

The Trawler

TOP NEWS – JANUARY 2024

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Tuesday, 23 January 2024, 9:00 - 12:30 & 14:30 - 18:30

SPINELLI 1E2

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Vote on the COD report on the “Transposition of conservation measures in NEAFC area”
- ▶ Vote on the 2022 discharge opinion for the European Fisheries Control Agency
- ▶ Presentation by the European Court of Auditors of the ECA Special Report 25/2023 on “EU aquaculture policy”
- ▶ Conclusion of an agreement with the Republic of Seychelles on the access for Seychelles fishing vessels to the waters of Mayotte: draft recommendation
- ▶ Presentation of a study by the Policy Department B “Training and social security schemes for fishers”
- ▶ Debate on the state of play of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement EU-Morocco

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AGENDA

Next meetings of the Committee on Fisheries:

- Monday, 19 February 2024, 15:00-18:30
- Wednesday, 20 March 2024, 09.00-12.30 and 14.30-18.30

WORDS FROM THE CHAIR



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Pierre KARLESKIND
Chair of Committee on Fisheries

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Friends,

First of all, let me take this opportunity to wish you and your families a happy New Year!

The end of the mandate is near and we still have legislative work ahead of us, to be completed before the European elections in June.

This meeting will be an occasion to look more in detail at the training and social security schemes for fishers. How could we, as European legislator, improve the mutual recognition of fishers' professional certificates and the functioning of social security schemes that cover them? The latest data indicate there are approximately 54.000 active EU fishing vessels offering direct employment to some 122.000 fishers: they deserve a modern legal framework.

We will also be talking about the EU aquaculture sector, which is an important element of the Blue Economy. Aquaculture production in the EU is stagnating despite national efforts and increased funding for the sector. What hampers aquaculture growth? And can we contribute, along with the Member States, to create a more favourable strategic framework for investments in EU aquaculture?

I look forward to fruitful debates!

Best wishes

Pierre KARLESKIND

ONGOING FILES / DOSSIERS

COD reports	Rapporteur	Type of procedure	PECH Committee vote	Plenary Session Vote
Targets for fixing fishing opportunities COM(2023)0771 - C9-0442/2023 2023/0449(COD) PECH/9/13827	TBC	COD	TBC	TBC
Conservation, management and control measures applicable in the area covered by the Convention on future multilateral cooperation in the North-East Atlantic fisheries (NEAFC) COM(2023)0362 - C9-0221/2023 2023/0206(COD) PECH/9/12730	Guerreiro	COD	23/01/2023	FEB II (tbc)
Reports adopted in PECH Awaiting Parliament's position in 1st reading	Rapporteur	Type of procedure	PECH Committee vote	Plenary Session Vote
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT): amendments to the management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Convention Area COM(2022)0171 - C9-0151/2022 2022/0111(COD) PECH/9/08855	Aguilera	COD	29/11/2023 (vote on prov. agreement)	FEB I
NLE reports	Rapporteur	Type of procedure	PECH Committee vote	Plenary Session Vote
Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles on access for Seychelles fishing vessels to the waters of Mayotte 2022/0362 (NLE) PECH/9/10611	Mato	NLE	19/02/2024	FEB II
Opinions	Rapporteur	Type of procedure	PECH Committee vote	Vote Lead Committee
2022 Discharge: European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) 2023/2150(DEC) - PECH/9/12937	Chair	DEC	23/01/2024	07/03/2024
Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) 2023/0353 (NLE) PECH/9/13413	Matić	NLE	20/03/2024	TBC

Protection of animals during transport and related operations 2023/0448(COD) PECH/9/13874	TBC	COD	TBC	TBC
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**Note on procedures:*

COD: Ordinary legislative procedure; **INI:** Own-Initiative;

NLE: Non-legislative (consent to international agreements); **DEC:** Discharge; **BUD:** Budget; **CNS:** Consultation

RESEARCH FROM THE POLICY DEPARTMENT 'B':

REQUESTED:

- ***Innovative developments and their impact on EU fisheries*** (workshop)
- ***The future of the EU fleet and its modernisation*** (workshop)
- ***The EU oceans and fisheries policy - latest developments and future challenges*** (study)

PUBLISHED (SINCE 2019):

CFP and fisheries management

- *European fisheries - latest developments and future challenges* (2019)
- *Implementation and impact of the key European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) measures on the CFP* (2019)
- *The impact on the fishing sector of offshore windfarms and other renewable energy systems* (2020)
- *Implementation of the current EU fisheries control system by Member States (2014-19)* (2020)
- *Workshop on Electronic technologies in monitoring, control and surveillance of EU fisheries - challenges and opportunities* (2021)
- *Artificial Intelligence and the fisheries sector, including measures to improve traceability* (study) (2022)
- *Costs and benefits of spatial protection measures as tools for fisheries management* (2022)
- *Animal welfare of farmed fish* (study) (2023)
- *European Green Deal – Challenges and opportunities for EU fisheries and aquaculture* (workshop) (2023)

