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## Implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives

### European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2024 on the state of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives (2021/2169(INI))

(C/2024/5734)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Articles 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 38, 39, 43 and 349,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common fisheries policy (CFP) <sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (Maritime Spatial Planning Directive) <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy <sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on More fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas <sup>(4)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2021 on securing the objectives of the landing obligation under Article 15 of the Common Fisheries Policy <sup>(5)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2021 on ‘the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ <sup>(6)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2021 on ‘Fishers for the future: Attracting a new generation of workers to the fishing industry and generating employment in coastal communities’ <sup>(7)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system <sup>(8)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 April 2022 on the future of fisheries in the Channel, North Sea, Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean in the light of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU <sup>(9)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2022 on the implementation of Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation <sup>(10)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2023 on the small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives <sup>(11)</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 3 November 1976 on certain external aspects of the creation of a 200-mile fishing zone in the Community with effect from 1 January 1977 <sup>(12)</sup> (1976 Hague Resolution), and in particular Annex VII thereto,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 419, 16.12.2015, p. 167.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 129.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 15, 12.1.2022, p. 9.

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 25.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 67.

<sup>(8)</sup> OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.

<sup>(9)</sup> OJ C 434, 15.11.2022, p. 2.

<sup>(10)</sup> OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 62.

<sup>(11)</sup> OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 150.

<sup>(12)</sup> OJ C 105, 7.5.1981, p. 1.

- having regard to the Commission communication of 10 October 2007 entitled ‘An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union’ (COM(2007)0575),
  - 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),
  - having regard to the Commission Communication of 21 February 2023 entitled on ‘The common fisheries policy today and tomorrow: a Fisheries and Oceans Pact towards sustainable, science-based, innovative and inclusive fisheries management’ (COM(2023)0103),
  - having regard to the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) report of 26 September 2019 entitled ‘Social data in the EU fisheries sector (STECF 19-03)’,
  - having regard to the STECF report of 10 December 2020 entitled ‘Social dimension of the CFP (STECF 20-14)’,
  - having regard to the study conducted for the Committee on Fisheries of July 2021 entitled ‘Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU fisheries and aquaculture’,
  - having regard to the STECF report of 8 December 2021 entitled ‘The 2021 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 21-08)’,
  - having regard to maritime economic paper No 8/2020 of 9 March 2021 entitled ‘The EU fishing fleet 2020: Trends and economic results’ produced by the Commission Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries,
  - having regard to the report of the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency of the European Commission, of 7 October 2022, entitled ‘Climate change and the common fisheries policy’<sup>(13)</sup>,
  - having regard to the 2017 World Bank report on ‘The Sunken Billions Revisited - Progress and Challenges in Global Marine Fisheries’,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Galician Fisheries Council of 8 February 2022 on the review of the Common Fisheries Policy,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A9-0357/2023),
- A. whereas given that Parliament has already expressed its views on several specific features of the CFP, this report builds on previous sectoral reports and provides an overall political assessment of the functioning of the CFP and a reflection on the future outlook, focusing in particular on the conservation of living marine resources and the management of fisheries under the CFP;
  - B. whereas Article 39 TFEU requires that the CFP, in all its areas, particularly the conservation of marine biological resources, must among other things, ensure a fair standard of living for the fishing community and assure availability of supplies (food security); whereas Article 11 TFEU also stipulates that ‘environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union’s policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development’;
  - C. whereas the CFP seeks to ensure ‘that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits’; whereas the CFP also includes the objective of contributing to the ‘availability of food supplies’ and mentions the objectives of implementing ‘the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management so as to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised’, of contributing ‘to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities, bearing in mind coastal fisheries and socio-economic aspects’ and of promoting ‘coastal fishing activities, taking into account socio-economic aspects’;
  - D. whereas achieving conservation of exploited stocks and the environmental objectives of the CFP overall would not be sufficient to conclude that the CFP has succeeded;
  - E. whereas it is appropriate to keep a balance between the three pillars of sustainability and to address gaps in the social dimension of the CFP;
  - F. whereas the CFP must also contribute to the supply of sustainable food to the EU market and to reducing the EU market’s dependence on food imports;

<sup>(13)</sup> European Commission, European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency, Bastardie, F., Feary, D., Kell, L., et al., *Climate change and the common fisheries policy – adaptation and building resilience to the effects of climate change on fisheries and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from fishing: final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

- G. whereas food security is one of the sustainable development goals (SDGs); whereas fish protein has extraordinary strategic value and is essential for food security; whereas capture fisheries are among the lowest impact systems for the production of animal protein;
- H. whereas the Commission has identified the need to produce more food from the oceans as a strategic objective; whereas a report by the High Level Scientific Group in 2017, appointed by the then Commissioner Karmenu Vella, recommends 'mainstream[ing] a "food from the ocean" paradigm of responsible culture and capture into broad EU and global systems-level policy agendas';
- I. whereas EU fisheries represent a strategic sector for the EU, providing a substantial number of direct and indirect jobs in fishing and coastal areas, help ensure food security and maintain a sustainable economy by linking employment and people's livelihoods to the territory and to the maintenance of cultural traditions;
- J. whereas fishing creates jobs both at sea and on land; whereas some regions rely on landings happening locally to ensure the viability of many businesses and to maintain lively coastal communities;
- K. whereas aquatic food producers and related industries play a vital role for society and for the communities they support;
- L. whereas fishing makes an indispensable contribution to food security in the EU;
- M. whereas the objectives of ensuring the food supply from EU fisheries and of ensuring a fair standard of living should play a more prominent role in the decision-making process;
- N. whereas a healthy European fisheries sector is essential to reduce dependence on third countries, such as China, when it comes to the EU's food supply;
- O. whereas the ocean must be recognised as a common good of humanity in international negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations;
- P. whereas the EU should promote the objectives of the CFP internationally, establishing a level playing field and cooperating with third countries and international organisations in order to improve compliance with international rules, including measures to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge;
- Q. whereas there is a need to determine a fishery resource management policy that upholds collective access to fishery resources, is based primarily on their biological aspects and amounts to a fisheries co-management system that takes account of the specific conditions of fishery resources and the respective sea areas, with the effective participation of those working in the sector;
- R. whereas in its Communication on 'The common fisheries policy today and tomorrow: a Fisheries and Oceans Pact towards sustainable, science-based, innovative and inclusive fisheries management', the Commission proposes that the CFP be implemented better rather than revised;
- S. whereas, when adopting successive regional multiannual plans starting in 2016, the European Parliament and the Council decided to require the use of MSY-based fishing mortality levels only for the main target stocks; whereas these plans also provide for some necessary additional flexibility in these mortality reference levels, notably to take into account the interactions between stocks and fisheries (choke species effects); whereas, in the multiannual plan for the Western Mediterranean, the legislator decided furthermore to postpone the deadline for application of MSY-based fishing mortality levels to 2025;
- T. whereas scientists recognise that achieving MSY for all stocks simultaneously is, in practice, impossible;
- U. whereas the health of fish stocks varies between different EU waters;
- V. whereas fisheries management measures adopted under the CFP are bearing fruit, as the number of fish stocks exploited at sustainable levels is increasing, making higher yields possible for stocks that were overexploited;
- W. whereas the EU did not meet the 2020 deadline to achieve the MSY exploitation rate for all fishing stocks; whereas, however, considerable progress has been made towards achieving the MSY target, particularly in the north-east Atlantic and Baltic Sea, where in 2020, 99 % of landings that are managed solely by the EU and for which scientific advice was available, were 'sustainably managed stocks';
- X. whereas the EU has committed itself to delivering on the UN 2030 Agenda, which includes SDG 14 'to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development';
- Y. whereas the 2013 CFP review led to a major paradigm shift in decades of fisheries management, by requiring all catches, particularly those of species out of quotas or of undersized fish, to be kept on board vessels and landed; whereas, however, this tool, which was designed to contribute to the implementation of the objective of the progressive elimination of discards of unwanted catches in fisheries, seems to have become an objective in itself;

