

MEPs concluded negotiations on rules granting equal access to EU waters

- Access to national waters for EU fishing vessels extended for 10 years
- Existing ecological restrictions maintained
- Parliament and Commission to encourage member states to find solution to demersal seines

Parliament and Council negotiators reached a deal on Thursday night that updates rules on how EU fishing vessels can access national waters.

Rules giving EU fishing vessels equal access to national territorial waters are extended for another 10 years while existing restrictions on access to biologically sensitive areas are maintained, according to the text agreed by EU co-legislators. This would enable the current regime to continue and keep the protection measures in place.

Within a zone of 12 nautical miles, EU member states will be able to restrict other EU vessels' access to their waters and resources. By restricting certain vessels' access, member states can manage fishing pressure in some areas and contribute to the economic stability of small-scale coastal activities. Outermost EU regions can use this derogation within 100 nautical miles. Existing rules would have expired in December 2022.

According to the agreed text, if the Commission proposes a review of EU Fisheries Policy, of which access rules are a part, it will conduct an impact assessment. The Commission will also prepare a report on the application of the access rules at the end of June 2031, before their expiration in 2032.

Demersal seines

Parliament and Commission take note of the situation of fisheries in the Channel, where local and regional stakeholders and fishers raised concerns about bottom trawl fishing methods used by numerous vessels. They therefore invite EU governments to come up with joint recommendations in this regard, which the Commission could use to propose practical measures. The Commission will ensure that funding for related scientific research is available.

Next steps

Parliament and Council will have to formally approve the agreement before it is published in the EU Official Journal. It will enter into force on the seventh day following its publication. The rules will then be applicable in all EU countries from 1 January 2023.

Further information


[Procedure file](#)


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