Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

Progresses on the regulatory side / regionalisation ….

Regional discard plans (DP) adopted annually laying down the calendar of implementation (species*fisheries) and the exemptions (high survivability, de minimis)

EU Com SWD(2019) 205
Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

Progresses on reaching common understanding on discard causes and quantification of risks of choke species ….

Choke categories:

- Category 1: Sufficient quota at Member State level, but poorly distributed within a country issue at PO/individual level
- Category 2: Sufficient quota at EU level but insufficient at Member State level, relative stability issue
- Category 3: Insufficient quota at EU level, overfished stock
- Category 4: Economic choking large quantities of low value fish.

NorthWestern Advisory Council 2017
Rihan 2018
Four years of implementation of the EU landing obligation (2015-2019)

Stakeholders’ perception: A slow evolution

DiscardLess conference Table Discussions 30/01/2019

• Awareness and dialogue
• Collaboration with scientists / authorities
• Mindset shift and new eyes on old issues
• Can improve the reputation of the sector
• Level playing field
• Aiming at reducing discards make sense…
• ….
Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

Some progresses on compliance monitoring ....

European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and Member States conduct Joint Deployment Plans of patrol vessels (Last Haul analysis)
Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

But in reality VERY LITTLE visible progresses so far ….

EU Com SWD(2019) 205: « the results of the last haul analysis point in the direction of a very poor implementation of the landing obligation and of a generally widespread non-compliance”
Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

Member States report annually to EU Com, results summarised by STECF

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<th>Member States</th>
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Key:
- **Significant Information**
- **Significant Change**
- **No Information**
- **No Change**

*Reporting for the first time - see key adjacent to 2016 figure*
Four years of implementation of the EU landing Obligation (2015-2019)

TACs are increased…

If TACs are increased and discarding continues there is a risk that fishing mortality increases!

Borges et al, 2019
Which consequences for fisheries data?

**Catch data more uncertain**….

- Discrepancies between discards estimates
- Fisheries observers less accepted onboard
- Potential bias (observers’ effect)
- Knowledge on discard volumes more uncertain

- Data more complex
- Data more uncertain
- The “Unwanted Catch” schizophrenia!

Example of discrepancies between observed discards (red) and landed BMS (blue)

The Discards-who-cannot-be-named
So where are we now with REM?

A strong push for REM from Commission and NGOs....

**Technical guidelines and specifications for the implementation of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) in EU fisheries**

**European Fisheries Control Agency**

**Landing obligation**

New: 25a

The amendments mandate the use of remote electronic monitoring tools, in particular CCTVs, for the control of the landing obligation. The new provisions will affect individual vessels and fleet segments according to risk assessment, and shall be implemented by Member States at regional level.
So where are we now with REM?

*But reluctance is still strong….*

- REM will not solve the fundamental causes of discarding in mixed fisheries, incl. inequal access to quota, choke species and technical interactions. Technical solutions to reducing discards remain limited.

- “Big Brother” feeling still very strong.

- All incentives previously used in REM trials (like quota top-ups, exemptions etc) have already been given away “for free”, accountability has not been included upfront in the discard plans.

EU Control regulation still in discussion today!!
Conclusions

- A lot has happened – and yet nothing has visibly really changed yet...

- The LO has remained very unpopular in the fishing industry. Its objectives remain unclear and little supported by the national administrations.

- TACs have been increased and exemptions have been given but discarding continue. This goes against the MSY objectives. Also, uncertain catch data undermines the quality of stock assessment.

- Recognition that control and enforcement are absolutely unsufficient. The current procedures cannot control the LO effectively.

- The landing obligation has triggered an intense dynamic of dialogue and awareness that wouldn’t have taken place otherwise.

- There is a major push towards the use of REM but reluctance remains strong. Control regulation still in discussion.
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And apologies for not being here in person!