Stocks

- *Environmental, social and economic sustainability of the European eel management* (2019)

Structural Policy and economics

- *Workshop on the Implementation and Impact of EMFF Measures on the Common Fisheries Policy* (2019)
- *Seafood Industry Integration in the EU 2018* (2019)
- *Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU fisheries and aquaculture* (2021)
- *Training and social security schemes for fishers - State-of-play and perspectives in the EU* (study) (2024)

External dimension

- *Workshop on impacts of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement on fisheries and aquaculture in the EU* (2022)
- *Role and impact of China on world fisheries and aquaculture* (2023)

Mission briefings

- *Fisheries in Senegal/Sicily* (2022)
- *Fisheries in Ecuador/Ireland* (2023)

@ You can access the studies and other documents via this [link](#)

FISHERIES NEWS IN BRIEF

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

[News - Press service](#)

Parliament rebukes Commission for plan to ban fisheries in protected maritime areas

18/01/2024

MEPs criticise the Commission's proposal to ban mobile bottom fisheries in marine protected areas and want reforms of the EU common fisheries strategy to address specific issues.

Following a morning devoted to debating the EU's fisheries strategy, in particular the proposals conveyed in the [Commission's fisheries package](#), MEPs voted on and approved three reports on the issue.

A more balanced approach to define marine protected areas

Parliament, according a plenary vote on a draft report, today, thinks the Commission took an oversimplified approach when proposing the [phasing-out of mobile bottom fishing](#) in all [marine protected areas](#) by 2030, and calls for balance and the participation of fishers in the definition and implementation of these areas.

The report "EU Action Plan: protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries", approved in plenary with 402 votes, 95 against and 57 abstentions, says that the Commission action plan lacks coherence with other priorities and complains that rising prices or strengthening economic growth and employment have not been adequately considered.

Accounting for 25% of catches, a ban of mobile bottom fishing would have economic impact in many regions from the coast, hindering shellfish farming, say MEPs. They also anticipate that closing zones to this practice can lead to conflicts and put pressure in other fishing areas.

You can [watch the plenary debate](#), including a statement by rapporteur [Niclas Herbst](#) (EPP, DE).

Reform the common fisheries policy (CFP)

The CFP "must continue to be implemented and, where necessary, reformed and adopted accordingly", MEPs say noting that its socio-economic aspects have not been given due consideration. They point to pending shortcomings regarding the [landing obligation](#) and note that by-catches are inevitable, mainly in mixed fisheries. They therefore call for a "pragmatic" application of this rule, keeping current exemptions and encouraging quota swaps.

MEPs highlight that the management based [maximum sustainable yield](#) model is impossible to apply in the case of multi-specific fisheries. They invite the Commission to ponder as management objective "both optimum fish stock levels and optimum socio-economic performance of fleets".

In the report "State of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives", adopted with 371 votes in favour, 92 against and 92 abstentions, the plenary asked the Council to set total allowable catches for longer than annual or biannual periods, to give more certainty to fishers.

You can watch the [plenary debate](#), including a statement by rapporteur [Gabriel Mato](#) (EPP, ES), on the evaluation of the execution of the CFP in the last decade.

More harmonised application of the Common Market Organisation rules

Taking stock of the policy for ensuring a level playing field of all fishery and aquaculture products sold in the EU, MEPs demand improving the information to consumers, including data on ingredients, date of catch, geographical fishing area and fishing gear.

They call for better traceability and a proper labelling system, and insist that all fish products - both from the EU and imported - should respect the same environmental and social sustainability standards. Approved with 415 votes to 10 and 129 abstentions, the report "Implementation of the Common Market Organisation Regulation in fisheries and aquaculture" also calls for the recognition of "cofradías" and "prud'hommies" as professional organisations.

[Watch the debate](#), including a statement by rapporteur [Izaskun Bilbao Barandica](#) (Renew, ES).

Background

Forty years since the creation of the CFP and ten after its last revision, the European Commission presented a “[Pact for Fisheries and Oceans](#)”, including an implementation [assessment](#) of the CFP, a [marine action plan](#) and a [report on the Common Market Organisation rules](#).

In adopting these texts, Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations expressed in the proposals of the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) - namely, proposals 1(1, 9) and 2(1, 7) on promoting effectively environmentally and climate friendly fishery, clear labelling and restore biodiversity.

