

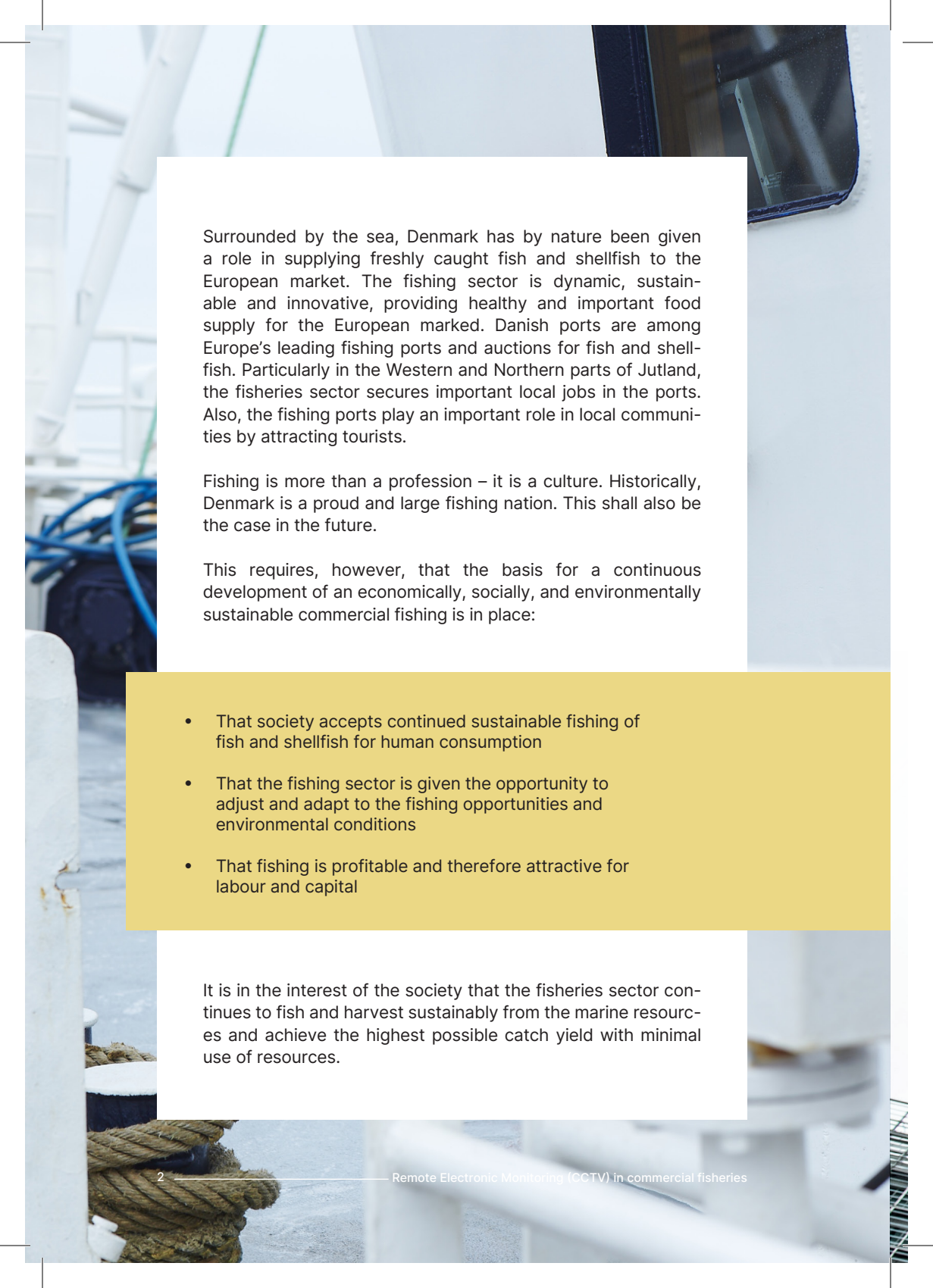
Remote Electronic
Monitoring (CCTV)
in commercial fisheries

February 2026



A Common Fishery Policy that makes sense

– how to develop a more sustainable
demersal fisheries sector



Surrounded by the sea, Denmark has by nature been given a role in supplying freshly caught fish and shellfish to the European market. The fishing sector is dynamic, sustainable and innovative, providing healthy and important food supply for the European market. Danish ports are among Europe's leading fishing ports and auctions for fish and shellfish. Particularly in the Western and Northern parts of Jutland, the fisheries sector secures important local jobs in the ports. Also, the fishing ports play an important role in local communities by attracting tourists.

Fishing is more than a profession – it is a culture. Historically, Denmark is a proud and large fishing nation. This shall also be the case in the future.

This requires, however, that the basis for a continuous development of an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable commercial fishing is in place:

- That society accepts continued sustainable fishing of fish and shellfish for human consumption
- That the fishing sector is given the opportunity to adjust and adapt to the fishing opportunities and environmental conditions
- That fishing is profitable and therefore attractive for labour and capital

It is in the interest of the society that the fisheries sector continues to fish and harvest sustainably from the marine resources and achieve the highest possible catch yield with minimal use of resources.

We need to change the Common Fisheries Policy

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) aims to ensure that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term and managed consistently with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits and contributing to food security.

