



TEXTS ADOPTED

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Decarbonisation and modernisation of EU fisheries, and the development and deployment of fishing gear

European Parliament resolution of 18 December 2025 on the decarbonisation and modernisation of EU fisheries, and the development and deployment of fishing gear (2024/2123(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 3, 4, 9, 38, 174 and 349 of the Treaty of Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea of 25 May 1980,
- having regard to the Convention on the International Maritime Organization of 17 March 1958,
- having regard to the Convention establishing the International Labour Organization,
- having regard to the Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris on 12 December 2015 (Paris Agreement),
- having regard to Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community¹,
- having regard to having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of

¹ OJ L 275, 25.10.2003, p. 32,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/87/oj>.

² OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>.

fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures³,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law')⁴,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund⁵,
- having regard to Decision (EU) 2022/591 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030⁶,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure⁷,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on the use of renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport⁸,
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources⁹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006 and (EC) No 1005/2008 and Regulations (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2017/2403 and (EU) 2019/473 of

³ OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1241/oj>.

⁴ OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1119/oj>.

⁵ OJ L 247, 13.7.2021, p. 1,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1139/oj>.

⁶ OJ L 114, 12.4.2022, p. 22,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/591/oj>.

⁷ OJ L 234, 22.9.2023, p. 1,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1804/oj>.

⁸ OJ L 234, 22.9.2023, p. 48,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1805/oj>.

⁹ OJ L, 2023/2413, 31.10.2023,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/2413/oj>.

the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control¹⁰,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 entitled 'The European Green Deal' (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal¹¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 May 2021 on new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU – Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future (COM(2021)0240),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 February 2023 on the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector (COM(2023)0100),
- having regard to the Commission Guide of November 2023 on Financing opportunities for the Green Energy Transition of Fisheries and Aquaculture – Supporting the energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture through EU funding opportunities under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework, NextGenerationEU and beyond,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 February 2023 entitled 'EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries',
- having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2021 towards a stronger partnership with the EU outermost regions¹²,
- 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 communities¹³,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 May 2022 toward a sustainable blue economy in the EU: the role of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors¹⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2023 on the small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives¹⁵,

¹⁰ OJ L, 2023/2842, 20.12.2023,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2842/oj>.

¹¹ OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 2.

¹² OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 18.

¹³ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 67.

¹⁴ OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 2.

¹⁵ OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 150.

- having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2024 on the state of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives¹⁶,
 - having regard to the European Court of Auditors reports of 2022 entitled 'Review 01/2022: Energy taxation, carbon pricing and energy subsidies' and of 2020 entitled 'Special Report 26/2020: Marine environment: EU protection is wide but not deep',
 - having regard to European Court of Auditors Special Report 25/2023 entitled 'EU aquaculture policy – Stagnating production and unclear results despite increased EU funding',
 - having regard to its Scientific Foresight Unit report of June 2023 entitled 'Decarbonising the fishing sector: Energy efficiency measures and alternative energy solutions for fishing vessels',
 - having regard to the Baltic Sea Advisory Council recommendations of 3 October 2023 on the energy transition of the Baltic Sea fisheries sector,
 - having regard to the North Western Waters Advisory Council advice of 28 November 2023 on the Commission communication entitled 'on the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector',
 - having regard to the Copernicus Climate Change Service and World Meteorological Organization report of 15 April 2025 entitled 'European State of the Climate 2024',
 - having regard to the North Sea Advisory Council advice of 19 May 2025 on the Evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy,
 - having regard to the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change report of 2 June 2025 entitled 'Scientific advice for amending the European Climate Law – Setting climate goals to strengthen EU strategic priorities',
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A10-0236/2025),
- A. whereas achieving climate neutrality by 2050 requires an ambitious, socio-economically just, inclusive and sustainable transition of the EU fisheries sector, based on a balance between environmental protection, social justice and economic viability, and supported by public investment and innovation;

¹⁶ OJ C, C/2024/5734, 17.10.2024,
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5734/oj>.

- B. whereas tackling both climate and environment-related challenges and reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement are at the core of the 2019 Commission communication on the European Green Deal;
- C. whereas oceans absorb about 30 % of global carbon dioxide emissions;
- D. whereas, in the worst-case scenario, the EU fishing fleet is estimated to emit 0,015 % of global carbon emissions; whereas the EU fleet has already reduced its emissions by more than 52 % compared to 1990;
- E. whereas this significant cut can be explained by the reduction in the EU fishing fleet, improvements in the energy efficiency of vessels and increased fishing yields; whereas, nevertheless, the fisheries sector faces decarbonisation requirements that could impose disproportionate costs on it;
- F. whereas energy products supplied for use as fuel for navigation within EU waters, including for fishing, are currently fully exempt from taxation under the Energy Taxation Directive;
- G. whereas the EU fishing sector faces significant challenges associated with climate change, from more adverse weather conditions at sea to fish stock migration due to warmer sea temperatures;
- H. whereas the fight against climate change is urgent and necessary in order to address the triple planetary crisis affecting the ocean and to prevent further adverse effects on society and the economy, to ensure that future generations, including future fishing generations, are better equipped to face the unavoidable effects of climate change;
- I. whereas seafood is the healthiest source of animal protein globally, with the lowest carbon footprint, yet the EU still depends on imports for over 70 % of its seafood consumption;
- J. whereas the transition to alternative fuels and low-carbon propulsion systems requires substantial investment in technological development, vessel design, crew training and port infrastructure, and must be accompanied by public support to ensure successful development, implementation, accessibility and affordability for all segments of the fleet, in particular for small-scale and artisanal fisheries;
- K. whereas no single alternative fuel and technology currently offers a definitive, accessible and scalable solution for the full decarbonisation of the fishing fleet, but developments and progress must be actively supported through research, demonstration projects and targeted public and private investment to enable a just and timely transition;

- L. whereas the Energy Transition Partnership, which launched in 2023, is a valuable platform designed to accelerate the energy transition in the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector and to bring together relevant stakeholders;
- M. whereas the 8th Environment Action Programme outlines the EU's commitment to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies within the EU;
- N. whereas, although the small-scale coastal fleet represents 76 % of all active fishing vessels operating in the EU, it continues to face persistent challenges in fleet modernisation; whereas, despite the number of vessels, technological developments remain limited, notably in terms of suitable new hybrid engines, and the high cost of alternative fuels compared to fossil fuels distorts the transition process; whereas there is an urgent need for targeted actions to support the transition of small-scale fisheries;
- O. whereas fishers, in particular small-scale operators, are essential allies in protecting marine ecosystems and should be fully involved in the implementation and monitoring of policies supporting the transition towards sustainable and low-impact fishing practices;
- P. whereas the common fisheries policy (CFP) seeks to guarantee the proper conservation and management of marine biological resources, and to ensure that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term and managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and contributing to food security;
- Q. whereas the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) includes provisions to support decarbonisation, innovation and social sustainability in the fisheries sector, but its effective contribution depends on equitable access, reduced administrative burdens and full alignment with the objectives of a just and inclusive transition;
- R. whereas, in principle, improvements in safety and energy efficiency can be supported by EU funds under the EMFAF and in accordance with CFP rules; whereas, however, less restrictive conditions must be considered to ensure that the Member States and regions are able to meet the decarbonisation and modernisation needs of their fishing fleets, while avoiding overcapacity or overfishing at the level of individual segments or the entire national fleet;