- Z. whereas the landing obligation makes many mixed fisheries unprofitable, notably because fishers have to sort out and store low-value or non-marketable fish on board, increasing labour, reducing resting time and storage space on board; whereas the landing obligation also risks resulting in under-utilisation of rightful fishing opportunities for some stocks, since vessels have to stop any fishing activity once their quota for one stock (choke species) has been exhausted;
- AA. whereas the level of unwanted catches is highly variable across different fisheries; whereas the implementation of the various flexibilities foreseen in Article 15 of the CFP Basic Regulation has led to numerous complex, ever changing and uncontrollable sets of derogations to the landing obligation;
- AB. whereas the most successful policies towards reduction and elimination of discarding around the world have been implemented through gradual approaches, where the policy has evolved by learning from experience;
- AC. whereas new techniques with selective fishing gear are necessary for sustainable fishing, which also ensures good yields;
- AD. whereas the CFP and the Technical Measures Regulation go hand in hand and, therefore, a review of this regulation is also needed to facilitate the authorisation of innovative gear;
- AE. whereas the number of total allowable catches (TACs) should be adapted to those that are necessary to manage fisheries as a whole; whereas ICES has indicated that a number of TACs could be eliminated from the EU system without undermining the overall management of fishery resources <sup>(14)</sup>;
- AF. whereas the principle of relative stability, first set out in the CFP Basic Regulation of 1982 and implemented by the TACs and Quota Regulation of 1983, laid down a distributional key of the TAC by Member State based on the allocation principles of historical catches (1973-1978), as enshrined in the Hague preferences of 1976;
- AG. whereas relative stability is of great importance for the predictability and continuity of the fishing fleet in the European Union;
- AH. whereas Brexit has affected the distribution of fishing rights in the EU and has had a socio-economic impact;
- AI. whereas the EU must deliver on the Paris Agreement goals to fight climate change and to be climate-neutral by 2050, as well as to meet International Maritime Organization (IMO) commitments, while creating jobs and sustainable growth in a manner that does not threaten food production, food supply and food security;
- AJ. whereas, although fishing is not the activity that generates the most accidents, of all maritime vessels, fishing vessels are those most often involved; whereas in 2018 a 40 % increase in the number of incidents involving fishing vessels was recorded compared with the previous year;
- AK. whereas, despite this, it has shown a downward trend, with the vast majority of incidents being the result of human factors (62,4 %) with system/equipment failures being the second most common cause (23,2 %); whereas the three most frequently reported factors contributing to accidents on fishing vessels related to human actions are a lack of safety awareness, a lack of knowledge and inadequate working methods among on board personnel; whereas all these factors cannot be addressed separately from the profitability of the fishing sector, which needs to be secured in order for it to be able to invest further in safe working conditions;
- AL. whereas 32 000 lives are lost every year in the fisheries sector globally, not to mention the thousands of victims of accidents; whereas furthermore, as has also been pointed out by professional organisations, occupational diseases among those engaged in this laborious activity have increased alarmingly in recent years;
- AM. whereas fishing is an arduous occupation involving serious risks to the health and safety of those engaged in it; whereas the International Labour Organization recognised this problem in a convention dating back to 2007 and called on the countries that have ratified it to guarantee safe and healthy working conditions in this sector; acknowledges that the well-being of workers on board fishing vessels is essential for the future of the industry;
- AN. whereas it should be highlighted that maritime fisheries activities play an important part in improving living standards for fishing communities;
- AO. whereas, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) offers financial support to move towards more sustainable fishing, including support to increase the energy efficiency of fishing vessels or to innovate towards low impact fishing gear;
- AP. whereas, however, this support is not sufficient; whereas the restrictions on fishing capacity, as well as the narrow margins that some Member States have within their national ceilings, do not allow for the improvement of safety, working and living conditions on board fishing vessels; whereas new carbon-free propulsion systems require more space on-board than traditional engines and fuel tanks;

<sup>(14)</sup> ICES (2018) EU request for ICES to provide advice on a revision of the contribution of TACs to fisheries management and stock conservation. ICES Special Request Advice. Northeast Atlantic ecoregions. sr.2018.15. Published 20 September 2018, <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.4531>.

- AQ. whereas the CFP Basic Regulation provides that multiannual plans (MAPs) must be adopted as a priority; whereas this approach has undoubtedly contributed to better management of resources and to relative certainty for the sector;
- AR. whereas certain stocks straddle sea areas covered under the scope of different regional MAPs, hence the need for consistent measures across their whole distribution range;
- AS. whereas the CFP is not yet fully implemented and some of its measures, such as the establishment of fish stock recovery areas, have not been used;
- AT. whereas regionalisation offers a unique opportunity to avoid micro-management from Brussels and to adapt the decision making process to regional and local specificities, traditional structures (such as 'cofradías') and particular activities (such as fishing on foot and shellfish gathering);
- AU. whereas early and effective consultation and involvement of the sectors concerned is fundamental for good, workable, fair, well-accepted and successful legislation, and its implementation and compliance; whereas, in this context, the role of advisory councils (ACs) is vital and their advice is of crucial importance in the decision-making process;
- AV. whereas ACs have the potential to evolve into pivotal bodies in results-based management or co-management;
- AW. whereas, while the Commission regularly publishes *ex post* analysis on the economic situation of the EU fishing fleets, its initiatives for strategies or legislation related to fisheries management often lack a proper *ex ante* socio-economic assessment;
- AX. whereas science, fishermen's experience and full impact assessments guarantee an objective basis for decision-making and decisions based on them are more robust and more readily accepted by the sectors concerned;
- AY. whereas fisheries and aquaculture are relatively small economic sectors but are strategic ones on account of their socio-economic and food security role, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent international geopolitical developments;
- AZ. whereas the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 includes the objective of reducing the negative impacts of fisheries and extraction activities on sensitive marine habitats and species, including the seabed, with a view to achieving good environmental status;
- BA. whereas objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy include the reduction of by-catch of species to a level that allows their recovery and conservation;
- BB. whereas purely plant-based products are already being marketed in the internal market under the trade name 'fish' or as various fish species;
- BC. whereas both small-scale and artisanal fishers and the shellfish sector play a strategic role in the availability of food supply and have a vital socio-economic role in many coastal communities;
- BD. whereas small-scale fishing, including artisanal fishing, has specific characteristics and challenges;
- BE. whereas the CFP and the resulting regulations might not cater adequately for the specific characteristics of small-scale and artisanal fishing and in those cases might fail to provide the right, sufficient or necessary response to several of the problems they are currently facing;
- BF. whereas professional maritime activities in general are considered high risk and dangerous, particularly fishing, where 85 % of EU vessels are small-scale coastal vessels (less than 12 meters in total length) and are, therefore, exposed to even greater risks caused by adverse weather conditions and by operating close to shore;
- BG. whereas, additionally, small-scale coastal vessels have more difficulty providing protective spaces and improving working conditions with risks also associated with the advanced age of a significant proportion of this fleet;
- BH. whereas, furthermore, the recent challenges such as Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine have severely impacted small-scale fisheries in particular;
- BI. whereas the EMFAF Regulation defines 'small-scale coastal fishing' as fishing activities carried out by marine and inland fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 metres and not using towed gear and also by fishers on foot, including shellfish gatherers; whereas this is the only definition of small-scale coastal fishing existing in EU legislation;
- BJ. whereas, in numerous Member States and international forums the defining characteristics of small-scale fishing go beyond the EMFAF definition, as a range of additional criteria apply, including with regard to gear allowed, the maximum vessel length, engine power, maximum duration of fishing trips, the distance from port at which vessels can operate, area of operation, maximum allowed travel time and vessel ownership;
- BK. whereas the Council is responsible for setting fishing opportunities, which are then allocated to the Member States following the principle of relative stability; whereas, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, Member States are responsible for allocating fishing opportunities to the different fleets;

