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Fishing is often seen as a male activity, especially when it involves work on board fishing vessels and long absences at sea. Women do however play a key role in the fisheries sector, although their work is often unrecognised and underpaid in low-valued positions in the processing and aquaculture sectors. Many women also have a significant role in supporting fishing activities in small-scale, family-run businesses. This work – often unpaid and less visible – can include a variety of vital tasks, such as maintaining equipment, and processing and marketing the fish.

The European Parliament has long championed women's important role in fishing communities, both in the EU and as part of the 'sustainable fisheries partnership agreements' with non-EU countries. Following on from its 2014 resolution on specific actions in the common fisheries policy for developing the role of women, Parliament recently adopted a fresh resolution 'Fishers for the future' (16 September 2021). This highlights the fact that women still lack sufficient economic and social recognition for their role in fisheries, and calls on the Commission to launch initiatives to acknowledge their work, secure equal pay between genders (not least in view of the 2020-2025 gender equality strategy), support female entrepreneurship and provide relevant EU funds.

On the occasion of European Gender Equality Week 2021 (25-28 October), the following publications offer background information and analysis.

Training of fishers
*Study by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, July 2018*

The focus of this study is the training and certification of fishers in EU Member States, relating to health, safety, and sustainability on board. Where available, the country chapters provide data on women in fisheries.

Women in fisheries: a European perspective
*Study by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, 2013*

This note gives an overview of the current situation faced by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Europe and the prerequisites for improved gender mainstreaming.

![Figure 1 – Gender balance in employment in the EU fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors](data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAAEAAAABCAQAAAC1HAwCAAAAC0lEQVR42mNk+A8AAQUBAScY0hYAAAABJRU5ErkJggg==)

Further reading:

**Social dimension of the CFP**
*Report by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF-20-14), 2020*

**The EU aquaculture sector: economic report 2020**
*Report by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF-20-12), 2020*

**The EU fish processing sector: economic report 2019**
*Report by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF-19-15), 2019*

**Social data in the EU fisheries sector**
*Report by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF-19-03), 2019*

**Study of the role of women in fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea**
*Study by Coffey [et al], for the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), 2019*

**FLAG support to women in fisheries and aquaculture**
*Study by FARNET, 2018*

**Gender in maritime affairs and fisheries**
*Study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 2017*

**Videos, websites:**

- **The invisible women of Europe’s fishing industry**
  *Video by Euronews – Ocean, Episode 7, March 2020*

- **AKTEA** – Women in fisheries and aquaculture
  *European network of fisherwomen’s organisations in Europe*

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**Figure 2 – Proportion of female employees in EU aquaculture and processing sectors in selected Member States**


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