- S. whereas the European Court of Auditors stated that ‘the EMFAF should not be used to fund actions increasing the fishing capacity of a vessel’¹⁷;
- T. whereas the implementation should respect the huge regional diversity of the EU fishing fleet and must not take a one-size-fits-all approach, especially in the outermost regions;
- U. whereas the outermost regions face specific constraints, such as remoteness, insularity, small markets and limited connectivity, which must be fully considered in the implementation of fisheries policies, including through adapted eligibility criteria under the EMFAF and flexibility in capacity and fleet renewal rules;
- V. whereas innovative fishing gear and techniques can play a key role in enhancing environmental sustainability and operational efficiency, and reducing fuel consumption, and needs to be supported through targeted public and private investment, knowledge sharing and faster evaluation processes to enable wider deployment;
- W. whereas innovative fishing gear has to progress from the prototype phase to the demonstration phase so that its efficiency and effectiveness can be tested under real use conditions, with the support of the EMFAF;
- X. whereas some current fishing techniques are highly fuel-intensive, generating considerable costs for the sector and resulting in a particularly high carbon footprint;
- Y. whereas the way some fishing techniques are applied has a variable impact on ocean carbon sequestration and, depending on several factors such as the type of fishery, may also be considered by science as sustainable and compatible with achieving seabed conservation objectives;
- Z. whereas it is crucial to support and invest in research and development into alternative engines and fuels and their effective use, improvements in vessels’ energy performance through retrofitting or innovative naval architecture, and the development of new sustainable fishing gear and methods, as well as technologies that reduce bycatch, improve fuel efficiency and minimise seabed disturbance, in order to support a just and science-based transition towards sustainable fisheries and to reach the objectives of EU fisheries legislation;
- AA. whereas the need to modernise, decarbonise and ensure a just energy transition also presents an opportunity to improve working

¹⁷ European Court of Auditors, ‘Marine environment – EU protection is wide but not deep’, Publications Office, 2020, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2865/134960>.

and living conditions on board, which is essential to ensure the well-being of fishers, attract new generations to the sector and make the fisheries profession more inclusive, especially for women and young people;

- AB. whereas a successful just transition of the fisheries sector requires inclusive governance based on scientific evidence and the active involvement of relevant stakeholders, including fishers, coastal communities, researchers and regional authorities;
- AC. whereas sustainable inland and marine aquaculture, shellfish and algae farming can contribute to a broader decarbonisation of the EU aquatic food sector and reduce the carbon footprint of imports;

Decarbonisation and energy transition

1. Stresses that achieving climate neutrality by 2050, in line with the European Green Deal objectives, EU legislation and the UN Paris Agreement, requires a structured, inclusive and just transition across all EU fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
2. Underlines that this transition must contribute meaningfully to the EU's climate targets without undermining the resilience or social and economic stability of fishing communities while ensuring the protection of their livelihoods, in compliance with the three pillars of sustainable development;
3. Stresses the need for a realistic and phased decarbonisation roadmap, based on the best available scientific knowledge and data, aligning technological developments, logistical improvements, the availability of alternative fuels and legislative timelines to ensure feasible and effective implementation across all fleet segments;
4. Calls for coordinated and long-term policy frameworks, such as the priorities outlined in the Commission communication of 5 June 2025 entitled 'European Ocean Pact' (COM(2025)0281), to decarbonise fisheries and aquaculture and ensure that no fleet segment or region is left behind;
5. Acknowledges that decarbonisation and the energy transition present a significant challenge for the fisheries sector, in particular for smaller operators with limited financial and technical capacity; recalls that achieving an inclusive and just transition requires removing structural barriers to access, including high entry costs, lack of training and insufficient port infrastructure; stresses that a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable given the diversity of fleets, regions and socio-economic contexts across the EU; recalls that the small-scale coastal fleet accounted for 76 % of the active EU fleet in 2021, and for almost the entire fleet in the outermost regions of the EU;

