



**2021/2200(INI)**

18.3.2022

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Fisheries

for the Committee on International Trade

on the Indo-Pacific strategy in the area of trade and investment  
(2021/2200(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Pierre Karleskind

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to its resolution of 8 July 2021 on the establishment of Antarctic Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the conservation of Southern Ocean biodiversity<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640) and to Parliament's resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on 'A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system' (COM(2020)0381), and to Parliament's resolution of 20 October 2021 on that strategy<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives' (COM(2020)0380), and to Parliament's resolution of 9 June 2021 on that strategy<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),
- having regard to the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission,
- having regard to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement,
- having regard to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean,
- having regard to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean,
- having regard to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the North Pacific Ocean,
- having regard to the Blue Partnership for the Oceans between the European Union and the People's Republic of China of 16 July 2018,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreements on sustainable fisheries in the Indian and Pacific Oceans,

A. whereas fisheries and aquaculture are a vital part of EU-Indo-Pacific relations and

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 99, 1.3.2022, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> P9\_TA(2021)0425.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 25.

whereas the exploitation of fishery resources is a source of tension and can lead to maritime territorial conflicts;

- B. whereas exploitative fishing activities threaten the Union's geopolitical and geo-economic interests, as well as its efforts to protect marine biodiversity;
- C. whereas fisheries activities in the Indo-Pacific are increasing and the Chinese fleet has been expanding considerably, having a dramatic impact on the sustainable management of fisheries resources around the world;
- D. whereas in the three main categories – vulnerability, prevalence and response – of the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Index published in January 2019, China ranked in first place globally;
- E. whereas the South China Sea alone accounts for around 12 % of the global fish catch and hosts more than half of the world's fishing vessels;
- F. whereas out of the 84.4 million tonnes of fish caught in seas across the world in 2018, around 61.4 million tonnes came from the Indian and Pacific Oceans;
- G. whereas most of the harm to ocean governance is caused by illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- H. whereas the EU has only three Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements in the region for which the respective protocols are currently in force (Seychelles, Cook Islands and Mauritius), and whereas the EU fishing fleet is present in both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean;
- I. whereas, within the framework of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the EU is an active member of several Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) in the Indo-Pacific region (the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the Parties of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the South Pacific RFMO); whereas the EU's application for membership of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission was accepted on 25 February 2021;
- J. whereas the EU supports the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission's significant role in increasing efficiency and sustainable productivity of fisheries and aquaculture in the region;
- K. whereas the EU holds high-level dialogues on ocean and fisheries issues with Australia, Indonesia, Japan and New Zealand; whereas it has signed an Ocean Partnership Agreement with China; whereas it also holds dialogues and has working groups on IUU fishing with Korea, Thailand and Taiwan;
- L. whereas Thailand is the world's leading producer of canned tuna and the EU's main competitor in this sector; whereas a free trade agreement with Thailand could pose a serious threat to the EU canned seafood industry, which is crucial in several coastal regions because of its important role in creating jobs and prosperity and because it is a sector which is female labour-intensive;

1. Welcomes the importance of the ocean and fisheries in the Indo-Pacific strategy; regrets, however, that the strategy does not mention aquaculture, even though it is an important means of supplying seafood to Europe;
2. Welcomes the fact that the threats to fishing in the Indian Ocean have been taken into account; is surprised that this is not the case for the Pacific Ocean and the China Sea;
3. Calls on the Commission to step up its action for ocean governance, through the implementation of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements and its participation in RFMOs, in full compliance with international law and with the main objective of ensuring the sustainable management of ocean resources and the restoration of marine ecosystems, which are essential for fishing activities;
4. Considers that the EU should continue its commitment to sustainable fishing in the region and support fisheries control in order to combat IUU fishing; urges the EU to strengthen its cooperation with like-minded international partners to combat overfishing, overcapacity and IUU fishing in the Indo-Pacific;
5. Calls on the EU and China, in implementation of the Ocean Partnership Agreement signed in 2018, to cooperate closely towards the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological resources, the fight against marine pollution, the mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of climate change on the oceans, the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, fisheries governance in regional and global forums and the prevention of and fight against IUU fishing;
6. Underlines the importance of urgent joint implementation of proactive policies for the protection of biodiversity and restoration of coastal resources;
7. Urges the EU to continue to promote the improvement of living and working conditions of fishers in the Indo-Pacific region in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) regulations and conventions;
8. Calls on the Commission to help structure an effective and lasting system of fisheries management by enhancing control measures, data exchange and capacity building;
9. Stresses the importance of product traceability for banning imports of seafood products obtained from illegal fishing; welcomes the creation of a database for the management of catch certificates (CATCH) to ensure traceability and reduce opportunities for fraudulent imports, as part of the reform of the fisheries control system proposed by the Commission; calls on the Commission to report on its exchanges with 'yellow card' states under Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
10. Stresses that any trade agreements with the Indo-Pacific countries must be preceded by rigorous sustainability impact studies and a detailed analysis of the potential economic, social, environmental and human rights impacts; urges the Commission to include canned seafood as 'sensitive products' in trade negotiations with the countries of the region;
11. Urges the European External Action Service to take into account the EU's fishing

interests and the presence of the EU fishing fleet when determining the ‘maritime areas of interest’ within the framework of coordinated maritime presences and maritime safety strategies;

12. Calls on the Ocean Mission to support actors in the Indo-Pacific region;
13. Considers it a priority to reinforce fisheries management capacities in the region, so as to assist regional countries in regaining control of their exclusive economic zones (EEZs);
14. Calls on the Commission to step up scientific cooperation with countries in the region for easier and transparent assessment of fish stocks, and to increase transparency of fisheries management by supporting organisations that monitor compliance with the international norms.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	16.3.2022
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 24 -: 0 0: 4
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, François-Xavier Bellamy, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Isabel Carvalhais, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Rosanna Conte, Rosa D'Amato, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Søren Gade, Francisco Guerreiro, Niclas Herbst, Jan Huitema, Ladislav Ilčić, France Jamet, Pierre Karleskind, Predrag Fred Matić, Francisco José Millán Mon, Grace O'Sullivan, João Pimenta Lopes, Manuel Pizarro, Caroline Roose, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Peter van Dalen, Theodoros Zagorakis
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Carmen Avram, Catherine Chabaud, Nicolás González Casares, Valentino Grant, Ska Keller, Petros Kokkalis, Gabriel Mato, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Raffaele Stancanelli, Annalisa Tardino

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

24	+
ECR	Ladislav Ilčić, Bert-Jan Ruissen
ID	France Jamet
PPE	François-Xavier Bellamy, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Peter van Dalen, Niclas Herbst, Francisco José Millán Mon, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Theodoros Zagorakis
Renew	Catherine Chabaud, Søren Gade, Jan Huitema, Pierre Karleskind
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, Isabel Carvalhais, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Predrag Fred Matić, Manuel Pizarro
Verts/ALE	Rosa D'Amato, Francisco Guerreiro, Grace O'Sullivan, Caroline Roose

0	-

4	0
ID	Rosanna Conte, Valentino Grant
The Left	Petros Kokkalis, João Pimenta Lopes

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention