
Fisheries: deal reached on new rules to improve compliance and traceability

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- Full traceability throughout the supply chain
 - Use of CCTV on big vessels and tracking for all
 - 10% margins of tolerance of in general catches
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New technologies, such as on-board cameras, and improvements in traceability should help ensuring better compliance and increased consumer protection.

Negotiators from Parliament and the Swedish Council Presidency reached an agreement on Tuesday on an update of Common Fisheries Policy rules, particularly regarding the monitoring fisheries activities and the traceability of fish products.

According to the agreed text, information on fresh and frozen fish will be fully accessible, including digitally, to safeguard food safety and consumer interests. This system of digitalised traceability will also be extended to cover processed fish in five years.

Increased monitoring and tracking of all vessels

EU vessels of 18 meters or more that may pose a risk of non-compliance will have on-board remote electronic monitoring (REM) systems, including closed-circuit television (CCTV), to guarantee respect for the so-called [landing obligation](#), which aim at encouraging fishers to avoid unwanted catches.

Under the revised rules EU countries will have to put in place systems to track the position and movement of all EU fishing vessels, including those smaller than 12 meters. Member states can, however, exempt small-scale vessels from the tracking obligation under limited and justified circumstances until 2030.

Sanctions and recreational fisheries

To overcome the significant differences between EU countries concerning the issue of sanctions, MEPs and the Council decided that the value of fishery products caught by a vessel will define the minimum level of a fine applied to it in case of a serious rules violation. If there is repeated infringement, the penalty will be at least twice the average value of the products.

EU countries will be tasked to check recreational fisheries' compliance and determine appropriate sanctions. EU countries will also have to introduce a data collection system, including catches by non-commercial activities, such as those organised by tourism organisations or sports competitions. Recreational fisheries that sell catches weighing over 10kgs or more than €50 will be considered in serious infringement.

Margins of tolerance

Negotiators agreed that the margin of tolerance - the difference between the estimate of the fish caught and the result of the weighting in the landing port - will be of 10% per species. A margin of tolerance of 20% will apply for any other species on board that not exceeds 100kg. For small pelagic, industrial fisheries and tropical tuna, the margin of tolerance will be 10% of the total quantity registered, under strict control conditions.

Quote

After the agreement, rapporteur [Clara Aguilera](#) (S&D, Spain) said: "We have concluded the deal exactly five years after the Commission proposed the revision of the fisheries control system. This is the last proposal pending from the revision of the Common Fisheries Policy. A proposal that will put us in the lead of control fisheries with digitalisation, harmonisation of the rules and full traceability of fishery products, as requested by citizens. We hope to have this process completed by the end of the year".

Next steps

The text of the agreement must be formally adopted by the Parliament and the Council. It is scheduled to be put to a vote in one of the next Parliament's Fisheries Committee meetings.

Background

The European Commission proposed [a revision of the fisheries control system](#) on 30 May 2018. The aim was to modernise and simplify the rules for monitoring fisheries activities and ensuring compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Further information

[Steps of the procedure](#)

[Legislative train: Revision of the fisheries control system](#)

[Profile of the rapporteur: Clara Aguilera \(S&D, ES\)](#)

[Committee on Fisheries](#)

[European Parliamentary Research Service: Revising the fisheries control system \(EU legislation in progress\) \(updated on 03.03.2023\)](#)

[European Parliamentary Research Service - In depth analysis: Le contrôle de la pêche européenne: Une vue d'ensemble \(August 2015\)](#)


[Fact sheets on the European Union: Fisheries control and enforcement](#)

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