6. Stresses that there are significant constraints and obstacles to investment in modernisation, energy efficiency and sustainability within the EU fleet; emphasises, therefore, that consideration must be given not only to modernisation, but also to the possibilities of vessel renewal, considering the fleet's high average age of 31,5 years, in order to achieve the EU's decarbonisation objectives;
7. Proposes, therefore, to promote the stimulation of renewal schemes in cooperation with private actors, with the support of national and EU funding, to facilitate fleet renewal with more modern, safe and environmentally friendly vessels, building attractiveness to better achieve generational renewal and to build trust among the fishing industry, public institutions, authorities and investors;
8. Regrets that the current framework under the CFP and the EMFAF severely restricts the possibilities for public support, which is also deterring private investment in vessel renewal, preventing the necessary developments to decarbonise the EU fishing fleet; calls therefore for changes to be made to the current legislative framework; regrets the fact that current financial incentives are insufficient to meet the sector's needs, and maintains that new mechanisms to provide financial leverage need to be developed and brought into play;
9. Calls on the Commission to identify and establish additional and sufficient funding instruments beyond the EMFAF, including innovative financing models, to support the sector's massive investment needs for decarbonisation and the energy transition;
10. Recommends that the Commission support research into vessel design, including innovations beyond propulsion systems, such as improved hull hydrodynamics, lightweight composite materials and the replacement of hydraulic-mechanical systems with electric drives;
11. Notes the possibility for the Member States, when technical solutions and sufficient financial support become available, to consider including decarbonisation efforts in the criteria for the allocation of fishing quotas to operators, in line with Article 17 of the CFP;
12. Underlines that the energy transition must be inclusive and accessible to all segments of the sector and therefore needs to be fully addressed in the development of EU policy, in particular for small-scale and artisanal fishers, and supported by public investment, training and knowledge transfer;
13. Recognises that, at present, no single propulsion or fuel technology offers a definitive solution for the decarbonisation and energy transition of the fisheries sector, owing to the wide diversity of vessel types, operational profiles and regional diversity at scale;

14. Draws attention to the fact that a one-size-fits-all approach will not be appropriate as new technologies, such as alternative fuel solutions, will not be able to meet the needs of all fleets; emphasises the need to assess the energy situation of fishing vessels in order to maximise their efficiency and that the needs of individual fleets will need to be taken into consideration;
15. Highlights the need to provide appropriate support and investments to avoid rising fuel costs and stresses that, until clean propulsion technologies or alternative energy sources are available on a commercial scale and the legislative framework is adapted to their implementation, no EU-level rules on fuel taxation should be introduced for the EU fishing fleet, as such measures would exacerbate the socio-economic challenges already faced by fishing companies due to high energy prices and inflation;
16. Emphasises that a change of propulsion systems necessarily entails, in addition to the adaptation of vessels, major changes to port infrastructure and facilities;
17. Calls on the Commission, in conjunction with the Member States, to consider schemes that better facilitate and support investments in clean energy, adapted to local realities and needs, to promote the energy transition and ensure a just transition towards the decarbonisation and energy transition of the fleet;
18. Stresses that modernisation, decarbonisation and energy transition measures must reflect the need for tailored and accessible support schemes to ensure the environmental and economic viability of the fleet; underlines that it is essential for EU-funding, such as the EMFAF, together with State aid and private funds, to finance the necessary investments in ports, energy infrastructures and vessels, from design to delivery, in order to ensure needed space for decarbonisation and the energy transition, to increase social tonnage of vessels, with adequate working and resting areas for crew, and adequate crew training, as well as contributing to the sustainable exploitation of marine resources;
19. Highlights that small-scale and artisanal fisheries generally operate with lower environmental and carbon impacts and therefore, depending on the region, play an essential role in the ecological and social fabric of those regions; calls on the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States, to establish and implement support mechanisms for small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries that make it possible to tackle the specific problems faced by this part of the sector;
20. Emphasises that financing needs require an in-depth study by the Commission and solutions that also include savings products for European citizens and specialist banks, such as maritime banks, to

offer financing with the support of a European guarantee for the financial products concerned and support from the European Investment Bank;