- BL. whereas, according to Article 17 of the CFP, when allocating the fishing opportunities available to them, Member States shall use transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature and they shall endeavour to provide incentives to fishing vessels deploying selective fishing gear or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact;
- BM. whereas there may be large differences between the sectors in different countries, with the result that a 'one size fits all' approach is not desirable;
- BN. whereas according to the latest STECF assessment on the social dimension of the CFP, only 16 out of 23 coastal Member States replied to the Commission's request to inform it of the allocation method used; whereas several of those responses were of limited use as they contained only broad descriptions of the national fishing fleet or simply highlighted their intended allocations without outlining the 'transparent and objective' criteria used;
- BO. whereas on various occasions Parliament has called on the Commission and the Member States to provide dedicated supportive measures for the small-scale coastal fisheries sector;
- BP. whereas the EMFAF provides financial support for young fishers starting up fishing activities, while there is no subsequent guarantee for acquiring fishing opportunities;
- BQ. whereas producers' organisations play a key role in the implementation and enforcement of the objectives of the CFP and the CMO for fisheries and aquaculture;
- BR. whereas other traditional structures, such as guilds, are also key players in the food systems of some Member States, where they operate as not-for-profit social economy entities representing the fisheries sector, and especially the small-scale coastal fleet and shellfish gatherers, performing co-governance functions for the benefit of maritime fishing and workers in the fisheries sector, as well as carrying out business-related tasks, such as marketing products and providing advisory and management services;
- BS. whereas the public perception of the fishing sector still includes negative stereotypes about fishing activity on marine life, despite the sector's efforts, successes and continued willingness to improve fisheries sustainability; whereas this negative perception influences aquatic food consumption patterns and job attractiveness in an EU fishing sector that is also facing a huge challenge in generational renewal;
- BT. whereas generational renewal depends on the attractiveness of the sector and that younger generations aspire to work in sustainable and profitable sectors;
- BU. whereas fishing is universally considered a risky profession, compounded by the arduous nature of the work on fishing boats and unpredictable incomes; whereas these are significant factors in younger people's lack of interest in the profession, thereby jeopardising generational renewal in the fisheries sector and the future of the fishing sector as a whole;
- BV. whereas improving fishers' living and working conditions and safety is an overarching social objective, essential to attract young people and achieve generational renewal;
- BW. whereas young people who want to start their own business as fishers face significant barriers;
- BX. whereas the CFP tools that can help to improve the attractiveness of fishing and aquaculture as a profession are insufficient;
- BY. whereas the CFP does not mention major societal concerns such as climate change, Brexit, the Green Deal, the energy crisis or address the impact on food security of the growing number of marine protected areas, the expansion of off-shore renewable energy sites and the energy transition;
- BZ. whereas, even so, the majority of Member States and the EU's economic partners in the fishing industry often refer to the income insecurity of fishing activities in some sectors, which is a factor in young people's lack of interest in fishing, a trend that has been rising in recent years, and which creates additional difficulties in maintaining activities troubled by job losses in coastal communities;
- CA. whereas, even so, the majority of the Member States and the EU's economic partners in the fishing industry often refer to young people's lack of interest in fishing, a fact which was first acknowledged at least two decades ago, and which creates additional difficulties in the industry as a whole and exacerbates social problems in coastal communities both in continental Europe and overseas regions;
- CB. whereas a significant number of people working in the fisheries sector are women, most are employed in activities on land, often informally, supporting sea-based activities, particularly in the case of small-scale fishing; whereas despite their significant contribution to the sector, the role of women is still not sufficiently recognised;
- CC. whereas combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing helps ensure a level playing field for fair competition between the EU and certain foreign fleets with lower social and environmental standards that potentially undermine the competitiveness of EU producers when selling their products on the EU market; whereas, however, anti-IUU legislation alone cannot ensure a level playing field;

- CD. whereas defending and promoting the EU's model of sustainability is perfectly compatible with defence of the EU sectors, and should go hand in hand with the defence of the EU sectors' interests;
- CE. whereas joint enterprises with EU capital play a role in disseminating the CFP's values and sustainability objectives, as well as an important role in development cooperation with third countries, contributing to improving the economy, working conditions and food security in the countries where they are based;
- CF. whereas fisheries played a very prominent role in the campaign in the run-up to the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the EU in 2016;
- CG. whereas the increases in the autonomous tariff quotas (ATQs) for tuna loins have benefited the Chinese industry, which does not guarantee traceability information and relies on subsidies;
- CH. whereas the outermost regions (ORs) face specific challenges linked to their remoteness, topography, small markets and climate as referred to in Article 349 TFEU; whereas the specific characteristics of fisheries in the ORs are insufficiently taken into account in the CFP;
- CI. whereas artisanal fishing in the ORs is a major economic driver, a source of food sovereignty and a traditional activity that is part of the culture of these territories, which creates jobs at sea and in the processing sector and contributes to the dynamism of the tourist industry, which is an important economic engine of these regions;
- CJ. whereas, in order to ensure the survival of the fisheries sector in the ORs and in compliance with the principles of differential treatment for small islands and territories mentioned in SDG 14, it should be possible to support, on the basis of Article 349 TFEU, the renewal of the ORs' artisanal fishing vessels which land all their catches in ports in the ORs and contribute to local sustainable development;
- CK. whereas the indicators to establish whether the fishing capacity is in balance with the available fishing opportunities are not adapted to the characteristics of the ORs' local fleets;
- CL. whereas the ORs' special characteristics and permanent structural constraints need to be acknowledged and considered; stresses that the fisheries sector plays an important role in the socio-economic situation, in employment and in the promotion of the economic and social cohesion of these regions, and that there is potential for employment growth in the sustainable blue economy; highlights that geographical location puts outermost regions in a privileged position in the monitoring and control of coastal and oceanic areas and should be used for the EU's efforts to fight IUU fishing;
- CM. whereas climate change is a major challenge for the conservation of aquatic resources and for the future livelihoods of operators who depend on fisheries;
- CN. whereas fishers are victims of climate change;
- CO. whereas climate change has a major direct impact on marine species by altering their abundance, diversity and migration patterns and affecting their feeding, development and reproduction, as well as relations between species; whereas these changes have an impact on the CFP and the management of EU waters;
- CP. whereas the resilience and good health of marine ecosystems is essential both for climate regulation and for the conservation of fish stocks;
- CQ. whereas the preservation and regeneration of blue carbon ecosystems is essential for the resilience of coastal communities and the fisheries sector;

### ***General objectives of the CFP***

1. Recalls that the CFP must ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, of contributing to the availability of food supplies; further recalls that Article 39 TFEU defines that the CFP must assure the availability of supplies and provide a fair standard of living for fisheries and aquaculture communities;
2. Regrets that, since 2014, the implementation of the CFP has not given sufficient consideration to socio-economic aspects or the availability of food supply or the ecosystem-based approach, all of which are needed to ensure sustainable management of stocks;
3. Considers that the resulting negative impacts on the fishing sector have been exacerbated since new unprecedented challenges have arisen that could not have been predicted in 2012, when the CFP was being designed, such as Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis; highlights the severe impact the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which is having adverse effects on areas such as maritime security, resulting in disruption of fishing activities, particularly in the Black Sea, owing to drifting floating mines, and leading to a loss of biodiversity, reflected in particular by the alarming increase in the mortality of Black Sea cetaceans;

