

Questionnaire to MS on the implementation of the landing obligation/Croatia

Steps taken by Member States and producer organizations to comply with the landing obligation

1. Have you initiated, supported, participated in or implemented any measures and/or studies relating to the avoidance of unwanted catches through spatial or temporal changes to fishing behaviour (for example, studies/pilots on real time closures)? - YES

Although there were no significant quantities of unwanted catches in fishing small pelagic fish in Croatia so far, and since Croatia implements the obligation of landing of the catch discarded in the event that such a catch exceeds 5% of the total catch per year (*de minimis*), the intention is to avoid such potential catches in future. In this regard, Croatia has enforced a mechanism of spatio-temporal regulation of fishing with purse seine net “srdelara” in the channel mainly within the inner fishing sea. As per the Ordinance on the spatial and temporal regulation of the commercial fishing with purse seine nets in 2016, a significant share of inner fishing sea (around 30%) has been closed for vessels larger than 12m in length with the purpose to increase the fecundity of sexually mature individuals and biomass of individuals larger than minimum conservation reference size of stocks: sardines, anchovies, mackerel and horse mackerel.

2. Which fleet segments/fisheries do these measures and/or studies apply to?

These measures are applied to part of the fleet that catches stocks of small pelagic fish with PS larger than 12m of LoA.

3. What has the uptake of these measures and/or studies been in the fleet segments/fisheries to which they are applicable? Please provide the number and proportion of vessels in the segment/fishery.

Number of vessels which are subject to these measures is 186 and they represent 84% of the fleet segment that catches PS sardine and anchovy. These vessels are over 12 m of LoA.

4. Have you initiated any changes to your quota management system to implement the landing obligation?

NO

5. For stocks managed through catch limits, have you conducted a quantitative analysis to identify potential national choke issues? – NO

6. Have you pursued any exemptions to the landing obligation (either for high survival or de minimis) in the development of regional joint recommendations? Yes.

We apply Delegated act no.1392/2014 that allows the de minimis of 5% per year.

7. What studies or evidence have you collected or produced in order to support such a request.

Scientific institutions continuously monitor the composition of the catch on board. Results are expressed among others in the study “Technical properties of the purse seine nets and their impact to the sea bottom”. Control is conducted on landings and catches and the data are

entered in registers. According to the technical characteristics of gears it is not expected to ever overpass the 5% of the de minimis quantity applied. In addition, it needs to be mentioned that there is monitoring project under way which includes activities of sampling catches and landings per national fishing subzone (administrative division of Croatian fishing sea) and per catching period (period between two full moons). The aim of this project is to monitor the size composition of the catches of sardines and anchovies and the spatial distribution of these stocks.

8. What steps have you taken to ensure the amount discarded under granted de minimis exemptions does not exceed the permitted volume in the delegated act?

The discarded catch is recorded within the e-logbook, which is installed over 100% of the PS fleet to which the landing obligation applies. The data entered into the e-logbook are examined and compared to the total catch. In case the amount of 5% is reached, there is a mechanism in place for informing fishermen that they are obliged to implement the landing obligation and land their entire catches.

9. What has been the utilisation of any granted de minimis exemptions in the fleet segment/fishery to which the exemption applies? Please provide the total weight and proportion of catch discarded under this exemption for each fleet segment/fishery to which an exemption applies.

At the cut-off date 20 October 2016:

Sardine

- total catch: 37,724,963.63 kg
- discarded quantity: 38,633 kg
- share of discard in total catch: 0.1%

Anchovy

- total catch: 7,600,183.45 kg
- discarded quantity: 2,449 kg
- % of discard in catch: 0.03%

10. Have any of your vessels utilised the provision to discard fish which shows damage caused by predators?

No

11. For stocks managed by catch limits, did you make use of the provisions for inter-annual or inter-species flexibility?

No

12. In the development of joint recommendations, has consultation with Advisory Councils and other relevant stakeholders taken place? Yes

On the national level, there has been a working group formed involving representatives of the administration, science and industry, and it has been very active in the context of preparation of the joint recommendation.