21. Calls for the full implementation of the CFP in order to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture activities are managed in a fair way, generate socio-economic benefits, contribute to the availability of food products and minimise the impact of their activities on habitats and marine ecosystems, while restoring and maintaining populations of harvested species above levels that produce maximum sustainable yield; considers that it must be applied taking into account the specific characteristics of the various sea basins; underlines the importance of fully mobilising the EMFAF in support of CFP implementation and the energy transition of the fleet; regrets that the CFP and the EMFAF impose strict capacity limits based on tonnage, restricting the installation of new propulsion systems and fuel storage, and hinder improvements in safety, working conditions and basic comfort for fishers;
22. Recalls that the ongoing evaluation of the CFP, and its possible review, should assess and take into consideration the EU fleet's situation and necessary improvements; highlights that it is the responsibility of the Member States to manage their national capacity ceilings, as provided for under the CFP; points out that, for the fishing sector, the application of these limits together with the restrictive approach of Member States has erected barriers to the decarbonisation and energy transition of the fleet; emphasises the importance of support through the CFP and the EMFAF to reach a sustainable EU fishing fleet in its three dimensions, backed by adequate and necessary funding in the future multiannual financial framework;
23. Welcomes the fact that the current EMFAF introduces the possibility to contribute to improving working, living and safety conditions on EU vessels, without increasing their fishing capacity, with particular attention paid to in-shore and small-scale coastal fishing vessels; stresses that the EMFAF contributes to the sustainability of fisheries and the blue economy, contributing to the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goal 14; expresses concerns, however, that these possibilities have not been widely used by Member States and believes that overly restrictive rules have created obstacles in this regard;
24. Takes the view that reducing dependence on fossil fuels should not make the EU dependent on non-EU countries for the development, construction and modernisation of the EU fleet; points out that the EU's strategic autonomy must be central to all policies, including decarbonisation, the energy transition and fleet modernisation, in particular as part of the future maritime industrial strategy;

25. Calls for the maritime industrial strategy to include the fishing fleet within its objective of supporting the blue economy and securing or regaining Europe's global leadership in maritime technologies;
26. Emphasises that, with a view to finding specific, realistic ways of modernising and decarbonising the fleet, a comprehensive approach is necessary across the entire maritime value chain (including shipowners, ports, energy suppliers, shipyards, design consultancies, equipment suppliers, classification companies, financiers, researchers, etc.) and requires collaboration via initiatives and programmes fostering zero emission vessels and port infrastructure;
27. Expresses, in this regard, the importance of measures to stimulate demand for sustainable maritime fuels, such as using EU policy instruments and targets, and of incentivising and facilitating the deployment of necessary infrastructure;
28. Welcomes, in that regard, the work of the Energy Transition Partnership for EU fisheries and aquaculture, launched by the Commission in 2023, which is intended to serve as a collaborative platform designed to accelerate the energy transition in the EU fisheries and aquaculture sectors; highlights the importance of collaboration and dialogue under this partnership, but emphasises that it must lead to concrete improvements in the conditions needed for decarbonisation in order for targets to be reached;
29. Draws attention to the need to boost the sector's competitiveness and support its sustainable transition, providing a sustainable future for businesses and coastal communities, by establishing a new strategic pact between the EU and the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
30. Stresses the need to provide incentives for applied research and technological innovation in the area of the circular economy within the fisheries sector, including on fishing gear, by promoting pilot initiatives and territorial projects that foster synergies between undertakings in the fisheries sector, fisheries local action groups, waste treatment operators, recycling companies and other economic actors, with the aim of increasing resource efficiency, improving the sector's competitiveness and generating new local employment opportunities;
31. Stresses that the geographical remoteness, insularity and small size of the outermost regions require a differentiated approach to the decarbonisation of their fishing sectors, considering the difficulty their fleets have in complying with the decarbonisation and modernisation process that the technological and sustainable transition entails; underlines that previous funding instruments such as the programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity for fisheries took into account the specific characteristics

of these regions, recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; highlights, going forward, that this must be fully considered when designing and implementing funding instruments, regulatory frameworks and innovation strategies;

