

# **The Impact of the EU Buy Back Scheme on the Italian Fleet: The Northern and Central Adriatic Sea Bottom Trawlers Case**

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## **Abstract**

The European Union Generalised Buy back scheme falls within the Multiannual Guidance Policy implemented since the early '80s. There have been four different schemes since then, each of them calling for a programmed and progressive capacity reduction. EU Member States have been responsible for the actual implementation of the program. In Italy, in the years 1997/2002, the whole program brought a 14% reduction of the fleet, corresponding to GT 35.000 and about KW 202.000. The case study is referred to the trawling segment fishing in Adriatic waters and considers the impact on the stocks, which are highly multispecific. The scheme is voluntarily and can be considered as a retirement premium for those who have applied, therefore having a strong social character. The impact on resources has been significant and estimates of biomass indices and LPUE show the inversion of the negative trend for some important stocks. Of course, since the time spent fishing has not been controlled over time, results could have shown an increase in days at sea. This has not been the case, due to the features of this artisanal small scale fishery.

Key words: EU MAGP, capacity, trawlers, Adriatic Sea,