

BALTFISH Presidency discussion document
TRANSPARENCY OF BALTFISH ACTIVITIES

In the context of a reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and in particular Article 18 of the CFP Basic Regulation¹, the recent work of Regional Fisheries Management Support Bodies (RFMSBs) in the European Union has gained a significant intensity and importance.

The work of these regional bodies now encompasses most of the matters of importance to fisheries management, such as but not limited to: implementation of the Landing Obligation, technical measures and coordination of control activities. In the case of BALTFISH, seen by many as the most developed RFMSB, one has to add the intensive preparatory activities on yearly fixing of Fishing Opportunities for the Baltic Sea.

This high intensity of activities has not yet been matched by a level of transparency that would meet, even partially, the level of expectations from stakeholders and wider public in some cases. This is mostly due to an incremental nature of RFMSBs development, as well as the need for regional Member States to operate within a strongly constrained budgetary framework and with limited human resources.

Against the backdrop described above, the BALTFISH Presidency has noted a number of requests coming from mainly from the stakeholders to increase the transparency of BALTFISH activities and committed itself to proposing a solution to the matter. Following an internal reflection and an initial contact with DG MARE, the Presidency suggests (in a non-binding way) to consider the following solution:

1. Upon European Commission consent, a “Regional Cooperation” folder could possibly be created within the European Commission’s DG MARE website;
2. Therein, DG MARE services would upload the following categories of documents, on BALTFISH Presidency request, being in turn subject to BALTFISH Members consent:
 - a. BALTFISH MoU and other constitutive documents as appropriate (such as working group ToRs);
 - b. Officially adopted Joint Recommendations;
 - c. Agendas of meetings
3. All other documents and communication would remain in circulation *via* e-mail exchanges as is the case now.

The Presidency believes that such an arrangement would provide the necessary level of transparency with an easy access to the published documents. At the same time, it would assure that BALTFISH remains a body where real and fruitful negotiations can take place with the necessary degree of privacy and informality.

¹ 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