32. Notes that the fishing fleets of the outermost regions are predominantly small-scale and ageing, and face increasing safety risks and deteriorating working and living conditions; notes, furthermore, that their structural conditions and additional costs due to remoteness are being further aggravated by the increasing impact of extreme weather conditions; underlines that this situation restricts access to resources and threatens food security and the local economies of these territories;
33. Calls for the adaption of eligibility criteria and investment priorities under the EMFAF and other EU instruments to reflect the structural constraints and environmental vulnerabilities of the outermost regions, ensuring that the energy transition does not exacerbate inequalities or hinder the socio-economic sustainability of these territories;
34. Stresses that small-scale coastal fishing, particularly in island and outermost regions, is a cornerstone for food security, and for the economic, social and cultural fabric of many local communities where access to fresh and healthy protein sources is closely linked to the viability of local fishing activity; calls on the Commission to ensure that environmental objectives are fully aligned with the economic sustainability of small-scale coastal fisheries;
35. Calls for enhanced cooperation with non-EU countries operating in the same maritime regions and sea basins, notably within the framework of regional fisheries management organisations, where appropriate and already established, to exchange best practice, coordinate investment, and establish common objectives for the decarbonisation, energy transition and environmental sustainability of fisheries to ensure that common rules are applied, while complying with the principle of reciprocity and fair conditions for all operators;
36. Notes that long-distance fleets operating in developing countries and on the high seas face the insurmountable obstacle that infrastructures such as ports, shipyards and storage centres for new fuels and propulsion systems in those countries are not prepared or suitable to meet the needs of decarbonised vessels;
37. Suggests that the Commission review the carbon and environmental impacts of all fisheries and aquaculture imports in order to prevent an unlevel playing field with global competitors that are not subject

to similarly stringent regulatory frameworks or equivalent environmental, health and social standards;

Modernisation

38. Stresses that the modernisation of the EU fishing fleet is a key component of the transition towards a more sustainable and resilient sector and should address both technological and human challenges, ensuring that energy efficiency, digital capacity and operational safety are pursued hand in hand with the improvement of working conditions on board;
39. Reiterates that increased gross tonnage or reconfigured vessel design to accommodate alternative propulsion systems or safety improvements should not be seen as contributing to an increased fishing capacity, and therefore, not contributing to the risk of overfishing; stresses that the decoupling of fishing capacity and gross tonnage for decarbonisation, the energy transition or safety improvements is necessary for a fair and evidence-based policy framework;
40. Calls for public support to prioritise vessel upgrades that deliver both environmental gains and social progress and enhanced capacity for proper on-board conservation of catches, including cold storage and preservation systems, within national capacity ceilings;
41. Calls on the Member States to use EU and national financial support to prioritise modernisation strategies that strengthen the long-term sustainability of fishing enterprises, promote local value chains and ensure that fishers can continue to operate under fair, predictable and economically viable conditions;
42. Underlines its view that generational renewal can go hand in hand with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the need to ensure a digital transition within the blue economy; notes that this requires not only attracting young people to the fishing sector but also ensuring the improvement in working and living conditions on board, providing better accommodation and facilities to contribute to crew wellbeing, ensuring proper training and information, and offering attractive career prospects and the opportunity to improve their personal situation – particularly by providing fair and stable income opportunities and ensuring sustainability;
43. Underlines that young generations of fishers contribute to the cohesion of their local communities, especially in the most isolated coastal regions and those with fewer job opportunities, enabling them to contribute to economic, social and environmental improvements within the sector; highlights, also, the need to enhance the role of women in this sector through increased mobility and employment opportunities throughout the EU, without difficulties or restrictions regarding recognition of their skills and

training; notes that this would help improve the industry's image and make it more attractive;

44. Considers that generational renewal must not lead to a clash between generations, and should include fishers of all ages to ensure a balanced approach to the ecological and digital transition in order to ensure that the legacy of experience is not lost;
45. Highlights the strategic role of digitalisation in the modernisation, decarbonisation and energy transition of the fishing fleet, which will also improve operational efficiency, safety at sea and the working conditions of fishers; underlines that support of digital tools and systems that enhance navigation, weather forecasting, communication and traceability, particularly in small-scale fleets, will also support the reduction of fuel costs and contribute to a more economically viable decarbonisation process; stresses that the digital transition must go hand in hand with adequate training, capacity-building and the design of inclusive technologies, taking into account the diversity of users and ensuring that digital solutions contribute to better working environments and equitably distribute technological benefits across the sector;
46. Emphasises the need to carry out energy audits on fishing vessels via the EMFAF; insists that optimisation and retrofitting operations must be encouraged wherever possible in order to improve the energy efficiency of vessels and promote the use of technologies, in particular AI, to optimise fishing routes, so as to decarbonise fishing in a more affordable way;
47. Stresses the importance of improving the collection, accessibility and use of environmental, socio-economic and operational data in the fisheries sector, including through digital tools and participatory monitoring approaches; underlines that effective and timely data are essential for science-based decision-making and for adapting policies to changing ecological and economic conditions; calls for closer integration between knowledge systems, including scientific research, traditional ecological knowledge and real-time operational data, in order to support more responsive, equitable and sustainable fisheries governance;
48. Calls for the allocation of dedicated funding, in addition to decarbonisation and energy transition efforts, to support vessel adaptations that meet minimum standards for worker welfare – in line with occupational health and safety requirements and international maritime labour conventions such as the International Labour Organization Convention of 2007 on work in fishing – including access to potable water, safe accommodation, adequate nutrition, protection against fatigue and medical care; considers that these improvements are essential to ensure dignity at work, prevent accidents and promote the social sustainability of the sector;

