}

Background

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is rooted in the EU Treaties, giving the EU exclusive competence to conserve marine biological resources, and shared power with its Member States for aquaculture and the common market policy. Its rules apply both in EU waters and outside EU waters where EU fishing vessels operate. The current Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 entered into force in 2014 and introduced key changes including the concept of maximum sustainable yield (MSY), a landing obligation to discourage discards, a regionalised decision-making system, objectives for external action, as well as a mechanism of policy coordination among Member States for the development of aquaculture.

The CFP Regulation functions as a basic regulation which is complemented by a variety of legal texts that supplement or further develop the basic framework of the CFP Regulation. All these legal instruments, together with the dedicated fisheries and aquaculture fund, contribute to achieving the CFP's objectives. This evaluation focuses solely on the CFP Regulation, looking back at the past 11 years (2014-2025) to assess whether it has achieved its objectives, and whether it is still fit-for-purpose in today's context. The findings and conclusions of this evaluation will contribute to informing the Commission on whether the basic regulation should remain unchanged or be amended to address any significant shortcomings or emerging needs. The evaluation will also feed into the Commission's 2040 Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture which will provide a strategic framework for fisheries and aquaculture policy development over the next 15 years.

Conclusions

The CFP Regulation has substantially strengthened the scientific basis and the governance framework of fisheries management, through improved data collection and scientific advice. EU funding has been critical in achieving these changes. The development and use of "the science of MSY" has become a central instrument to achieve the Regulation's targets.

Over the past decade, there has been clear progress in reducing fishing pressure towards the FMSY (exploitation rate). However, this reduction was not achieved for all the stocks within the initial timeframe (2020) and has not consistently led to maintaining or rebuilding fish stocks above biomass levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield. The poor situation of some stocks when FMSY measures were adopted as well as external factors such as declining natural productivity across sea basins, driven notably by climate change and habitats degradation (pollution, eutrophication), have contributed to this outcome.

Progress in operationalising ecosystem-based approaches to minimise negative impacts of fishing on marine biodiversity and ecosystems has been evident but relatively slow. This has been achieved primarily through technical measures, protecting marine space and international cooperation. On the other hand, the landing obligation did not trigger evident changes in fishing behaviour, selectivity, or catch composition.

Economic performance has not been as expected: insufficient rationalisation of capacity in certain fleet segments combined with reduced landings in several sea basins, continues to weigh on incomes and undermines the long-term profitability of significant fleet segments.

Aquaculture production has been stagnating while the processing sector has been more resilient.

Regarding the living standards of coastal communities involved in fishing, processing, and aquaculture, results are mixed. In the catch sector, a weak economic model appears to undermine job security and wages while ageing vessels and working conditions reduce the sector's attractiveness for new generations, emphasising the need to build robust business models with realistic socio-economic trajectories that take into account the situation of stocks, to improve the attractiveness of the sector. The aquaculture sector has also been facing issues of generational renewal due to administrative burden and efficiency issues, while the processing sector is relatively more resilient, thanks to better economic performance.

The CFP Regulation has contributed only moderately to food security, as a result of static or declining domestic fisheries and aquaculture production. The catch sector is facing difficulties due to the situation of fish stocks, while EU aquaculture, even though profitable, remains relatively small and has not yet achieved significant production growth.

Internationally, the EU's active building of strategic partnerships with key third countries through bilateral agreements, RFMOs and SFPAs, has contributed to maintaining access to non-EU waters, improving level playing field and shaping the legal and governance frameworks in international fisheries, including the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Member States acting independently would be very unlikely to achieve similar leverage. However, this has not compensated for the overall shortfall in supply due to the slow recovery of EU stocks. As a result, the EU is increasingly dependent on imports, especially the processing and fed aquaculture sectors that rely on imported raw materials and feed.

Evidence indicates shortcomings in control, enforcement and compliance over the past decade: the revised Control Regulation is an important milestone on the path to better implementation.

A significant part of the implementation costs of the CFP Regulation is linked to the need to ensure control, data quality, and sustainability outcomes. Expanded monitoring, reporting, and enforcement requirements generate additional burden but they are connected to achieving more reliable data, better compliance, level-playing field and more sustainable stock management. Targeted EU funding co-financed the costs for control, data collection and fleet adjustment, limiting national budget pressures and duplication. Simplification, digitalisation, multiannual management plans and regional coordination also aim to reduce administrative burdens where effectively implemented. Efficiency also depends strongly on how Member States implement the rules, with fragmented or uneven application reducing cost-effectiveness. Several efficiency concerns raised by stakeholders stem from secondary legislation, rather than the CFP Regulation itself.

All in all, the CFP Regulation remains a very important and relevant tool to manage a common natural resource and related economic activity in a changing world. Its broad and comprehensive objectives allow it to cater to many emerging issues. Inefficiencies and gaps identified in the evaluation and by stakeholders are often dependent on the full implementation

of its provisions or provisions of secondary legislation. This does not put into question the fundamental pillars of environmental, economic and social sustainability.