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# REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

## on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States

# 1 BACKGROUND

The Commission (Eurostat) collects statistical data on landings of fishery products under Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 ('the Regulation')[1]. According to Article 2 of the Regulation, fishery products are deemed to be landed on Member States' territory if landed by EU and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) fishing vessels, or if landed on non-EU territory by EU fishing vessels and then imported into the EU[2]. Article 10 of the Regulation requires the Commission to submit every 3 years a report to the European Parliament and the Council assessing, in particular, the quality and relevance of the statistical data collected. The report must also analyse the cost-effectiveness of the system for collecting and processing statistical data on landings and propose any best practices to lessen the workload at national level and lead to more useful, higher-quality statistical data.

The Regulation applies to EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. However as it relates to landings of fishery products that are marine catch, landlocked countries are exempted from the data reporting obligation (5 Member States: Czechia, Luxemburg, Hungary, Austria and Slovakia).

This report is based on (i) the quality reports on landings submitted to Eurostat by the reporting Member States for the reference year 2019, (ii) compliance analysis and (iii) cost data collected by Eurostat.

The Commission adopted previous assessment reports concerning statistics on landings submitted under this Regulation in November 2010[3], April 2014[4], May 2016[5] and February 2019[6].

European fisheries statistics also include detailed statistics on catches, fleet and aquaculture in addition to those on landings. Other Commission departments, mainly the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), also collect a large amount of data under Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009[7] and Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004[8] in order to manage the

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1 Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1382/91 (OJ L 403, 30.12.2006, p. 1).

2 This means that these statistics are not comparable to landing data collected under Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, where data are collected by a vessel's flag country.

3 Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States, COM(2010) 675 final.

4 Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States, COM(2014) 240 final.

5 Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States, COM(2016) 239 final.

6 Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1921/2006 on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States, COM(2019) 47 final.

7 Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC)

common fisheries policy. The statistical data collected by Eurostat and the data collected by DG MARE overlap partially. This report covers only statistical data on total quantities and unit values of the fishery products landed in 2019 on the territory of the Member States, as collected by Eurostat.

In 2018, Eurostat launched the project 'Streamlining and simplifying European fishery statistics'. It consists of an evaluation of the current aquaculture, catch and landing statistics and an impact assessment on future policy options and possible future legislation. The evaluation, which also covered the implementation of the Regulation, was completed in 2019. The impact assessment was launched in 2020 and was close to being finalised at the time of drafting this report.

# 2 MAIN FINDINGS

## 2.1 Punctuality and completeness

### *2.1.1 Punctuality*

The punctuality of the data transmissions has improved over recent years, with most of the reporting countries sending the data on time. For the reference year 2019, the data transmitted by one third of the reporting countries needed some corrections. These corrections were provided within an acceptable period in most cases.

The Commission (Eurostat) releases the data immediately after they are validated. If necessary, data can be revised at any time.

### *2.1.2 Completeness*

Data completeness has improved thanks to measures taken by the Member States to significantly extend their survey coverage of vessel types, foreign vessels and fish species.

## 2.2 Consistency

### *2.2.1 Quality and accuracy*

Eurostat collects quality reports on landings statistics every 3 years. They describe the methods and quality aspects of data collection based on self-assessments by the countries. Eurostat has used the national quality reports to compile an EU-level quality report[9].

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No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006 (OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1–50).

[8] Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (OJ L 157, 20.6.2017, p. 1–21).

[9] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/EN/fish_ld_esqrs.htm (available only in English).

The overall quality of the data was good and most Member States deemed both the non-response rate and under-coverage to be very low. A very limited number of Member States reported measurement or sampling errors, while possible misclassification was considered to have no impact on the quality of the data. 35% of the countries indicated that the overall quality of landings statistics has improved since the last quality report 3 years ago.

More than half of the countries have a quality management system in place. Most improvements targeted timeliness, accuracy and reliability.

### *2.2.2 Comparability*

In October 2019, Eurostat published a handbook for catch and landings statistics[10], which has further improved the homogeneity and therefore the comparability of the statistical data between countries. The length of the time series – comparability over time – varies between the countries. However, for the period covered by this assessment report, data are comparable over time.

## 2.3 Relevance

The statistical data collected under the Regulation are essential for informed, evidence-based policymaking at both national and EU level. The data on production levels and trends are important in analysing the development of the fisheries sector as part of the common fisheries policy and provide policymakers and industry with solid foundations on which to build the sector's future.

Landings statistics are widely used by various data users. The statistical data are an important source for other organisations' publications and services. The European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products uses European statistics on landings in compiling its structural analysis of the European fisheries industry. Landing statistics form the basis for other data collections[11].