49. Emphasises that modernisation, decarbonisation and the energy transition should also contribute to the economic viability, employment opportunities and competitiveness of the EU fisheries sector and must not compromise the profitability of the sector or the EU's strategic food autonomy;
50. Underlines that investments in vessel adaptation, digital tools and on-board fishing products preservation capabilities can help reduce operational costs and emissions, improve product quality and enhance the market value of catches, provided that efforts to meet established targets are supported by science-based and coordinated governance across regions, and by public and private funding and well-enforced market instruments;
51. Reiterates that the modernisation, decarbonisation and energy transition of fisheries must be seen as part of a broader strategy for coastal and maritime development, including marine spatial planning, biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation and adaptation, and the deployment of renewable energy; stresses that a balanced and coordinated approach is needed to avoid marginalising fishing communities; highlights the potential for positive synergies between sustainable fisheries, ocean conservation, clean energy and local development when managed through holistic, inclusive, science-based and territorially adapted frameworks;
52. Points out that a recent Parliament workshop report¹⁸ suggests that future support instruments for fisheries should consider less restrictive conditions for support for the first acquisition of a fishing vessel, for engine renewal or replacement and for vessel improvements requiring additional tonnage, while at the same time applying restrictions to avoid overcapacity or overfishing at the level of individual fleet segments or the entire national fleet; stresses that, at the same time, individual fishing vessels should be enabled to adapt to economic, environmental and social needs;
53. Calls, therefore, for a revision of the eligibility provisions currently set out in Articles 13, 17, 18 and 19 of the EMFAF in order to allow public support for vessel upgrades or replacements strictly aimed at improving safety, working and living conditions, energy efficiency and the adoption of sustainable fishing techniques; underlines that such support should not result in increased fishing capacity or effort, and should be contingent on compliance with high environmental and social standards, while ensuring economic viability and generational renewal, in particular in outermost regions and coastal

¹⁸ Parliament, 'Workshop on the future of the EU fishing fleet – First assessment of Member States' EMFAF programmes for 2021-27', Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, 19 November 2024.

areas where fleet assessments show that the fishing effort is in balance with the available resources;

54. Insists on the need for a mid-term review of the EMFAF and for a targeted review of the CFP rules and relevant guidelines, with a view to accommodating for the space and design requirements of alternative fuel storage, energy and propulsion systems and to making the framework for State aid more flexible when it comes to the construction and modernisation of vessels; calls for a dedicated emergency fund to be established to accelerate fleet renewal, thus enabling a realistic transition to clean energy technologies;
55. Underlines the urgent need to address the lack of covered working areas, sanitary facilities, adequate resting spaces and safety equipment that currently affects many small-scale and artisanal vessels; notes that current EU definitions of fishing capacity do not differentiate between operational areas of the vessel and those dedicated to improving social and safety conditions on board; stresses that this creates a disincentive to invest in essential upgrades such as sheltered working spaces, resting areas and sanitation facilities, which are key to ensuring decent working and living conditions; calls on the Commission to find a solution that would balance the needs of fishing workers with the need to ensure that the EU fleet's fishing capacity is not increased, in particular by excluding 'social and safety' related tonnage from the calculation of fishing capacity;
56. Calls on the Commission, for this purpose, and while maintaining a framework and limits that prevent overfishing, to carry out an in-depth review of the indicators that measure fishing capacity and the impact of fishing;
57. Stresses that the fisheries sector's energy transition requires significant investment, which is not always feasible for small businesses relying solely on ordinary resources; calls on the Commission to make decarbonisation a means of supporting the viability of coastal fishing in the EU and to consider raising, on a temporary and tailored basis, the ceiling for de minimis aid in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, with a view to supporting the adoption of low-emission technologies, sustainable fleet renewal and/or adaptation and energy efficiency throughout the supply chain, to be carried out in conjunction with professionals in this area of the fleet, with a view to stimulating investment;