[EUROPEAN COMMISSION](#) [News - Press service](#)

The EU fisheries control system gets a major revamp 09/01/2024

New rules for a reinforced control system enter into force on Tuesday 9 January 2024.

The revised rules modernise the way fishing activities are controlled, for **both EU vessels and those fishing in EU waters**.

They will help prevent overfishing, create a more effective and harmonised fisheries control system and ensure a level playing field between different sea basins and fleets.

The revised EU fisheries control regulation updates most of the rules for controlling fishing vessels to bring them **in line with technological developments** and **make EU fishing more sustainable**.

The main changes relate to improved monitoring of fishing activities and traceability of catches by making use of the best available technology and sanctioning those breaching the rules.

Better harmonisation and preservation of marine resources

The new provisions will ensure a more harmonised fisheries control system for EU fisheries and better preserve marine resources through:

- **strengthened fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU)**
- **the transition to full digitalisation, new technologies and modern data management.**

The control of fishing activities will be **entirely digitalised** – from the net to the plate - by gradually expanding the geo-localisation and electronic reporting to all fishing vessels, irrespective of their size, and mandating catch recording and reporting in certain recreational fisheries.

All fishing vessels will be tracked via a **vessel tracking systems (VMS)** and all catches will need to be recorded via electronic means.

User-friendly tools such as apps on mobile devices will be used to remove the burden for fishers.

For the first time, **full digital traceability will be mandatory** along the supply chain, enabling the authorities to more effectively **tackle illegal fishing**. The system will be mandatory for fresh and frozen fishery and aquaculture products. It will gradually be expanded to processed fishery and aquaculture products, such as canned products, giving consumers more information on the origin. These rules will apply to all fishery and aquaculture products, including imports.

The new EU control system rules also strengthen the **compliance of the ‘landing obligation’** (to make sure unwanted catches are not illegally discarded at sea, but brought to shore): they include obligations for **remote electronic monitoring** (with onboard cameras) for fishing vessels above 18 meters that present a high risk of non-compliance with this obligation.

Importantly, the new rules include harmonised sanctions for breaching the rules of the common fisheries policy, in particular in the case of serious infringements.

New rules for imported fishery products

For imported fishery products, the use of the **IT tool CATCH** will become compulsory.

EU importers will need to use CATCH from 9 January 2026 to submit the catch certificates for the importation of fishery products in the EU market.

CATCH streamlines the catch certification process for fishery products entering the EU market and offers a **fully digitalised and paperless workflow**. It facilitates the exchange of data, information and documents between all involved trading parties and control authorities and therefore simplifies and speeds up the administrative procedures.

CATCH makes it easier to identify and prohibit importation into the EU of fishery products obtained from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), thus improving the effectiveness of the EU IUU Regulation's catch certification scheme.

Next steps

The regulation enters into force on 9 January 2024 but there are transitional provisions to leave enough time for the EU's fishing authorities and other relevant stakeholders to adapt to the new requirements.

Most provisions of the amended regulation will apply in 2 years, from 10 January 2026. Derogations to the margin of tolerance apply in 6 months (from 9 July 2024).

Some provisions will apply only after 4 years (from 10 January 2028), as their implementation may require some preparatory work, such as the remote electronic monitoring, or electronic tracking and catch recording for small scale fleet.

Few other provisions will apply only after 5 years (from 10 January 2029), such as the ones on traceability for prepared and preserved fishery and aquaculture products or for algae.

In the coming months and years the European Commission will adopt the necessary regulations to ensure a harmonised implementation of the new rules across the EU.

Background

Control rules are fundamental to implement the EU common fisheries policy, in particular to monitor fishing quotas and to ensure that unwanted catches are not being illegally discarded at sea.

Monitoring and control of fishing activities is carried out by national authorities, with the

support of the European Commission and the [European Fisheries Control Agency](#).

In 2018, the European Commission proposed to revise the EU fisheries control system to simplify it and ensure full compliance with the reformed common fisheries policy.

At the end of May 2023, the two co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, agreed on a final deal, that they approved formally on 20 December 2023.

More information

[New Fisheries Control Regulation](#)
[Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing \(IUU\)](#)

[Common fisheries policy](#)

Preserving sharks in the Mediterranean **22/12/2023**

In October 2023, the project [LIFE European Sharks project](#) started with one objective in mind: **safeguarding Mediterranean sharks and rays**.