4. Welcomes the swift adoption of measures by the EU to support and alleviate the sector in difficult times; emphasises, however, that the cumulative effects of this situation have led numerous fleets to the brink of collapse and undermined the profitability of thousands of businesses to the point where their very survival is at risk, with potentially devastating effects on employment and social cohesion in coastal areas;
5. Stresses that the implementation of the CFP will have to adapt to the challenge of fighting climate change, where the EU has committed to be climate neutral by 2050;
6. Therefore, believes that the CFP must continue to be implemented, and where needed, reformed and adapted accordingly;
7. Underlines that seafood is a very high-quality source of protein and a vital part of a healthy diet, which generally has a lower carbon footprint than land-based food; notes therefore the strategic value of seafood in the context of the European Green Deal and in contributing to several SDGs such as SDG 2 'Zero Hunger', SDG 3 'Good Health and Well-Being', SDG 12 'Responsible Consumption and Production', SDG 13 'Climate Action' and SDG 14 'Life Below Water';
8. Considers that the CFP must respect equally all policy objectives; stresses the need to keep a balance between the three pillars of sustainability in the CFP; therefore supports strengthening, addressing gaps and stepping up the ambition in the CFP's socio-economic and food security dimensions, as well as fully applying an ecosystem based approach and the reaching of a level playing field in its international dimension;
9. Takes the view that the objectives of a fisheries policy should include guaranteeing the supply of fish to the public, as part of ensuring food security and sovereignty, developing coastal communities, and championing and encouraging the social recognition of fisheries-related professions, as well as promoting jobs and improving the living conditions of fishers;
10. Calls on the Commission, to that end, to systematically conduct full *ex ante* and *ex post* impact assessments, including socio-economic analyses, before any strategy or legislation is proposed or any policy decisions are taken with the consultation of all stakeholders involved in the fisheries sector;
11. Notes that while the CFP Basic Regulation highlights the environmental, socio-economic and food security objectives of the policy, Regulation (EU) 2016/2336 relating to deep-sea stocks deals solely with environmental aspects; considers that in future all regulations subordinate to the Basic Regulation should fully incorporate socio-economic and food security aspects;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Council to place more value in policymaking on the importance of fisheries in contributing to food security by providing high-quality seafood products, especially in crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in its contribution to the economic and social structure, and the cultural, touristic and gastronomic heritage of Europe's coastal and island communities;
13. Stresses the strategic role of fishers and aquaculture producers in the food value chain and in food security, as well as the role of women, as fishers, vessel masters, net menders, shore-based assistants and packagers, etc., and their need for recognition;
14. Recalls that all seas and the ocean are a global common good and that the marine resources are a natural public resource, that fishing activities and management are an asset based on these resources and belong to our common heritage, and that these resources should be managed based on reliable scientific advice in a way that guarantees the highest long-term benefits for all society;
15. Believes that the de minimis aid ceiling for fishery and aquaculture product processing companies should be aligned with the same scheme for agricultural processing companies in order to ensure consistency and guarantee food security; welcomes therefore the amendments adopted by the Commission to the de minimis scheme in this regard;

#### **Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)**

16. Recalls that, the CFP shall, among other things, 'aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the MSY' and that 'the MSY exploitation rate shall be achieved (...) at the latest by 2020 for all stocks' and by 2025 for the stocks covered by the management plan for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea; highlights, however, that for multi-specific fisheries, species management based on the MSY model is impossible to apply, even in scientifically well-known and documented fisheries;



17. Considers that the introduction of MSY as a fisheries management reference point has been a driver for improving the overall state of fish stocks; recalls that over the years of the application of the CFP, the fishing industry has made significant efforts to reduce fishing pressure to the point that, in 2020, the overall fishing mortality ratio (F/FMSY) fell below one in the North-East Atlantic;

18. Stresses that it is crucial to continue and accelerate the work of rebuilding and keeping fish stocks above MSY levels, notably in the Mediterranean where the F/FMSY remains above 1, while ensuring that maximum sustainable levels of seafood are produced, in order to ensure availability of food supply and positive social and economic returns to fishers and coastal communities;

19. Considers, in this regard, that the MSY objective should be implemented in light of the practical reality and in consideration of the socio-economic, proportionality and food security dimensions enshrined in the Treaty and in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) code of conduct;

20. Further considers that MSY should be developed as part of an ecosystem-based model that encompasses all factors that influence the status of stocks, including species interactions, global warming and pollution, in order to ensure that stock depletion is not attributed to the fisheries sector alone;

21. Calls on the Commission, following a broad stakeholders' consultation to examine the possibility of introducing fisheries management objectives that ensure both optimum fish stock levels and optimum socio-economic performance of fleets;

22. Invites, in this regards, Member States that want to initiate projects, including other types of management measures such as Maximum Economic Yield, where appropriate, to launch consultations to see where such trial projects could best be conducted;

### ***Landing obligation and reduction of unwanted catches***

23. Reiterates the views expressed in its resolution of 18 May 2021 on the landing obligation; recalls that some unwanted catches or by-catches are inevitable, especially in mixed fisheries, as fish may be damaged or unsaleable, undersized or fit for human consumption but prohibited for sale, etc.; further recalls that, despite the ongoing efforts and collaboration by all stakeholders, the landing obligation cannot be properly implemented if some shortcomings, such as the lack of storage capacity on board or collection facilities at port as well as adequate usage of exemptions, are not improved; points out that these shortcomings hinder proper implementation, which results in insufficient data collection on stocks and makes it difficult to accurately estimate catches, thereby hindering reliable scientific estimates of fish stocks;

24. Highlights that the landing obligation is not a goal in itself but a tool to minimise unwanted catches; stresses, in this regard, that, thanks to the greater selectivity achieved in recent years, there has been a considerable reduction in unwanted by-catch; highlights that this is the result of the efforts made by fishers in collaboration with the scientific community with applied knowledge supporting the development of more selective fishing techniques and gear; stresses, therefore, that more effort must be focused on financing development as well as deployment of fishing gear that contribute to selectivity and better data collection;

25. Recalls that Parliament asked the Commission to assess the implementation of the landing obligation, including an assessment of the socio-economic impact of the landing obligation that must be carried out for all fisheries, including small-scale ones;

26. Considers furthermore that:

- the current landing obligation should be applied in a pragmatic manner, taking into account the specific characteristics of each fishery; underlines the importance of fishers' experience on when and where to fish while avoiding unwanted catches, valuing their efforts to improve selectivity;
- quota swaps between Member States and between Producers' Organisations, through quota pools, as well as technical and spatiotemporal selectivity, should be encouraged;
- the importance of maintaining the existing exemptions to the landing obligation, based on the best available scientific advice should be acknowledged, as well as reducing the administrative burden in implementing the landing obligation; the Commission should take this into account when reviewing them;
- the application of the landing obligation, including its scope, should be reviewed so as to limit the problems of choke species and complex derogations;

- the landing obligation should be effectively controlled and enforced and, at the same time made more attractive to improve ownership by operators and thereby compliance, notably through incentives, for example to encourage the use of artificial intelligence tools to improve selectivity and species identification, as well as making adequate improvements and adaptations to European ports; calls on the Member States to make full use of EMFAF's possibilities and support for this purpose;

27. Insists that the objective of minimising unwanted catches cannot sufficiently be achieved through the landing obligation and should be primarily met by using technical measures and should be supported by better documenting catches, on the basis of the best available scientific advice; calls on the Commission to assess other alternatives to minimising unwanted catches, as well as proposing actions to make the landing obligation work better, in parallel with continuing looking for different ways to implement the landing obligation and to developing more selective gear;

### **Conservation measures**

#### *Fishing opportunities*

28. Recalls that TACs and quotas are the most direct way of managing fishing mortality, but single stock TACs can be problematic in mixed fisheries (due to the choke effect);

29. Highlights the need to improve the scientific advice for mixed fisheries also in the light of impacts of climate change on the ocean, as well as considering catch composition and the displacement of species, due to climate change, when setting TACs;

30. Stresses that in fisheries under quota management the problem of choke species has the potential to shut down fishing operations before the end of the season with potentially significant economic implications for fishers; calls on the Commission and the Member States to use current CFP possibilities, like quota swaps or inter-annual and inter-species flexibilities, while underlining in this regard that a good quota system should include a fair degree of flexibility, as it would allow fishers who need extra quotas for a choke species and fishers who have available quotas to arrive at a mutually beneficial outcome;

31. Calls on the Commission and the Council to consider setting TACs for longer than annual or biannual periods, in particular for the main target stocks, always based on the best scientific advice available, in order to provide more predictability and long-term certainty for fishers and in line with the MSY principle; calls on the Commission and the Council to seek the best available scientific advice on the possibility of removing the TACs for certain stocks, while ensuring that the stock concerned remains within safe biological limits in the short and medium term;

