

New EU rules on fisheries control

Fisheries control aims to ensure compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and is therefore a key condition for its success. The EU control system is currently under revision, with a European Commission proposal intended to modernise the monitoring of fisheries activities, improve enforcement and update the rules in line with the latest CFP reform. Parliament's vote on the revision is scheduled for the March I part-session.

Background

Designed to support the CFP, whose core business is one of the few EU exclusive competences, the fisheries control system is nevertheless conceived as a national competence: Member States are responsible for controlling their fishing and related activities, whereas the Commission verifies how they fulfil their responsibilities. It is governed by the Control Regulation [1224/2009](#), complemented by Regulation [1005/2008](#) on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and Regulation [2017/2403](#) on management of external fishing fleets, in a comprehensive package covering EU Member States' responsibilities in each of their roles as flag, coastal, port and market states.

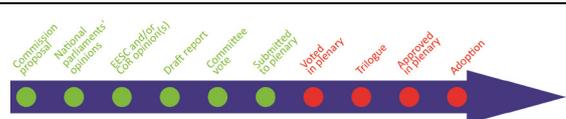
European Commission proposal

On 30 May 2018, the Commission issued a [proposal](#) to revise the fisheries control system, centred on the amendment of the Control Regulation. The proposal introduces electronic tracking of all EU fishing vessels, fully digital reporting of catches, with electronic logbooks and landing declarations applicable to all vessels, and monitoring of recreational fisheries. Control of the landing obligation, intended to end fish discards, is based on closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, to be installed on a minimum percentage of vessels. The proposal improves traceability along the supply chain, through digitalised identification and declaration, for all fishery and aquaculture products, whether from EU fisheries or imported, and establishes a new system for weighing fish upon landing. The enforcement rules are being thoroughly revised, with a common list of activities defined as serious infringements and corresponding sanctions, as well as a strengthened points system. The proposal also revises the mandate of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), to fully align its objectives with the CFP and to upgrade its inspection powers, and the IUU Regulation, to include a digital catch certification scheme for imported fishery products.

European Parliament position

Parliament's Committee on Fisheries adopted its [report](#) on 5 February 2021, supporting the proposal on major aspects, such as tracking of all fishing vessels, reporting of all catches and improving traceability of fishery products. It backs the proposal on harmonising sanctions for infringements of fisheries rules across the EU, and requires the creation of a 'Union register' of infringements. It departs from the proposal as regards the mandatory use of CCTV technology, only allowing it on a voluntary basis (if associated with incentives such as quota increases), or as an accompanying sanction for vessels that commit repeated infringements. It exempts vessels under 10 m from the obligation to keep electronic logbooks, and introduces derogations to the weighing of fishery products upon landing. It increases the margin of tolerance in logbook estimates, in particular for small pelagic and tuna species, and limits the continuous engine-power monitoring to vessels exceeding 221 kilowatts that operate under fishing effort regimes.

First-reading report: [2018/0193\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: PECH; Rapporteur: Clara Aguilera (S&D, Spain). For further information see our 'EU Legislation in progress' [briefing](#).



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