As stated by the project coordinator Eleonora de Sabata: *"Our approach is to try and focus on the human element and change the perspective on sharks from being dangerous to endangered."*

Co-funded by the EU, the project will promote the conservation of protected species and encourage responsible and sustainable interactions with sharks and rays by:

1. **Training fisheries officers and fishers** to reduce mortality of protected species, promoting compliance with EU regulations and improving the quality of data collection.
2. **Testing with fishers voluntary actions to reduce shark and ray bycatch mortality**, with an assessment of the socio-economic impact of these solutions.
3. **Promoting shark and ray catch&release among recreational fishers**, and better handling technique to increase post-release survival.
4. **Reducing the risk of entanglement** in local fishing gear with the cooperation of divers.
5. **Tapping into the knowledge of sea users to map important areas for**

breeding, feeding and migration of sharks and rays, and stimulate authorities, policy makers and communities to implement conservation measures.

6. **Increasing public understanding of the essential that sharks and rays play** in the Mediterranean ecosystem and encouraging the consumption of local and more sustainable food. The project plans activities in several aquariums and will also collaborate with chefs.

Coordinated by Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, the project brings together partners from Croatia, France and Italy.

This project is supported by the LIFE programme, the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action.

More information

Project website: [European Sharks - a LIFE project](#)

Details on the projects partners: [LIFE 3.0 - LIFE22-GIE-IT-LIFE-EU-SHARKS](#)

Interview and video with project coordinator: [European sharks 'in danger and not dangerous,' warns marine expert | Euronews](#)

[Euronews OCEAN episode Shark SOS: The initiatives seeking to revive Europe's predator populations:](#)

LIFE programme (EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action): [LIFE - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

Turning the toxic pufferfish invader into aquaculture feed

22/12/2023

When the Suez Canal was opened 150 years ago, it brought many positive aspects for travel and trade. But it also opened a channel (pun intended) for the mass migration of **invasive marine species** from the Indo-Pacific region, with significant, and generally negative repercussions for the biodiversity of the sea basins concerned.

The **pufferfish, originating from the Red Sea**, is one of the most harmful invasive species now present in the Mediterranean Sea.

The **EU-funded LagoMeal project** managed to create a commercial fishery for this invasive species that used to have no commercial value. LagoMeal brought together a team of experts from various national institutions and the private sector. Together they used the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to develop a process to **deactivate a powerful nerve toxin** and turn deadly pufferfish into **high-quality fishmeal**.

An invasive species and dwindling fishmeal supplies

The pufferfish *Lagocephalus sceleratus* is related to the infamous *fugu* of Japan, and like its distant cousin, it has no predators because it is **highly poisonous**.

Pufferfish is a considerable threat to the environment and fisheries. An opportunistic predator whose numbers are growing fast, the pufferfish **damages fishing gear and catches and eats native species**. Greek fishers claim that the pufferfish damage to their nets alone can cost them each more than €5,000 a year.

In parallel, **the expansion of aquaculture has increased demand for aquafeed**. This puts pressure on the fishmeal supply, especially when traditional sources are being over-exploited. Fish farmers urgently **need new sources of fish protein**.

Greece, for example, currently has only five fish feed production plants, with an annual production of approximately 250,000 tons worth €300 million. The country's aquaculture industry currently needs to import a further 50,000 tons of fishmeal annually, costing around €70 million.

A win-win solution

By **heat-treating the pufferfish to remove the deadly toxin**, the project partners believed they could create a profitable market for this otherwise unloved invader. Local fishers would have a new target species, aquaculturists would benefit from lower feed prices, and *Lagocephalus* numbers would fall.

Trials showed that **cooking pufferfish** at 160°C deactivates the poison to levels safe for human consumption, while at 200°C it disappears. Feeding trials were also encouraging, showing that **European sea bass grow well when pufferfish fishmeal replaces up to 30% of conventional fishmeal** in their diets.

The project's business plan looked at a small plant to process 1500 tons/year of pufferfish producing 250 tons/year of fishmeal and 100 tons/year of fish oil. Over ten years **the annual return on investment was estimated at 15-25%**, depending on the extent of compensatory measures for fishers.

On this basis, processing pufferfish would be an **attractive investment for aquafeed producers, and help aquaculture producers reduce costs**. The ability to produce local fishmeal with a stable composition, high nutritional value and competitive price could have significant benefits for the industry, and **a commercial fishery would help control the *Lagocephalus sceleratus* populations**.

Looking forward

EU funding allowed this innovative project to start the process of sourcing alternative protein for fishmeal production, and prove the basic process at lab and pilot scale.

The project also helped the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR) and its partners establish **connections with coastal fishers**, gaining trust for future collaborations and research programmes.

This newly acquired knowledge and expertise, together with the obtained fishmeal production equipment, will give HCMR opportunities to participate in new related EU, national and industrial research and innovation projects.