32. Underlines that relative stability, established four decades ago, is widely accepted as an essential instrument to provide long-term predictability and continuity in sharing fish stocks between countries;

#### *Fleet management*

33. Stresses that, despite international and EU efforts to improve safety conditions on board fishing vessels, there are still shortcomings, i.e. the international conventions setting out the rules and systems for the protection of vessels and persons on board apply above all to larger vessels;

34. Reiterates that on board working and living conditions cannot be seen separately from safety conditions; takes the view that good working and living conditions on vessels and the suitable modernisation thereof, improves safety, as well as resting time for fishers; considers that these aspects have direct implications for safety on board, as a large percentage of accidents and incidents on fishing vessels continue to be linked to human error, whether caused by lack of knowledge, training or by fatigue;

35. Urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure the highest standards of safety on board vessels, irrespective of their size; encourages the sector to implement the best possible conditions for safety on board;

36. Taking into consideration current EMFAF possibilities to support health, safety, working conditions and energy efficiency on board fishing vessels, insists that the current use of gross tonnage as a yardstick for measuring fishing capacity in the EU could hamper improvements in energy efficiency, safety and comfort of vessels, as it limits possibilities to replace and modernise them or increase space, even if it does not increase the vessels' ability to fish more; stresses that this, in turn, hampers the improvement of the aforementioned features, which would ultimately promote employment, the development of coastal communities and the attractiveness of the sector, especially for young people and women;

37. Takes note of the Commission communication on the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector <sup>(15)</sup>, seeking to ensure that the fishing sector contributes to the EU becoming climate neutral in 2050, while ensuring that fishing in the EU is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable; points out that this transition faces a number of obstacles, such as the current definition and limits of fishing capacity; recalls that hydrogen, ammonia or electric engines are generally heavier and larger than equivalent diesel engines and that their installation on board therefore requires additional gross tonnage and that there is a lack of adapted technologies, their high cost and the absence of research and development focusing specifically on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors; regrets that these obstacles are not addressed in the Commission communication;

38. Calls on the Commission to propose measures to respond to the need to facilitate the decarbonisation of the fishing industry, to solve the issue of ageing fishing vessels and to improve safety and working conditions; considers that such measures could, where appropriate, include:

- fully utilising the available gross tonnage within national capacity ceilings,
- redefining fishing capacity, for example, by excluding the 'social and safety' related tonnage from the calculation of the fishing capacity,
- increasing the fishing capacity limits in terms of gross tonnage and engine power, without increasing the ability of vessels to catch more fish;

39. Calls on the Commission and Member States to make it easier for industry professionals to access EMFAF funds;

40. Further calls on the Commission and Member States to accelerate research and development, to adapt the State Aid policy and in synergy with the EMFAF to provide adequate and sufficient funding, so that the sector is able to achieve the decarbonisation of the EU fleet within the tight timeframe required by the European Green Deal and other related obligations;

41. Also calls on the Commission to review the EMFAF, in line with the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted at its 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) on 17 June 2022, with a view to reaching carbon neutrality; calls for financing for new vessels to be approved, within the parameters laid down in international fisheries agreements;

42. Further calls for an economic transition assistance to be developed to advance decarbonisation, covering all fleet segments; insists that such assistance should also be used to replace existing vessels, as the fleet is very old, with more efficient, safer, technologically innovative and spacious vessels that contribute to making the sector more attractive and to promoting generational renewal;

43. Calls on the Commission and Member States to complement EMFAF funding, for example through the Just Transition Fund, RePower EU and Horizon Europe to facilitate decarbonisation and to finance research, in order to facilitate a just ecological transition that leaves no one behind;

44. Urges the Commission and Member States to work together to support research and allowing innovative gear and techniques for selective fishing that contribute to substantially reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fuel use;

### ***Regional Multiannual plans***

45. Recognises the essential role of multiannual plans (MAPs) as main frameworks for long-term regional fisheries management, based on the best available scientific, technical and economic advice, but regrets that they have not reached their full potential;

46. Calls on the Commission to assess how effectively the existing MAPs are being implemented in order to ensure that they contribute to the CFP objectives; where necessary, these plans should be updated and improved, so that they take into account socio-economic considerations and changing conditions;

47. Calls on the Commission to explore, in coordination with other partners in the area - namely non-EU countries and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) - whether MAPs, similar to those in place in other sea basins, could be proposed for the EU's remaining waters, notably in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and how they can complement and work together with already existing management tools in these sea basins;

<sup>(15)</sup> COM(2023)0100.

48. Underlines the need to ensure synergies between regional multiannual plans and the specific maritime policies for each basin;

49. Believes that it is imperative that all local and regional authorities competent for fisheries management, as well as the Advisory Councils (ACs), which have a fundamental role in this regard, are fully involved in the definition, development and implementation of MAPs in line with the CFP;

50. Stresses that fisheries is the sector most dependent on healthy, productive and resilient stocks and marine ecosystems and that these ecosystems are affected also by the many other uses of, and activities taking place in the marine environment, such as maritime transport and tourism, urban and coastal development, the exploitation of raw materials and energy sources, including sea-floor mining, as well as being affected by marine pollution and climate change; consequently, stresses the need to improve the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach at regional, national and European level, to which MAPs and other management tools have a crucial role to play;

51. Stresses the need for consistent fisheries management measures concerning stocks straddling over regions covered by several MAPs, as well as for regions not covered by MAPs;

### ***Governance***

52. Strongly recommends, given the strategic importance of fisheries and aquaculture as a source of healthy, protein-rich and high-quality food, that this policy be given the additional strategic recognition it deserves within the Commission and that the Commission services responsible be staffed with an adequate number of experts in fisheries and aquaculture;

53. Requests that, in future compositions of the College of Commissioners, there should be a Commissioner dedicated exclusively to fisheries, aquaculture and maritime affairs;

54. Stresses the importance of the Commission's including sufficiently detailed information in its annual reports as referred to in Article 50 of the CFP, so as to allow the implementation of the CFP by the Commission to be monitored and assessed effectively; calls in addition on the Commission, when reviewing the CFP, to amend Article 49 in order to set a deadline for a report to be submitted 10 years after the review and every five years thereafter to the European Parliament and to the Council;

55. Calls on the Commission to better support the Member States in implementing and ensuring respect of and compliance with the objectives of the CFP; underlines that it is essential for the Commission and the Member States to be transparent in their management of fishery resources; stresses that transparent management is vital in ensuring a high level of trust among EU citizens and maintaining the good reputation of the EU fisheries sector;

56. Proposes to the Commission and the Council that the European Parliament be given observer status, ensuring full political representation, at the annual negotiations on fishing opportunities;

### ***Regionalisation and stakeholders' involvement***

57. Stresses the importance of strengthening regionalisation in the CFP, allowing regions and local authorities to be more involved in the drafting, development and evaluation of the national operational programmes for fisheries and in fisheries management more generally, while also making full use of the existing possibilities in the CFP;

58. Highlights the importance of taking into account regional specificities, while applying a harmonised approach to fisheries management across the EU; encourages Member States to increase their cooperation within regional groups, together with the relevant stakeholders, ACs and local and regional authorities in accordance with Article 18 of the CFP Basic Regulation in order to design regional conservation measures through joint recommendations that are better tailored to the specific characteristics of each particular maritime basin;

59. Stresses the fundamental role of ACs in reinforcing stakeholders' cooperation and in ensuring their adequate and fair participation in the EU decision-making process;

60. Further emphasises that the ACs are essential to provide experience and knowledge to the European Commission and to the Member States, as well as to submitting recommendations on matters relating to the management of fisheries and the socio-economic and conservation aspects of fisheries and aquaculture and explain the problems of the sector and of other stakeholders, thus supporting and improving legislation;