The statistics on the volumes and prices of the fishery products landed on EU territory contribute to the Commission's commitments on market intelligence. The data are essential for following up and analysing the EU fishery product markets along the supply chain.

This statistical data could also be relevant to landing obligation as set out in Article 15(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013[12] requiring all stocks for which there are catch limits to be landed and counted against the relevant quota.

The Member States declared all user needs to be fully met at national level.

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10 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/fish_ld_esms_an3.pdf (available only in English).

11 Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/909 of 18 February 2019 establishing the list of mandatory research surveys and thresholds for the purposes of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (OJ L 145, 4.6.2019, p. 21).

12 Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22).

## 2.4. Accessibility

2.4.1. Online database

Statistical data on landings of fishery products are available in the Eurostat public database[13] in detailed country tables, as well as in an overall summary table displaying EU and national data at a more aggregated level.

Half of the reporting Member States also publish the data at national level in online databases that users can access.

### *2.4.2 Publications and data tables*

Eurostat publishes data and articles concerning statistical data on landings of fishery products in its online 'Statistics Explained' collection and in statistical books[14]. Half of the reporting countries produced electronic publications.

### *2.4.3 Metadata*

Every 3 years the Commission collects national quality reports on which this report is based (see footnote 8). The national reports include detailed information on the quality of the data and on the methods used to collect them. The national quality reports follow the European Statistical System (ESS) guidelines and are collected in the ESS Metadata Handler.

## 2.5 Data confidentiality

There are very few confidential variables in the statistical data on landings of fishery products transmitted to the Commission. In 2019, three Member States faced confidentiality issues either for the quantity or the price of the landed products. As a result, the overall volume landed and value remained confidential for the EU total.

Eurostat and the Member States have invested time and effort in making as many figures as possible available to data users, while safeguarding statistical confidentiality and keeping the process as efficient as possible.

# 3 BURDEN AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The ESS carried out a cost analysis of the process of collecting landing statistics. 23 countries (all the countries concerned except Iceland) sent cost estimates in monetary terms and labour force, which were expressed in full-time equivalent (FTE). One country could only provide a total figure for statistics on both fishery catch and landings; the cost of landing statistics was estimated to account for roughly half of the total cost.

The total direct and indirect costs for all countries providing the figures was EUR 2.9 million annually. The median cost per country was EUR 16 400. In more than half of the countries, the cost was very small, but there are a few countries organising sample surveys with higher costs. In total 70 persons (converted into FTEs) were working with landing statistics. The median per

[13] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database (available only in English, French and German).

[14] The most recent is 'Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics' — 2020 edition https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/12069644/KS-FK-20-001-EN-N.pdf/a7439b01-671b-80ce-85e4-4d803c44340a?t=1608139005821 (available only in English).

country was 0.5 FTEs. Half of the reporting Member States claimed they had made gains in efficiency since the last report. One third of them said that they managed to reduce the burden on respondents by using more user-friendly questionnaires or easier data transmission methods.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Landing statistics are robust in terms of punctuality, completeness and consistency. The countries provide reliable information on the volume and value of fishery products landed in the EU and very useful detailed data at species level that can be used for analysing the EU fish market.

Eurostat reporting guidelines and handbooks have made landing statistics more consistent. In parallel, measures taken by national data providers resulted in better punctuality and completeness.

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## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Eurostat strives to continuously improve the quality and availability of European statistics. It is also committed to reducing the burden on Member States and respondents. To this end, the 'Streamlining and simplifying European fishery statistics' project looks at current data collection and draws up a strategy for making statistical data on landings of fishery products more fit for purpose. The project's first milestone – finalise the evaluation of European fishery statistics – was reached in late 2019, when a staff working document was produced on the evaluation[15].

The most important outcome from the evaluation of fisheries statistics for landings is that they are a very important and widely used part of fisheries statistics, but their coverage does not satisfy user needs. The evaluation of fisheries statistics found that users had an important emerging need for landings statistics to cover total landings for all fishing vessels of a country, landings of EU/EFTA fishing vessels outside EU/EFTA territory and landings by non-EU/EFTA fishing vessels in EU/EFTA territory.

The best solution for providing a better service to data users would be to amend the current legislation or replace it with new legislation that increases coverage. The Commission is currently finalising an impact assessment on the potential options to improve all fisheries statistics: catch, landing, fishing fleet and aquaculture. New legislation could bring about efficiency gains, especially by simplifying the data flows and aligning deadlines with the needs of other international organisations.

At national level, the use of electronic questionnaires should be further encouraged, as it helps make data collection more efficient. National data collection guidelines and helpdesks that offer respondents tailor-made support are other examples of good practices.

[15] Staff Working Document (2019) 425 (available only in English).