More information

[Website of the project](#) (in Greek)

[Website of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research](#)

EU Funding for maritime, fisheries and aquaculture projects: [EMFAF](#)

The EU and UK agree on fishing opportunities for 2024 worth around €1 billion to EU fishers

08/12/2023

The EU and the United Kingdom reached an agreement on the fishing opportunities for 2024 for more than **85 total allowable catches (TACs) in the Northeast Atlantic**.

The EU and the United Kingdom reached an agreement on the fishing opportunities for 2024 for more than **85 total allowable catches (TACs) in the Northeast Atlantic**.

The agreement will contribute to the sustainable management of fish stocks jointly managed by the parties, as well as provide stability and predictability for the respective fleets and operators.

The deal secures **fishing opportunities of almost 388,000 tonnes for the EU fleet**, estimated to be **worth around €1 billion** based on historic wholesale prices, adjusted for inflation.

This agreement is important because the **stocks negotiated with non-EU countries represent a vast majority of the stocks of interest** for the EU.

The agreement was reached under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) after the fourth annual consultations on fishing opportunities between both parties. The EU based its positions on its legal framework, including sea-basin related multiannual plans. The EU and the UK conducted these negotiations guided by the **best available scientific advice** on the status of fish stocks. **Socioeconomic considerations** were also taken into account to avoid choke situations that would lead to a premature closure of certain fisheries.

Besides the key role played by Member States in supporting the conclusion of this agreement, the close cooperation between the EU and the UK in the **Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF)** contributed to this outcome. Among other recommendations adopted this year, SCF concluded on the alignment of management areas with the stock distributions for eight shared stocks (lemon sole, witch, turbot, brill, Western channel and Eastern Channel plaice and Celtic Sea and Eastern Channel whiting) and developed a joint methodology for interpreting ICES advice for skates and rays.

The written record on the EU-UK consultations also establishes a clear set of priorities for future SCF work, including cooperation on joint technical measures to protect vulnerable stocks across sea basins and a joint request to ICES to update the Irish Sea sole ICES advice after the benchmark exercise.

Next steps

The agreed catch limits will be submitted for incorporation into the Fishing Opportunities Regulation for 2024, during the Council of EU

fisheries Ministers on 10 and 11 December 2023.

The parties will hold in-year consultations during 2024 for three other jointly managed stocks, for which the ICES scientific advice does not align with the calendar year: sandeel (North Sea, all banks), sprat (North Sea and the English Channel) and Norway pout.

Background

The [EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\)](#) sets out jointly-managed EU-UK stocks, for which the Parties hold annual consultations every year to establish catch limits.

The parties' respective shares of these stocks are set out in the TCA, which also provides for reciprocal access for the fleets of both parties to the waters of the other. The TCA also provides for mutual access to fish non-quota stocks at historic fishing levels.

The EU reaches agreements with Norway and the UK and bilaterally with Norway on fishing opportunities and access to waters for 2024

08/12/2023

The EU concluded agreements with the UK and Norway, and bilaterally with Norway, securing **valuable fishing opportunities for 2024 for the EU fleets** and provide predictability for stocks in the Northeast Atlantic and the North Sea.

These agreements are important because the **stocks negotiated with non-EU countries represent a vast majority of the stocks of interest** for the EU.

EU-UK-Norway agreement

The trilateral arrangement between the EU, Norway and the United Kingdom on jointly managed fisheries stocks in the North Sea for 2024 establishes total allowable catches (TAC) **over 915,000 tonnes**, covering an EU quota of almost 415,000 tonnes of cod, haddock, saithe, whiting, plaice and herring.

The **agreement on TACs includes an increase for cod**, set below the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) advice to accommodate precautionary considerations for the southern sub-stock. TACs were set in line

with the MSY advice for saithe and plaice and below the MSY advice for haddock and whiting to cater for their interaction with cod.

The EU, UK and Norway continued **reviewing the management model for herring** in 2024 and decided to set TACs in line with MSY.

They also agreed to **maintain measures to protect North Sea cod** by carrying over existing area closures.

EU-Norway agreements

In parallel, the EU and Norway concluded bilateral consultations for shared stocks in the North Sea, Skagerrak and quota exchanges.

The **three bilateral arrangements** relate to the **exchange of quotas, mutual access** to fishing in each other's waters and **quota setting** in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat.

Both sides secured an ambitious balance of exchanges of fishing opportunities of major economic interest. Among other stocks, the **EU will receive 9,983 tonnes of Arctic cod for 2024**, while it will transfer 48,000 tonnes of blue whiting to Norway.