61. Underlines that ACs also play a key role in the context of regionalisation;

62. Calls on the Commission to ensure that regional stakeholders and ACs play a greater role in the negotiations and consultations with third countries, especially the United Kingdom and Norway; points out that the Commission is responsible for organising the negotiations with third countries in such a way as to allow for direct interactions and exchanges between stakeholders on both sides;

63. Supports the composition of the ACs, with a majority representation of socio-economic operators as compared to other interest groups;

64. Highlights the importance of stakeholders' actively participating in ACs, in a good working atmosphere based on respect, inclusion of all opinions by the different stakeholder groups, impartial secretariats, rotating chairpersons and external, regular and independent performance reviews;

65. Highlights the importance of involving the ACs with the European Parliament's work, and thus recommends holding regular exchanges between representatives of the ACs and Parliament's relevant Committees;

66. Deplores the insufficient monitoring of and transparency on how the ACs' advice is taken into account in decision-making; calls on the Commission to draw up a procedure to give ACs a better understanding of the results of their recommendations, such as considering an annual report, as well as including explanations in specific proposals from the Commission, such as in recitals of the relevant legislative acts, on how ACs' recommendations have been taken into account;

67. Calls on the Commission to systematically and actively participate in the ACs' meetings and to better communicate on the value of their advice, as well as for Member States to provide appropriate support for the functioning of ACs;

68. Considers that co-management is a participatory and co-responsibility model, based on a bottom up approach, which is transparent, proactive and democratic, and which helps to generate greater knowledge sharing for fisheries management, within a culture of responsibility, establishing a network of trust and contributing to reducing conflict and overcoming hurdles to implement innovations and necessary measures in fisheries management, as well as in the creation, implementation and management of Marine Protected Areas, where it has proven to be highly successful;

69. Welcomes the Commission's proposal announced in its Communication on the CFP today and tomorrow to conduct, between spring 2023 and summer 2024, an EU-wide participatory foresight project on 'Fisheries of the Future' based on interviews on the ground;

### ***Decisions based on science and impact assessments***

70. Calls on the Commission to base all its political and legislative initiatives (including implementing acts that set restrictions on fisheries) on the best available scientific, technical and economic advice (including fishers' empirical knowledge) and consultation and participation of the fisheries sector and other relevant stakeholders and on prior socio-economic impact assessments using innovative tools such as those developed in the CABFishman project, which analyses the impacts of fisheries on coastal areas;

71. Calls on the Member States to increase their human and material resources and to equip them for suitable scientific campaigns and projects so that they have sufficient knowledge of the species targeted by conservation policies;

72. Calls for the EMFAF to provide effective support to more selective and less impacting fishing techniques for EU fishing fleets, and in particular to support fishers impacted the most by restrictions, based on scientific impact assessments on the use of specific fishing techniques; encourages the Commission to promote the scientific concept of 'pêchécologie' ('fishecology') which aims to reconcile conservation measures and sustainable use of the sea's living resources;

73. Considers that the ACs should be given the possibility of contributing to the Commission's requests for advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) in order to foster closer collaboration between scientists and stakeholders;

74. Calls on the Commission to systematically inform the European Parliament about these requests, in particular the way in which they contribute to the objectives of the CFP;

***The integration of fisheries into a wider policy context***

75. Stresses the need to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture are given a fair place in comparison with other sectors in policy design and in spatial planning; recalls the need to establish a better balance between the various economic activities pertaining to the Blue Economy in order to reduce and avoid conflicts and foster synergies, especially with renewable marine energy infrastructures <sup>(16)</sup>, through the Directive on maritime spatial planning <sup>(17)</sup>; points out that this requires broad and inclusive stakeholder participation;

76. Recalls that environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the CFP with a view to promoting sustainable development, in line with the TFEU;

77. Stresses that it is impossible to manage fisheries as a standalone policy, and calls on the Commission to implement the CFP in synergy with all EU public policies affecting the hydrosphere and taking into account all of the challenges associated with Europe's maritime areas;

78. Underlines that, notably, the CFP must be consistent with EU environmental legislation, in particular with the objective of achieving a good environmental status as set out in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive <sup>(18)</sup>, and be implemented respecting the three pillars of sustainability equally;

79. Stresses the need for other EU policies and strategies to sufficiently take into account and be coherent with the CFP;

80. Notes the need for a holistic approach, ensuring proper support to the fisheries and aquaculture sector, when implementing measures designed to improve conditions for the marine environment;

81. Recalls that Article 13 TFEU provides that, in formulating and implementing the EU's fisheries policy, the EU and its Member States should pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States.

82. Calls on the Commission to further increase science-based knowledge on the welfare of aquatic animals and to take this research into consideration in future policy developments in fisheries and aquaculture; stresses that, any future policy developments should also take practical feasibility into account in fisheries and aquaculture management and the potential economic and operational impact on operators' and activities, and should also consider the need to ensure an international level playing field;

83. Considers that the marketing of purely plant-based products under the trade name 'fish' or fish species may lead to some confusion for consumers at the time of purchase; asserts that the trade name 'fish' or fish species should be reserved in the internal market for fishery or aquaculture products of animal origin;

84. Calls on the Commission to review, update and give regulatory content to the concept of an 'area heavily dependent on fisheries', so that this recognition provides differentiated treatment aimed at preserving fisheries in these areas through a preferential distribution of fishing quotas; supports the view that the defining elements of an updated concept of 'area heavily dependent on fisheries' should include the production of quality animal protein, the contribution to food security or ensuring high added value to catches and other sea products, as well as the social importance of the activity;

***Small-scale fisheries***

85. Notes that some aspects of the CFP might not cater adequately for the small-scale fishing sector and that its vital socio-economic role in many coastal communities and its strategic role in the availability of food supply must be secured;

86. Takes the view that the CFP should sufficiently take into account the diverse nature, specific characteristics and problems of the small-scale fishing and shellfish sectors;

87. Draws attention to the need for greater involvement and participation of small-scale fishing professionals in the management, definition and implementation of fisheries policies, as well as in ACs;

<sup>(16)</sup> According to the Court of Auditors' special report on 'offshore renewable energy in the EU' of 5 July 2023: 'the potential negative consequences of offshore renewable energy development on the fisheries sector need to be better identified and addressed' ([https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2023-22/SR-2023-22\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2023-22/SR-2023-22_EN.pdf), page 40).

<sup>(17)</sup> Directive 2014/89/EU of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135).

<sup>(18)</sup> Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) (OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19).

88. Takes the view that a review of the CFP should include a common, broad and appropriate definition of small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries; stresses that this definition should be pragmatic, measurable and clear; also emphasises that this definition should derive from an appropriate assessment that takes into account the specific characteristics and criteria of the small-scale segment, rather than focus solely on vessel length, in order to arrive at a definition of small-scale fisheries that better reflects the reality of the segment;

89. Calls for the Commission, together with the ACs, to propose a harmonised definition to be included in a review of the CFP Basic Regulation in order for it to cover all EU fisheries legislation, where appropriate; considers that any of the changes outlined above should not impact the implementation of the EMFAF during the current budgetary period;

90. Stresses the need for an amendment to Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, also known as the 'Mediterranean Regulation', which lays down rules on the technical characteristics of fishing gears and their uses and which is unfortunately outdated and as such presents an obstacle to fulfilling the main goals of the Common Fisheries Policy, particularly those related to small-scale fisheries;

### ***Quota allocation***

91. Emphasises that, under Article 17, when allocating the fishing opportunities available to their fleet, Member States are to use transparent and objective criteria, including those of an environmental, social and economic nature; stresses that it is up to the Member States to determine the criteria they use when allocating fishing opportunities;

92. Welcomes the fact that the current allocation methods based largely on historical rights allow for a certain level of economic stability in the fishing sector, which can be a condition enabling operators to innovate and adopt more sustainable techniques;

93. Stresses that an easily accessible system of fishing opportunities along with transparent criteria for its allocation and transparency on its practical application allows for better scrutiny, a level playing field, equal opportunities for all interested parties and more predictability, stability and legal certainty for fishers;

