

Title: Is Participation in Eu Policy-Making the Answer to Improve Policy Outcomes and Legitimacy? the Case of the Common Fisheries Policy

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Abstract: The White paper on European Governance suggests enhanced participation and transparency to improve policies, regulations and outcomes. This paper identifies and addresses difficulties and constraints associated with increasing legitimacy through participation using the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as an example.

The Green paper leading to the reform of the CFP acknowledged that the current framework is not well suited to respond quickly to local and emergency circumstances and stakeholders do not feel sufficiently involved in important aspects of the policy. Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) was created to enhance stakeholder participation and improve policy outcomes as part of the reform of the CFP and hereby gain support for the conservation measures adopted.

The paper will investigate how participation (or lack of) and the following representation presently influence outcomes in relation to the CFP in terms of legitimacy and effectiveness. Drawing on existing consultation arrangements designed to provide a full range of views from the fisheries sector and other stakeholders.

Concluding that the present move towards increased participation in fisheries policy making will be a *Fuite en avant*, despite all good intentions and visions as long as the fundamental requirements for realising the vision are not thoroughly understood and the lessons from past experiences of participation are not integrated in the structure and more importantly arguing that increased participation is only a way forward if there is openness and readiness within the political and administrative systems to change the management approach if this become the outcome of a more participatory decision-making process.