

Managing Outermost Regions' fishing fleets

An own-initiative report on the management of the fishing fleets in the Outermost Regions is scheduled to be voted during the April II plenary session. The report looks into the possibilities of modernising the Outermost Regions' fleets, while ensuring sustainable fishing in these regions.

Background

The EU currently has nine [Outermost Regions](#) (ORs), which are an integral part of its territory: the Canary Islands (Spain), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Saint Martin, Réunion and Mayotte (France). While the rights and obligations of the EU Treaties apply fully to these regions, Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) recognises that they have particular features which constrain their development, and allows the adoption of specific measures adapted to the situation of the ORs.

Map - Location of EU's Outermost Regions



Source: EPRS.

The common fisheries policy and the Outermost Regions

Under the current common fisheries policy (CFP), [OR fishing fleets](#) are subject to the same management measures as all EU fleets. As the CFP sets maximum limits of total tonnage and engine power, the capacity of the OR fleets cannot increase (though Mayotte, which became an OR more recently, benefits from a derogation). OR fleets' capacity limits are set for each [fleet segment](#) of each OR (see Annex II of the CFP [Basic Regulation](#)). To date, the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities in the ORs, based on Member States' annual reports, has not been conclusively assessed, mainly due to lack of biological data on the stocks exploited. The Member States are authorised to restrict fishing, in a 100-mile zone around the ORs, to vessels registered in OR ports. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund ([EMFF](#)) takes into account the ORs' specificities by authorising a higher intensity of public aid compared to the mainland (with the exception of aid for engine replacement), and by a scheme to compensate additional costs borne by OR operators.

European Parliament position

The Committee on Fisheries (PECH) discussed the specific problems of the OR fleets in an own-initiative report, with the Committees on Budget and Development providing opinions. The [report](#) was adopted in committee on 22 March 2017 by 18 votes to 2 with 6 abstentions, and is scheduled for the April II plenary session.

The report points out that the CFP and the EMFF, designed for continental Europe, can only provide a limited response to the specificities of OR fisheries, and calls for the development of regional strategies tailored for each OR. Among other things, the report promotes improved data collection, in particular on the state of the stocks. It stresses that only OR vessels should be allowed to fish in OR waters, to protect their resources. The report calls on the Commission to consider establishing a financial instrument specifically dedicated to supporting fisheries in the ORs, along the lines of the [POSEI](#) scheme for agriculture, which could possibly bring together several provisions of the existing EMFF. In addition, it proposes to increase the capacities of certain OR fleet segments, if compatible with sustainable fishing objectives, and points out the need to reconsider the basis for fleet segmentation. It also proposes that aid intensity for engine replacement be increased.

Own-initiative report: [2016/2016\(INI\)](#). Committee responsible: PECH; Rapporteur: Ulrike Rodust (S&D, Germany).

