

Forecasting fish distribution and abundance in the Atlantic Ocean: The challenge of balancing exploitation and sustainability



3 December 2020, 14:30 – 16:30 CET
Online event

**Hosted by MEP Isabel Carvalhais
& MEP Pierre Karleskind**

Fish populations are highly variable and thus changes in both their distribution and abundance are difficult to foresee. Such fluctuations present a tremendous challenge to fisheries and management, and, in some cases, have even given rise to international conflicts. This is a situation that some analyses expect to worsen under both a changing climate and Brexit.

Advances in state-of-the-art modelling and assessments are starting to provide robust forecasts on longer timescales. In cooperation with fishing communities, scientists and modellers have started to create the first generation of fish forecasting products. Already, in some areas, variables such as sea-surface temperature can be predicted five or more years in advance. When coupled with ongoing work in fisheries research, models are being developed that can predict fish stock distribution and abundance many months in advance.

This briefing is co-organised by three European Union funded research projects working on climate predictions in the marine environment. Blue-Action works to develop and improve models that can predict climate from seasons to decades in advance, and produce the first generation of real fish-forecasts. TRIATLAS works to develop the understanding and the capacity to best predict changes in the tropical Atlantic marine ecosystem and its societal impacts. Mission Atlantic works to map and assess present and future status of Atlantic marine ecosystems under multiple stressors.

Given the potentially valuable, but also controversial, nature of the scientific work, this briefing seeks to promote a discussion of the societal and policy implications of fish forecasting in the Atlantic Ocean between Members of the European Parliament, national representatives, Commission officials, and other interested stakeholders, including the fishing industry, NGOs and scientists. This generation of fish forecasting products will be a contribution to national, European as well as international policy frameworks, agreements and regulation like the European Green Deal, the pan-Atlantic Galway and Belém Statements, and the United Nation Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

FINAL AGENDA

- 14:30 - 14:40** Opening remarks by **MEP Isabel Carvalhais**
- 14:40 - 14:50** Remarks by **Nikolaos Zampoukas, Marine Resources Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission**
- 14:50 - 15:20** Presentations by:
- **Jörn Schmidt**, Chair of the Science Committee at ICES - Societal relevance of ecosystem based management for fisheries policies
 - **Femke de Jong**, Researcher at NIOZ - Importance of integrated ocean observation and networks to understand our ocean
 - **Mark Payne**, Researcher and Associate Professor at DTU Aqua - Fish forecasts and climate services in the Atlantic
- 15:20 - 15:35** Reactions by:
- **Laura Meller**, Campaigner and Ocean Specialist, Greenpeace
 - **Manuel Barange**, Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, FAO
 - **Daniel Voces**, Managing Director, Europêche
- 15:35 - 15:45** Reactions by **MEPs**:
- **MEP Isabel Carvalhais**
 - **MEP Grace O' Sullivan**
- 15:45 - 16:20** Interactive discussion and Q&A moderated by **Sandra Ketelhake (KDM)**
- 16:20 - 16:30** Closing remarks by:
- **Noel Keenlyside**, Professor at Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research and University of Bergen
 - **MEP Pierre Karleskind**

