

*The following is a passage adapted from the New York Times about fishing policies in the European Union. Please read the passage and alert the researcher when you are finished. You will then answer some questions about the passage.*

The European Union on Thursday agreed to an overhaul of the region's fisheries policy, a deal intended to make commercial fishing more sustainable. While officials hailed it as a landmark agreement, some environmentalists said the deal might not be ambitious enough.

The agreement, the first overhaul of the Common Fisheries Policy since 2002, was reached early Thursday by Maria Damanaki, the European fisheries commissioner; Ulrike Rodust, a German member of the European Parliament; and Simon Coveney, the Irish fisheries minister, on behalf of the European Union's 27 national fishing ministries. The deal requires the consent of all 27 member countries of the European Union, but their approval is expected.

"This is a historic step for all those involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors," Ms. Damanaki said in a statement. "We are going to change radically the way we fish in the future."

The current policy has been widely regarded as a failure. According to European Union data, 80 percent of Mediterranean fish stocks and 47 percent of Atlantic stocks have been overfished.

In February, Parliament gave overwhelming support for a strict new policy. But the European fisheries council balked at the plan. Since then, both sides have worked to resolve their differences. As part of the deal, negotiators agreed to end overfishing by setting quotas at levels consistent with scientific advice and bringing fleet capacity in line with fish stocks. Overfishing is supposed to stop by 2015, with a five-year grace period for exceptional cases. Officials

also agreed that stocks should be managed with a goal of being returned to sustainable levels.

They also decided to seek an end to the wasteful practice of discarding unwanted fish at sea. The new rules will also pass on more decision-making to the national and local authorities. The negotiators rejected a proposal to create transferable fishing rights, which had prompted fears among small operators that Europe's fishing quotas would end up in the hands of large companies. Ms. Damanaki said the overhaul would also address the claim that European fleets act in environmentally destructive ways in overseas waters.

"We are going to apply the same principles when we are fishing abroad," she said. "We will fully respect international law and our commitments."

Conservation organizations generally applauded the deal reached on Thursday, praising Parliament for taking a strong stand. But critics question Europe's will to enforce its own laws, noting that no deadline had been set for the sustainability goal.

Sergi Tudela, head of the fisheries program at the environmental group WWF Mediterranean, said the language in the agreement meant that it might be 100 years before some stocks recovered to sustainable levels. The deal "fails to end overfishing and ensure recovery of fish stocks within a reasonable time frame," Mr. Tudela said.

Another battle looms on the horizon, this time over the subsidies the European Union pays out annually to fishermen. Those subsidies are considered to be a cause of

unsustainable overfishing, since they keep otherwise unprofitable boats in the water.

Responding to widespread public dissatisfaction with the current policy, the European Parliament voted 502-to-137 to impose sustainable quotas by 2015 and end the wasteful practice of discarding unwanted fish at sea. The legislation also returns some management responsibility to E.U. member states.

“The fishermen back home were really determined to wrest control away from Brussels, where the micromanagers have been the absolute ruination of the fisheries policy,” and they will be pleased with the outcome, said Struan Stevenson, a Scottish member of Parliament for the European Conservatives and Reformists and the party’s spokesman on the issue.

Markus Knigge, policy and research director for Pew Environment, said the E.U. legislation was comparable to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the landmark U.S. law that in 1976 established modern American fisheries practices, widely seen as superior to European practices.

Guy Vernaève, secretary general of Européche, which represents European fishing associations, expressed disappointment with the vote. Setting quotas at maximum sustainable yields by 2015 was “unrealistic,” he said, and the discard ban was a “radical obligation” that legislators had adopted without understanding that in many cases it would be impossible to implement.

Mr. Vernaève said the industry would seek to persuade the European Fisheries Council to fight some measures, but added that a final agreement could be reached by June.

The parliamentary vote, spearheaded by

Ulrike Rodust, a German Socialist who leads the Fisheries Committee, was supported by an alliance of Greens, Liberals, Socialists and the Conservatives and Reformists. But parliamentary observers said the final tally showed that some lawmakers from parties opposed to the overhaul had crossed the aisles in significant numbers to support it.

Still, the Parliament does not have the final word on the matter. Because the legislation adopted Wednesday goes much further than proposals from the Fisheries Council, the issue will go through a process known as a trilogue — a reconciliation of the competing proposals, with the European Commission acting as mediator.

In addition, some E.U. states with significant fishing industries have argued that the Parliament does not have the authority to set multiyear fishing plans, raising the possibility of a battle over E.U. governance that could lead all the way to the European Court of Justice.

Nonetheless, the Irish government, which holds the rotating presidency of the Union, has said it hopes to wrap up an agreement by the end of June.

The legislation also requires the elimination of excess fishing capacity, a perennial problem for European fisheries, by removing boats from the fishing fleets. The measure also would deny subsidy payments to fisheries that did not respect the law, including by failing to provide accurate catch data.

Mr. Stevenson said the timetable on some of the issues might turn out to be “unrealistic,” particularly a blanket discard ban by Jan. 1, 2014.

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**Questions (Circle one answer for each question).**

- 1) What policy is this article about?
  - a. Tax rates
  - b. Foreign policy
  - c. Fishing policy
  - d. Welfare
- 2) What do the quotas hope to prevent?
  - a. Boat theft
  - b. Violence
  - c. Freeloading
  - d. Overfishing
- 3) How many years might it be before some stocks recovered to sustainable levels?
  - a. 10 years
  - b. 25 years
  - c. 50 years
  - d. 100 years
- 4) What was the US legislation that the E.U. legislation was comparable to?
  - a. Magnuson-Stevens Act
  - b. Maryland Act
  - c. Stanley Law
  - d. Manson-Stale Act
- 5) How did Mr. Stevenson describe the policy's timetable? (Answer briefly in the space below)