94. Deplores the lack of transparency regarding the distribution of fishing opportunities in certain Member States and calls for the criteria to be made public, in line with the applicable data protection legislation;

95. Considers that the allocation methods should be developed and applied with the involvement of fishing communities, regional authorities and other relevant stakeholders, making sure all fleet segments, producers' organisations (POs) and workers' organisations are fairly represented, based on the best available scientific advice, and that they should include safeguards such as notice periods to allow fishers to adapt in case Member States decide to change their allocation method;

96. Urges the Council to take into account the specificities and needs of each fleet segment, including the small-scale segment, when allocating fishing opportunities;

97. Recalls the role of Article 17 of the CFP as a tool to provide incentives for low-impact and small-scale fisheries and that it is for Member States to make use of the possibilities offered by it, such as incentives to use more selective fishing gear or use fishing techniques with reduced energy consumption or habitat impact;

98. Notes that the Commission will initiate discussions among Member States and stakeholders with a view to preparing a vade mecum on the allocation of fishing opportunities in order to improve transparency, promote sustainable fishing practices across the EU, and support small scale and coastal fisheries;

### ***Producers' organisations and guilds***

99. Underlines the role of POs in promoting sustainability, in contributing to the availability of food supply and in enhancing growth and employment in the fishing and aquaculture sectors through, inter alia:

- the management and implementation of collective actions;
- the linking of producers, first buyers and consumers in the supply chain,
- the promotion of viable and sustainable fishing products to consumers by participating in certification schemes;

- the promotion of compliance with fishing regulation, supporting traceability and enhancing transparency and data quality in catch declarations so as to combat IUU fishing;
- the distribution and management, in some Member States, of fishing quotas;

100. Further notes that, in many Member States, relatively few small-scale fishers belong to POs, and even fewer small-scale fishers have their own dedicated POs, limiting their capacity to benefit from this channel to access fishing quotas; encourages, therefore, the Commission and the Member States to facilitate and encourage the creation of POs for and by small-scale fishers;

101. Stresses that fishers' associations such as guilds, pursuing the main objectives of a PO under the Common Markets Organisation<sup>(19)</sup>, should be eligible to receive financial aid on an equal footing with currently recognised POs; insists, in this regard, that the Member States concerned, the Commission and guilds should, in concert, consider relevant options and solutions;

### ***Generational renewal and role of women***

102. Points out that CFP standards are among the highest worldwide and make an important contribution to environmental, economic and social sustainability and that, although there is still much room for improvement, progress made in recent decades shows what can be done to further contribute, on the one hand, to the sustainability of fish stocks and habitats and, on the other, to increase the earnings of fishers and ship owners; highlights that promoting high standards in terms of the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the fisheries sector is, among other factors, key to attracting a new generation of fishers and to providing long-term economic stability for the sector;

103. Notes that the protection of the environment is a growing concern for Europeans, in particular younger generations; stresses the importance of sustainable management of fisheries to attract young fishers; calls, in this regard, for the promotion of low-impact fishing;

104. Further calls on the Commission to ensure that part of the financial contributions under the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements is also allocated, where possible, to the better integration of young people and women in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, to the restoration of the marine environment and to the improvement of knowledge about the state of the climate and the marine environment;

105. Stresses the need to attract young people not only to sea fishing activities, but also to fishing enterprise management and aquaculture, so as to ensure generational renewal across the entire aquatic food sector;

106. Highlights that generational renewal is important to counter the demographic challenges facing coastal and surrounding rural areas, in particular, and will contribute to preserving their cultural heritage;

107. Welcomes the fact that the 2021-2027 EMFAF provides assistance and support for young fishers making their first purchase of a vessel or fishing enterprise; calls in this regard on the Commission and Member States to promote generational renewal by supporting people who want to start a career in the fisheries sector and removing obstacles, such as addressing the high cost of starting a business, income instability, gender inequality and the lack of career stability;

108. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to provide with new measures, as well as on the sector to take measures, that will stimulate the inclusion of young people and women at all levels of the sector and better promote generational renewal, in particular by making all jobs in the fishing and aquaculture value chain more attractive, safer and better paid;

109. Stresses the importance of ensuring proper information and training, especially for young people, to ensure knowledge sharing in particular in relation to the contribution of fisheries to sustainability issues; believes this to be important in order to guarantee both their personal situation, contributing to improving their income, and by extension the cohesion of their local communities, especially in the most isolated coastal regions, with fewer job opportunities;

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<sup>(19)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1).



110. Underlines that generational renewal must take into account the objectives of the European Green Deal and the need to ensure digital transition also in a sustainable blue economy; considers, however, that generational renewal must not lead to a clash between generations and should include fishers of all ages, ensuring balance in the ecological and digital transition in order to ensure that the legacy of experience is not lost; further calls for enhanced mobility and employment opportunities throughout the EU, without difficulties or restrictions regarding recognition of fishers skills and training;

111. Recognises the important role of women in the logistical and administrative support for fishing vessels as well as in the marketing and processing of fish; highlights, however, that this role is often overlooked or barely visible, in particular as fishers or vessel masters as well as their role in science;

112. Calls, therefore, on the Commission to launch initiatives to acknowledge women's work in fisheries and to enhance the visibility of their role, both by favouring their incorporation in its various areas, and by supporting a better representation of women in all representative organisations and entities, and to secure equal payment between genders;

113. Recalls that the Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025 requires that the relevant EU funds support actions, such as EMFAF, to promote women's work-life balance and participation in the labour market, promote investments in care facilities, support female entrepreneurship, and combat gender segregation;

114. Calls on the Commission and Member States to endeavour to ensure that every programme and actions aimed at attracting young people to the fishing sector carried out under the CFP must contribute to achieving gender equality;

#### ***External dimension of the CFP and oceans' governance***

115. Calls on the Commission to invest more effort in promoting the CFP as a policy model for ocean governance, by using the EU's position in RFMOs, free trade agreements and Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements, and more generally in international forums; stresses that this will be essential to ensure fair competition for EU operators and to defend the interests of the EU's fisheries and aquaculture sectors at a global level;

116. Calls on the Commission to monitor the distribution of the EU's financial contributions, ensuring that these are allocated to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;

117. Calls for the role of RFMOs to be strengthened and calls on the Commission to propose a general framework for the negotiating mandates for participation in these organisations; further calls on the Commission to ensure Parliament's involvement at the earliest stages of the drafting of measures and recommendations for adoption within RFMOs, in a manner that does not undermine the EU's negotiating position;

118. Considers that there should be no ocean area and relevant fisheries resource that is not covered by the relevant RFMO; calls on the Commission to promote the creation of new RFMOs, where necessary, as well as the adaptation of existing ones, in international forums, to improve the protection of fish stocks and the sustainable management of fishery resources and to defend the sustainable activities of the fleets operating in these areas;

119. Points out that SFPAs with non-EU countries provide mutual benefits both to the EU and to partner countries; underlines that recent SFPAs include human rights clauses and integrate the needs of local populations;

120. Considers it imperative that the Commission fully respects all aspects of international law when engaging in the external dimension of the CFP;

121. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the CFP objectives are fully integrated into the EU position in all international environmental forums, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) or Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), where questions relating to marine biological resources are discussed;

#### ***Imports and trade and Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing***

122. Considers that imported aquatic food products must be subject to rigorous monitoring and certification procedures, to ensure they come from sustainable fisheries, and to high health, environmental and social standards, that are as strict as those applied to EU products; is of the view that this should be required by means of specific clauses in the new trade agreements negotiated by the EU;

123. Points out that the traceability system for fresh, frozen and processed aquatic food products imported into the Union, including for tuna loins imported under the autonomous tariff quotas' (ATQs) regime, is essential, in order to meet consumers' expectations through information with a view to improving food safety and allowing checks on third-country imports, alongside measures to fight against IUU fishing; calls for a more harmonised approach in the EU in relation to the implementation of IUU-related EU-legislation;