The **EU will have access to catch up to 15,107 tonnes of Atlanto-Scandian herring** in Norwegian waters. At the same time, Norway obtains access to Union waters to fish 150,000 tonnes of blue whiting.

The EU and Norway decided to implement measures to reduce fishing mortality for Western Baltic herring, which mixes with the North Sea herring in the Skagerrak and Eastern North Sea. Such measures include the restriction of catches in the Skagerrak.

The parties also signed the neighbouring arrangement covering the Swedish fishery in Norwegian waters of the North Sea.

Next steps

The catch limits agreed bilaterally and trilaterally will be submitted for incorporation into the Fishing Opportunities Regulation for 2024, during the upcoming Council of EU fisheries Ministers on 10 and 11 December.

The EU and Norway will hold an in-year consultation during 2024 for *Pandalus*, for which the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) scientific advice does not align with the calendar year.

AGRIFISH Council met in Brussels on 10-11 December 2023 (see [provisional agenda](#) and [main results](#)).

Next meetings of the [Agriculture and Fisheries Council](#)

23 January 2024

26 February 2024

Council approves fishing opportunities for 2024 in EU and non-EU waters 12/12/2023

Following three days of negotiations, fisheries ministers agreed on fishing opportunities in the Atlantic, the North Sea, and in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas for 2024. The political agreement reached by the Council is in line with the goal of ensuring the long-term sustainability of fish stocks, while at the same time protecting the livelihoods of communities that depend on fishing.

For the Atlantic and the North Sea, in the case of eight fish stocks, the decision also concerns catch limits for 2025 and in two cases for 2026 as well. These are known as 'multiannual total allowable catches (TACs)'. This is based on multiannual advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The aim of this multiannual approach is to ensure predictability and stability for the industry, and to make the decision-making process more efficient.

Overall, the political agreement reached by the Council includes catch limits, also known as 'total allowable catches' (TACs), for over 200 commercial fish stocks.

The political agreement is based on proposals drawn up by the Commission and takes into account the best available scientific advice, while respecting the aims of the common fisheries policy (CFP) and the EU's multiannual plans for various sea basins.

MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCILS*

*THE MEETINGS CAN BE SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT

AC	DATE	PLACE	TYPE
BSAC	24/01/2024	Warsaw	ExCom
NSAC	26/01/2024	Stockholm	ExCom
AAC	30/01/2024	virtual	WG1
MAC	30/01/2024	Brussels	WG2, WG3
MAC	31/01/2024	Brussels	WG1, ExCom
AAC	31/01/2024	virtual	ExCom
NWWAC	31/01/2024	virtual	FG Spatial Dimension
NSAC	01/02/2024	virtual	Ecosystem WG
CCRUP	02/02/2024	virtual	FG
NWWAC/NSAC	12/02/2024	virtual	FG Skates & Rays
AAC	20/02/2024	virtual	GA & WG3
AAC	21/02/2024	virtual	WG2
BISAC	22/02/2024	Constanta and virtual	WG6, FG1
BISAC	23/02/2024	Constanta and virtual	ExCom
MEDAC	27/02/2024	Roma hybrid	WG1, WG3, FG Eastern Med, FG Strait of Sicily
BSAC	27/02/2024	virtual	Demersal WG
BSAC	28/02/2024	virtual	Pelagic WG
PELAC	28/02/2024	Paris	WG I and II, ExCom
MEDAC	28/02/2024	Roma/hybrid	WG1, WG3, WG4, GA
NSAC	05/03/2024	tbc	Demersal WG
LDAC	05/03/2024	Brussels	WG1, WG4
LDAC	06/03/2024	Brussels	WG 5
NSAC	06/03/2024	tbc	Skagerrak & Kattegat WG
LDAC	07/03/2024	Brussels	ExCom
BSAC	08/03/2024	virtual	Ecosystem Based Management WG
NWWAC/PELAC	14/03/2024	Dublin	Joint horizontal WG
CC RUP	19/03/2024	Paris	WG Aquaculture & IUU fishing
CCRUP	20/03/2024	Paris	Demersal, Benthics & Pelagic WGs
CCRUP	21/03/2024	Paris	ExCom
BISAC	29/03/2024	Varna	GA

Abbreviations:

- NWW AC: North Western Waters Advisory Council ([link](#))
- PEL AC: Pelagic Advisory Council ([link](#))
- NS AC: North Sea Advisory Council ([link](#))
- MED AC: Advisory Council for the Mediterranean ([link](#))
- SWW AC: South Western Waters Advisory Council ([link](#))
- LD AC: Long Distance Fleet Advisory Council ([link](#))
- BS AC: Baltic Sea Advisory Council ([link](#))
- AAC: Aquaculture Advisory Council ([link](#))
- MAC: Market Advisory Council ([link](#))
- BIS AC: Black Sea Advisory Council ([link](#))
- CC RUP: Outermost Regions Advisory Council ([link](#))
- **GA**: General Assembly, **ExCom**: Executive Committee, **WG**: Working Group, **FG**: Focus Group