In addition, Croatia has taken also active role within MEDAC and the national working group mentioned earlier has been closely cooperating with MEDAC in development of the joint recommendation.

13. Following the adoption of the delegated act for a discard plan, have steps been taken to ensure adequate understanding among stakeholders of their obligations under the provisions of the act?

Yes

The representatives of fishermen's associations have participated in drafting the application for de minimis. They also participated in all meetings related to this topic, and have been constantly informed on developments regarding the landing obligation.

14. Are there any other steps not covered by the questions above that you have carried out to effect compliance with the provisions of the landing obligation?

No

15. Which fleet segments/fisheries do these studies/pilots apply to?

No

16. What has the uptake been of these measures in the fleet segments/fisheries to which they are applicable? Please provide the number and proportion of vessels in the segment/fishery.

17. Has information been provided by Member States administrations and control agencies to fishermen?

Yes

18. Have guidelines been provided by Member States administrations and control agencies for inspectors?

No

19. Have new control and monitoring tools been used by Member States?

Yes

20. Have the Member state administrations and control authorities monitored below Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) catches at and after landing (traceability)?

Yes

21. Has control and monitoring been based on risk assessment?

Yes

22. Has the “last observed haul” approach elaborated by EFCA as a tool for monitoring the implementation of the landing obligation and to derive potential targets for inspection been used?

Yes

23. Using the most appropriate indicators defined below, provide information on the socioeconomics impacts on:

- The catching sector
- Upstream businesses
- Processors
- Consumption and markets
- Costs for Member States

24. Have there been any reported incidents of overloading of vessels causing stability problems?

No

25. Have there been any reported incidents of overloading of vessels forcing them to return to port early?

No

26. Have there been any reported incidents or accidents on board vessels that can be attributable to excessive workload?

No

27. Has any national legislation relating to safety on board fishing vessels arising from the landing obligation been amended or introduced?

No

28. Have you provided or received any funding under Article 32 (Health and safety) of EMFF or Article 3 (Eligible operations on safety) and Article 6 (Eligible operations on working conditions) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/531 to mitigate against potential safety issues caused by the landing obligation? Yes/No

No, as there were no operations selected under Article 32 of EMFF in 2016.

29. What have been the main reported uses and destinations for catches below mcrrs? Can you quantify these catches by species in terms of volumes, price per tonne and

30. Have you carried out any studies or pilot projects considering the potential uses for such catches?

No

31. Have you provided funding under Article 38 of the EMFF for modifications on board vessels for the handling of catches on board? Yes/No

No, as there were no operations selected under Article 38 of EMFF in 2016.

32. Have you provide funding under Article 43 of the EMFF for investment in the infrastructure of fishing ports, auction halls and shelters for the handling of unwanted catches? Yes/No

No, as there were no operations selected under Article 43 of EMFF in 2016.

33. Have you provide funding under Articles 68 and 69 of the EMFF for investment in marketing measures and the processing of fishery and aquaculture products? Yes/No

No, as there were no operations selected under Articles 68 and 69 of EMFF in 2016 related to landing obligation, i.e. there were no operations selected for funding under Article 68(1)(b)(ii) or under Article 69(1)(c)

34. Please provide information on the following:

Operational difficulties, such as:

- Avoidance and/or selectivity insufficient to avoid unwanted catches

- **Handling, storage and processing of unwanted catches**
- **Lack of funding to adapt fishing gears, vessels or port infrastructure**
- **Difficulties relating to monitoring, control and enforcement, such as:**
- **Lack of understanding or awareness of the rules**
- **Difficulties implementing and monitoring de minimis or high survivability Exemptions**
- **Implementation problems with regard to control/monitoring processes or infrastructure (e.g. adaptation of ERS systems)**
- **Refusal to carry observers**
- **Difficulties in fully utilising fishing opportunities, such as:**
- **Problems re-allocating quota to cover catches previously not landed**
- **Problems with the timing or availability of quota swaps**
- **Fisheries being forced to close early due to choke problems**