

Information on the implementation of the landing obligation (Regulation (EU) 2015/812 amending Regulation 1380/2013) in Slovenia - 2016

Steps taken to comply with the landing obligation

In 2016, in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of the Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy, Slovenian fisheries have been subject to the landing obligation for small pelagic species in the Mediterranean, namely anchovy, sardine, mackerel and horse mackerel.

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014 establishing a discard plan for certain small pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea which has applied from 1 January 2015 allows a de minimis exemption in the northern Adriatic Sea for discarding up to 5 % of the total annual catches of species subject to minimum sizes in the small pelagic mid-water trawl and purse seines fisheries for anchovy, sardine, mackerel and horse mackerel. The request for this derogation has been submitted on the sub-regional level of North Adriatic in cooperation between Croatia, Italy and Slovenia, and on the basis of advice by the Mediterranean Advisory Council - MEDAC. For Slovenian fisheries, the request for derogation has been based on the data collected on fisheries from the national fisheries database and on data from the Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia.

The de minimis exemption is of crucial importance for Slovenian small pelagic fisheries which consists of a few smaller fishing vessels with purse seines that have very small quantities of discards (few kilograms per fishing trip). Of these, only 4 vessels have been active in 2016. This is important taking into account the principle of proportionality: *Slovenian catches of small pelagic species in the North Adriatic Sea have amounted only to 0,1 % of total catches of these species in the North Adriatic Sea*, taking into account the data from the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) for fisheries exploiting stocks of bluefin tuna and sardine and anchovy in the northern Adriatic Sea.

With the purpose of ensuring compliance with the de minimis exemption granted under Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014, the relevant fishermen have been informed as well as Slovenian fisheries inspection. Also, pursuant to national legislation, Slovenian fishermen have to fill in fishing logbooks for all quantities and species of fish caught and discarded, also for vessels below 10 meters of length. Data on landings and discards have been provided to EFCA under Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) for fisheries exploiting stocks of bluefin tuna and sardine and anchovy in the northern Adriatic Sea. In relation to this, the catches and discards of small pelagic fish by Slovenian fishing vessels have been very small and the proportion of discards has remained below the applicable de minimis exemption.

Steps taken regarding control of compliance with the landing obligation

Control of compliance with the landing obligation and provisions on de minimis exemption has proceeded in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Common Fisheries Policy, including Regulation (EU) 2015/812 amending Council Regulations (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2187/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 2347/2002 and (EC) No 1224/2009, and with Regulations (EU) No 1379/2013 and (EU) No 1380/2013, as regards the landing obligation. Moreover, control and monitoring of Slovenian fisheries as regards the landing obligation has proceeded in accordance with the provisions of Slovenian national legislation - among others, Decree on the monitoring of catches and sales of fisheries products (Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia No 38/16) provides that a fishing logbook has to be filled in by masters of all fishing vessels (also for vessels below 10 meters of length) for all the

quantities and species of fisheries products caught and discarded. The fishermen have been informed about the landing obligation and the de minimis exemption by the fisheries inspection as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.

Slovenian fisheries inspection has implemented control and monitoring of the landing obligation during the course of its regular inspection activities (at sea and on shore), in the framework of the Sampling plan for weighing of fisheries products in the Republic of Slovenia, as well as activities related to the Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) in the context of the Specific Control and Inspection Programme (SCIP) for fisheries exploiting stocks of bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, swordfish in the Mediterranean and for fisheries exploiting stocks of sardine and anchovy in the Northern Adriatic Sea (Commission Implementing Decision 2014/156/EU).

All Slovenian fishing vessels using active fishing gears are equipped with Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), including the vessels with purse seines which catch small pelagic species. Compliance with provisions of EU Common Fisheries Policy on minimum sizes (Annex III of Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006) has been controlled in the course of fisheries inspection activities described above, including through control of landings of small pelagic fish in accordance with the Sampling plan for weighing of fisheries products in the Republic of Slovenia.

Information on the socioeconomic impact of the landing obligation

The de minimis exemption that is allowed for small pelagic species in the North Adriatic Sea on the basis of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014 establishing a discard plan for certain small pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea was crucial for Slovenian fisheries, as there were only 4 vessels using purse seines active in 2016, and all of these vessels were less than 15 meters of length. Their daily catches were low, therefore an obligation for them to separately store and land a few kilograms of discards, which would then need to be taken care of, would represent a disproportionate burden.

Information on the effect of the landing obligation on safety on board fishing vessels

Safety on board fishing vessels was not an issue due to the de minimis exemption for North Adriatic as provided for in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014 establishing a discard plan for certain small pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea. If there was no de minimis exemption, safety on board fishing vessels might have been compromised, as all Slovenian fishing vessels targeting small pelagic fish are old and smaller than 15 meters of length, and implementation of the landing obligation would demand additional storage space as well as additional labour.

Information on the use and outlets of catches below the minimum conservation reference size of a species subject to the landing obligation

There are no industries in Slovenia that could use the catches below minimum sizes (discards) because the quantities of discards in Slovenian fisheries are very small (a few kilograms per fishing trip, taking into account that 4 vessels targeting small pelagic species were active in 2016). The discards would have to be transported from the coast to central Slovenia i.e. to near Ljubljana for incineration as waste (distance 150 km). In this case, the costs of disposal as waste would be disproportionately high in comparison to actual quantities of discards in Slovenian fisheries.

Information on port infrastructures and of vessels' fitting with regard to the landing obligation for each fishery concerned

The Operational programme for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in the Republic of Slovenia 2014-2020 (OP EMFF 2014-2020) provides that some funds within the measure from Article 43 of the EMFF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) - Fishing ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters

could be used for infrastructure in Slovenian fishing ports in relation to dealing with discards, if needed. Such investments would need to be cost-effective with regard to actual quantities of discards.

Information on the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the landing obligation and recommendations to address them

There were no particular difficulties encountered in the implementation of the landing obligation in Slovenia in 2016; at the same time, the de minimis exemption with regard to discards of small pelagic species in the North Adriatic Sea on the basis of Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014 establishing a discard plan for certain small pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea has been of crucial importance for Slovenian fisheries due to the small quantities of catches and discards.