MAIN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS*

*THE MEETINGS CAN BE SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT

REGIONAL FISHERIES ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

Date	Organisation	Type of meeting	Venue
2024			
29 January-2 February	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)	Annual meeting	Manta, Ecuador
25-28 February	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)	Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC)	virtual
19-23 February	GFCM	Fish Forum 2024	In person – Antalya, Türkiye
9-18 April	North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)	Annual meeting + Technical and Compliance Committee and Finance and Administration Committee	Osaka, Japan
29 April -10 May	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)	Annual meeting	Bangkok, Thailand
14-17 May	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)	Compliance Committee (and WGIUU and WGVMS)	Hurghada, Egypt
15-16 May	OECD- Committee on Fisheries (COFI)	133 rd session	Paris
3-7 June	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)	Annual Meeting	Westport, Ireland
10-12 June	Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement (CAOFA)	COP3	Icheon, Korea
1-5 July	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)	Annual meeting	Korea

FISHERIES PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS*

*THE MEETINGS CAN BE SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT

COUNTRY		EXPIRATION DATE OF CURRENT PROTOCOL	NEXT JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING	NEGOTIATIONS SESSIONS FORECAST	LEGAL PROCESS			Latest information
			Date Location	Date Location	Expected adoption date of Commission recommendation for negotiating mandate	Expected adoption date of negotiating mandate by Council	Expected adoption of Council Decision on signing (and provisional application)	
MIXED AGREEMENTS	Mauritania	14 November 2026	Q4 2024	/	/	/	/	The last JCM took place on 6-8 December 2023 in Brussels.
	Morocco	17 July 2023 – EXPIRED	/	/	/	/	/	The Protocol expired in July 2023. The last JCM took place on 13 July 2023.
	Senegal	17 November 2024		/	/	/	/	The last JCM took place on 6-7 July 2023 in Brussels.
	Guinea Bissau	14 June 2024	2024 EU	/	Q1 2024	Q1 2024		The last JCM took place in April 2023 in Bissau.
	The Gambia	30 July 2025	Q1 2024 The Gambia	Q4 2024 tbc	/	/	/	The last JCM took place on 6-7 March 2023 in Brussels.
	Greenland	21 April 2025		/	/	/	/	The last JCM took place in November 2023 in Brussels.
WEST AFRICA	Cape-Verde	19 May 2024	Mindelo	Q1 2024	/	19 December 2023	/	The last JCM took place on 9-10 February 2023 in Mindelo.
	Côte d'Ivoire	31 July 2024		/	Q1 2024	Q1 2024		The 4th JCM took place on 21-22 March 2023 in hybrid mode.
	Gabon	28 June 2026	Libreville	/	/	/	/	The last JCM took place in May 2023 by videoconference.
	Ghana	N/A	/	/	/	Adopted on 3 March 2017		The ex-ante evaluation was conducted end of 2016.
	Liberia	8 December 2020 - EXPIRED	/	/	Adopted on 25 September 2020			The Protocol expired in December 2020. IUU Yellow card. The last JCM took place by videoconference on 29 June 2021.

	Equatorial Guinea	N/A	/	/	/	/	/	The ex-ante evaluation was approved at the end of November 2016.
	São Tomé and Príncipe	18 December 2024		/	/	/	/	The 2nd JCM took place on 9-10 March 2023 in Sao Tomé.
INDIAN OCEAN	Comoros	DENOUNCED	/	/	/	/	/	The termination of the SFPA with Comoros has been notified to the Government of Comoros on 3 July 2018.
	Madagascar	30 June 2027		/	/	/	/	
	Mauritius	20 December 2026	Brussels	/	/	/		The last JCM took place by videoconference on 23-24 May 2023.
	Mozambique	31 January 2015 - EXPIRED	/	/	/	Adopted on 12 June 2014		Negotiations for a new protocol suspended until further notice to enable further reflection by both Parties to narrow divergences. The last JCM took place in February 2016.
	Seychelles	23 February 2026	Mid-2024 EU	/	/	/	/	The last JCM was held on 6-8 September 2023 in Victoria (Seychelles).
	Mayotte (Access agreement)	31 December 2028		/	/	/	/	The new Agreement was signed on 10 March 2023 and applies provisionally pending EP consent. The last JCM was held on 8 September 2023 in Victoria (Seychelles). No financial implications for the EU, as this agreement allows access of Seychelles flagged vessels to Mayotte's waters under EU jurisdiction.
	Tanzania	No Agreement/Protocol	/	/	/	Adopted on 16 June 2015		A first technical meeting took place in Dar-Es-Salaam on 4-6 July 2016. Vague interest in discussing a SFPA with the EU.
	Kenya	No Agreement/Protocol	/	/	/	Adopted on 18 July 2016		
PACIFIC	Cook Islands	16 December 2024	1st quarter 2024 Location tbc	/	/	/	/	The last JCM took place on 31 January - 2 February 2023.
	Kiribati	1 October 2028		/	/	/	Adopted on 18 October 2023	