124. Recalls that the EU is the largest and most attractive import market for seafood and aquaculture products; calls for this position of commercial strength to be leveraged to protect the interests of EU consumers in promoting high standards and of the EU sectors, to prevent its partners from renegeing on agreements or commitments and to foster a level playing field at international level, in particular on social, economic and environmental standards;

125. Welcomes the fact that the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement incorporates a direct link between trade and fisheries provisions; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that fisheries negotiations with the UK as well as with other coastal states in the North-East Atlantic are also linked to issues pertaining to trade and access to the EU single market;

126. Underlines the importance of the EU's zero-tolerance policy regarding IUU fishing, in the light of it still being an occurrence on the international level including examples ranging from a lack of transparency on illegal fishing operations to modern slavery, as in the case of some Chinese vessels, and regrets that unauthorised seafood continues to be sold on a number of EU markets;

127. Points out that the Commission and the Member States must redouble their efforts to tackle IUU fishing and ensure that seafood consumption in the EU does not contribute to it;

128. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the EFCA's role to fight IUU fishing;

129. Calls for all free trade agreements with third countries to include a section on tackling IUU fishing;

#### ***Outermost regions***

130. Considers that some aspects of the CFP do not sufficiently address the specific needs of the outermost regions; calls on the Commission and the concerned Member States to address this situation on the basis of Article 349 TFEU and through a regionalised approach, as enshrined in the CFP, and, where necessary, to make the adjustments needed;

131. Points to the specific features of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the outermost regions; calls on the Commission to propose a programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity (POSEI) for fisheries and aquaculture, similar to that of agriculture;

132. Stresses that EU and national support for the renewal of artisanal fleets is of vital importance for these regions; calls on the Commission, in particular, to adapt its guidelines for the analysis of the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities (COM(2014)0545) to the characteristics of the outermost regions;

133. Underlines the importance of carrying out robust studies to assess the marine biological resources in all Union waters and, in particular, in the outermost regions;

134. Insists on the need to support selective fishing methods, such as anchored fish aggregating devices used by artisanal fleets in the ORs, provided that such devices contribute to sustainable and selective fishing;

135. Stresses the need to provide the necessary resources to improve scientific knowledge of the ORs' exclusive economic zones;

#### ***Climate change and other challenges for the future***

136. Stresses that climate change mitigation and adaptation are key challenges that are insufficiently tackled by the current CFP;

137. Stresses that the efforts made by the fishing industry to improve the stocks' sustainability and to commit to keeping them in good condition once a good status is reached will be meaningless if climate change is not addressed;

138. Strongly emphasises the need for scientific research to focus more on the interactions between environmental changes due to climate change and fish stocks, in order to avoid blaming the depletion of stocks solely on the fishing industry;

139. Stresses that fishers and the rest of the seafood chain are not a cause of climate change but rather victims of it;

140. Considers that the aquaculture sector is capable of providing a consistent contribution to ecosystem services for society, and that pond aquaculture, algae and shellfish farming can contribute to decarbonising the EU economy and mitigating climate change; stresses, however, that carbon sequestration by algae and shellfish farming is limited depending on the production method and use when the product is harvested; calls on Member States to promote efficient short supply chains, where appropriate, with a view to contributing to combating climate change;

141. Points out that certain aquaculture practices, such as mussel or oyster farming and pond polyculture, can be successful models for future emissions credit systems, in the context of EU climate legislation; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support this type of green business;

142. Calls on the Member States to continue encouraging the promotion of algae farming and facilitate the use and development of algae as food and feed; highlights that there is untapped potential in algae farming for creating new jobs and providing ecosystem services and more environmentally friendly food and feed;

143. Calls on the European Commission to take into account, when revising the Common Fisheries Policy, that the ocean's characteristics (temperature, density, salinity, oxygen saturation, etc.) have changed over the last 10 years;

144. Highlights the need for more resilient ecosystems through connected and effectively managed marine protected areas, as a basis for resilient and profitable economic fishing sectors;

145. Stresses that, for fisheries, resilience to climate change is achieved through diversified fishing zones and targeted species;

146. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to increase human and financial resources to fisheries science related to climate change and decarbonising the fleet, analysing the impact of climate change on the state of fisheries and its environment;

147. Calls for innovation in monitoring the impact of climate change on stocks in the framework of a close collaboration between the scientific community and stakeholders, in order to increase the reactivity and to develop adapted management tools;

148. Calls on the Commission to design tools and sufficient funding for the sectors affected by climate change;

149. Calls on the Commission, in order to promote the circular economy in the fisheries sector, to set up European programmes for fishers to collect litter at sea, if they are able to do so, during periods when they are unable to go fishing, and thereby supplement their income;

150. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address and follow up on all provisions of the CFP that have not been implemented;

### ***Recreational fisheries***

151. Stresses the urgency and need to improve the collection of data from recreational fisheries catches; urges the Commission and the Member States to include in the European Data Collection Framework, established by Regulation (EU) 2017/1004<sup>(20)</sup>, all species subject to TACs and quotas, in addition to those included in multi-annual management plans (MAPs) and under the landing obligation;

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<sup>(20)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (OJ L 157, 20.6.2017, p. 1).

152. Stresses the need for data to assess the impact of EU recreational fisheries on the marine ecosystem and marine biological resources in EU waters, including data on by-catch, in particular species protected under EU or international law, data on impacts of recreational fisheries on marine habitats, including vulnerable marine areas, and data on impacts of fisheries on food webs;

153. Underlines that recreational fishing could be having a significant impact on fish stocks; welcomes the progress made in the revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation and calls on Member States to ensure that recreational fisheries are conducted in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the CFP;

### **Aquaculture**

154. Recalls the importance of aquaculture to guarantee long-term food security and contribute to meeting the growing world demand for aquatic food, as well its contribution to create growth and employment for EU citizens, to better preserving ecosystems and biodiversity and be part of a more circular management of resources;

155. Stresses that farmed seafood, as a source of protein for food has a lower-carbon footprint and required the least use of natural resources than other terrestrial livestock, and has an important role to play in helping to build a sustainable food system;

156. Recognises the role of the strategic guidelines and the Multiannual National Strategic Plans for the development of a sustainable and resilient aquaculture;

157. Regrets that since 2014 European aquaculture has been stagnant and limited progress has been made in reducing the administrative burden and integrating aquaculture into maritime, coastal, and inland spatial planning;

158. Underlines that European aquaculture is far from reaching its full capacity and that the EU import dependence rate is very high since almost 75 % of the total seafood that is consumed in the EU is imported from third countries;

159. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the growth of low environmental-impact aquaculture, which includes not only mollusc and algae but also freshwater and marine finfish farming, rather than promoting the growth of low-trophic aquaculture; stresses in particular the importance of finfish production in the supply of the EU market, due to the scale of the imported tonnages involved (94 % in 2021);

160. Recalls that big non-EU producer countries continue to heavily promote the growth of their finfish farming sector, with the EU being their main export market;

161. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively support the implementation of the revised strategic guidelines and the multiannual national plans and promote its long term sustainability with a focus not only to the environmental sustainability but also the economic and social sustainability of EU aquaculture;

162. Regrets that the EU's current trade policy does not safeguard a level playing field between EU and non-EU producers that will allow the aquaculture sector to achieve sustainable economic results and in return to contribute to the social and economic development of the EU's regions;

163. Recalls the importance of aquaculture in guaranteeing long-term food security and contributing to meeting the growing world demand for aquatic food, as well as its contribution to creating growth and employment for EU citizens, to better preserving ecosystems and biodiversity and being part of a more circular management of resources; regrets that since 2014 European aquaculture has been stagnant and limited progress has been made on reducing the administrative burden and on integrating aquaculture into maritime, coastal, and inland spatial planning; stresses that European aquaculture is far from full capacity and that 75 % of the seafood consumed in the EU is farmed in facilities outside the EU; calls on the Commission to actively support the implementation of the revised strategic guidelines and national plans and to promote their long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability;



164. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.