There are many good intentions found in the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, supplemented by national regulation and administration.

Nevertheless, micromanagement through very detailed regulations in the regulation on technical measures, control and management plans, combined with even more detailed regulation in implementing acts and regulation is burdensome and suffocating for the fishing sector. This situation is even further strengthened by the complex decision-making process in the EU system that does not create flexibility or possibility of real time adjustments.

The EU regulations on the landing obligation for the demersal fisheries, with sorting onboard the vessels, is an unfortunate example of this. Another example is the very detailed regulations on mesh sizes and design of fishing gear established through negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament. "One size fits all" is the common approach - everyone must have the same rules - regardless of where the fish is caught. This to ensure a "level playing field".

National authorities can only tighten the regulations for their own fishers – not make the rules more flexible or relevant, for instance, to create incentives to increase selectivity in the fisheries. This reduces the ability of fishers to engage in innovation and further development of fisheries. It also means that national authorities cannot, on a case-by-case approach, create incentives for changes in the fishing sector.



A Common Fisheries Policy that makes sense must allow for greater degrees of freedom for the fishing sector

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) must focus on ensuring that individual fishers have incentives to meet fundamental objectives such as compliance with catch quotas, environmental regulation, respect for marine protected areas, protection of endangered species and biodiversity. How it is done should in principle, be up to the individual fisher.

The fishing sector must be set free. It should be put on an equal footing with other professions and human activities, where management and rules are less pronounced and take more account of different conditions.

The individual fisher must, to a greater extent, be allowed to take stock of the situation at sea and adapt to the fishing grounds where fishing is conducted, so that fishing activity can be as optimal as possible.

In other words, policy and management need to move towards a results-based approach, where each individual fisher is held accountable for his or her activity. The individual fisher must be given the opportunity to choose fishing gear as freely as possible to adapt to the quotas and fishing opportunities available.

There must still be minimum requirements for the design and use of fishing gear, but the fisher must be given the opportunity to choose the gear that is optimal for the situation.

A free choice of fishing gear also means the possibility of fishing with trawl gear to the extent that the basis of protected areas is respected. There is currently no realistic alternative to trawl gear if the fishing opportunities in the EU are to be exploited. However, in a results-based approach, some quantitative targets for the individual vessels to reduce the impact on the marine environment can be set.

Work to minimize the impact of gear on the marine environment, e.g. by implementing floating doors in trawl fishing, must continue. This requires political prioritisation and the allocation of public funds for the continued development of such gear.



Greater degrees of freedom must be fully documented

When fishing is given greater degrees of freedom, society will expect independent documentation of the fishery.

To avoid unwanted developments in bycatches, etc., free gear selection must be linked to fully documented fishing. It should be possible to document that the basic requirements, objectives, and restrictions are respected. Each vessel must document what has been caught, how much is caught in total, where it has been caught and which type of gear has been used.

This requires independent documentation, which largely will have to be electronic. It should document where the vessel has fished and with electronic monitoring and CCTV, it will document the catch.

This will make electronic monitoring and new AI technology natural tools for developing the fishing industry – and not just an extra layer of control that drives fishers away from the industry.

Therefore, Danish Fishers PO propose that ...

- Fishers engaged in fully documented fisheries, documenting all their catches, can fish without detailed rules on how the fishing is conducted. Control of their fishing is simplified, as it can be conducted based on the available electronic documentation.

↳ For example, it could be allowed to discard catches that are not allowed to be landed for human consumption, e.g. because of provisions on minimum size - provided that all catches of quota species are counted against the quotas in question.

- Quotas for both EU stocks and stocks managed in agreement with third countries, must be adjusted more or less automatically if the biological advice and the ongoing collected data provide a basis for this. Quotas should ideally be set in real-time and not as is presently the case with years of delay.

- The system is made incentive-based to ensure that the fishing industry takes ownership of the resultbased approach. The benefits of transitioning to the new scheme must be so motivating that it is a positive option for the individual fisher to participate.

Outline of a new CFP for the demersal fisheries

The aim is a sustainable fishing sector in respect of a healthy marine environment, and where there is an incentive for the individual fisher to take greater responsibility for the individual fishing:

We want an incentive-based scheme for responsible and documented fishing

- The fishery must, of course, respect allocated catch quotas and marine environmental regulations
- The fishery must be documented and controlled by electronic monitoring (CCTV/REM/AI)
- The fishing vessel must share data with relevant research institutions to improve stock assessments
- Fishing vessels must, among themselves, share knowledge about occurrences of unwanted species and fish below the minimum size to reduce unwanted bycatch

The fishing sector is given more flexibility

- The fishing vessel can optimize the fishing through innovation and a freer choice of fishing gear reflecting the fishing vessels fishing possibilities
- The fishing vessel is allowed to discard catches of species below the minimum size, provided they are counted against the quota of the vessel
- For fishing vessels covered by the scheme, quotas should not be reduced in accordance with ICES' estimates of discard
- The fishing vessel is assigned administrative reductions when the fishing activities are subject to electronic monitoring, e.g. in relation to control regulation

WE ARE THE FISHERS OF DENMARK

DANISH FISHERS PO WITH FISHERS ORGANISED IN 26 LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