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

BUREAU			
Chair	KARLESKIND Pierre		
1st Vice-Chair	MILLÁN MON Francisco José	3rd Vice-Chair	MATIĆ Predrag Fred
2nd Vice-Chair	CHRISTENSEN Asger	4th Vice-Chair	CARVALHO Maria da Graça

COORDINATORS			
EPP	MATO Gabriel	ECR	ILČIĆ Ladislav
S&D	CARVALHAIS Isabel	ID	CONTE Rosanna
Renew	BILBAO BARANDICA Izaskun	The Left	PIMENTA LOPES João
Greens/EFA	ROOSE Caroline		

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES FULL MEMBERS			SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS		
AGUILERA Clara	ES	S&D	AVRAM Carmen	RO	S&D
ALBUQUERQUE João	PT	S&D	BITEAU Benoît	FR	Greens/EFA
BARTOLO Pietro	IT	S&D	CHABAUD Catherine	FR	Renew
BELLAMY François-Xavier	FR	EPP	FERRANDINO Giuseppe	IT	Renew
BILBAO BARANDICA Izaskun	ES	Renew	FLANAGAN Luke Ming	IE	The Left
CARVALHAIS Isabel	PT	S&D	GONZALEZ CASARES Nicolás	ES	S&D
CARVALHO Maria da Graça	PT	PPE	GRANT Valentino	IT	ID
CASANOVA Massimo	IT	ID	HLAVÁČEK Martin	CS	Renew
CHRISTENSEN Asger	DK	Renew	HRISTOV Ivo	BG	S&D
CONTE Rosanna	IT	ID	KALINOWSKI Jarosław	PL	EPP
D'AMATO Rosa	IT	Greens/EFA	KELLER Ska	DE	Greens/EFA
GUERREIRO Francisco	PT	Greens/EFA	KOKKALIS Petros	EL	The Left
HAGA Anja	NL	EPP	MARKEY Colm	IE	EPP
HAZEKAMP Anja	NL	The Left	MATO Gabriel	ES	EPP
HERBST Niclas	DE	EPP	MEBAREK Nora	FR	S&D
HUITEMA Jan	NL	Renew	MELO Nuno	PT	EPP
ILČIĆ Ladislav	HR	ECR	MONTEIRO DE AGUIAR Cláudia	PT	EPP
JAMET France	FR	ID	O'SULLIVAN Grace	IE	Greens/EFA
KARLESKIND Pierre	FR	Renew	PAPANDREOU Nikos	EL	S&D
MATIĆ Predrag Fred	HR	S&D	RAFALSKA Elżbieta	PL	ECR
MILLÁN MON Francisco José	ES	EPP	STANCANELLI Raffaele	IT	ECR
MIRANDA Ana	ES	Greens/EFA	TARDINO Annalisa	IT	ID
PIMENTA LOPES João	PT	The Left	VUOLO Lucia	IT	PPE
ROOSE Caroline	FR	Greens/EFA	YON-COURTIN Stéphanie	FR	Renew
RUISSEN Bert-Jan	NL	ECR			
SCHREIJER-PIERIK Annie	NL	EPP			
TARABELLA Marc	BE	NI			
ZAGORAKIS Theodoros	EL	EPP			

NEXT FISHERIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2024

- Tuesday, 23 January, 09:00-12:30
- Tuesday, 23 January, 14:30-18:30

- Monday, 19 February, 15:00-18:30

- Wednesday 20 March, 09:00-12:30
- Wednesday 20 March, 14:30-18:30

- Tuesday 9 April, 09:00-12:30
- Tuesday 9 April, 14:30-18:30

USEFUL LINKS

- @ EP Committee on Fisheries [link](#)
- @ DG MARE (European Commission) [link](#)
- @ Belgian Presidency of the Council [link](#)
- @ FAO Fishery and Aquaculture [link](#)
- @ ICES International Council for the Exploration of the Sea [link](#)

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