Development and deployment of fishing gear

58. Highlights that innovation in fishing gear and techniques should be based on the best available scientific evidence and guided by clear environmental objectives, contributing to improved selectivity, reduced bycatch or incidental catches, minimised risks of lost and

abandoned fishing gear, optimised vessel routes, economic benefits and lower impact on marine habitats; underlines the need for targeted public and private investment and regulatory support to promote the development, testing and scaling up of fishing gear that enhances both ecological outcomes and the operational viability of sustainable fleets;

59. Calls on the Commission to support innovation through investments in increasing the selectivity of fishing gear, enhancements to port infrastructure, and upgrades to fishing vessels aimed at improving health, safety and working conditions, increasing energy efficiency, lowering emissions and enhancing the quality of catches;
60. Recalls the need to follow the precautionary principle when developing and deploying innovative fishing gear and techniques; emphasises that it is essential to promote an ecosystem-based approach when developing and deploying innovative fishing gear and technologies in order to reduce bycatch, minimise incidental catches, lower seabed impact and improve fuel efficiency; highlights that pilot projects and experimental fisheries should remain limited in duration and number of vessels, to test new gear and propulsion technologies and to ensure that no large-scale deployment occurs until their environmental, social and economic impacts have been scientifically, independently and fully assessed, and they have been demonstrated to be safe and sustainable;
61. Underlines the urgent need to invest in and deploy fishing technologies that reduce unwanted catches, improve selectivity and minimise ecosystem disturbance; stresses that technological transitions in the sector need to be further facilitated in a more time efficient way and guided by technology neutrality and robust scientific evidence, including all aspects of sustainability; calls for the decision-making processes on gear approval, funding eligibility and regulatory flexibility to be based on the best available science, aligned with all relevant policies and regulations and to contribute to all three pillars of sustainability;
62. Calls on the Commission to take account of the specific characteristics of each sea basin and regional differences, to step up the regionalisation and adaptation of multiannual management plans in line with these selectivity objectives and to prioritise the use of gear that has less impact on ecosystems, in close collaboration with advisory committees and engaging with local fleets, taking into account socio-economic effects and climate change;
63. Stresses the need to have specific budgetary lines to finance research into decarbonisation and the energy transition within the future multiannual financial framework, for example under the European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe;

64. Emphasises that the extent to which scientific innovations can be transferred to fishers can be hampered by the risk of loss of income for professionals during experimental phases; calls on the Commission to consider financial support to mitigate this risk and speed up the deployment of more selective, lower-impact fishing gear;
65. Recognises the growing contribution of fishers to climate action and environmental protection through activities such as the collection of marine litter, including lost or abandoned fishing gear; stresses that this role should be encouraged and supported through targeted incentives, adequate port infrastructure and the creation of complementary income streams linked to circular economy objectives; underlines that promoting the ecological contribution of fishers helps to strengthen the social acceptability of the profession, reinforces their role as guardians of the sea and contributes to broader sustainability and marine restoration goals;
66. Calls on the Commission to ensure the inclusive involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including small-scale fishers, producer organisations and coastal communities, in the design, development and assessment of innovative fishing gear, as opposed to adopting a one-size-fits-all approach; underlines that participatory governance strengthens the legitimacy, practicality and acceptance of rules, while allowing the incorporation of local ecological knowledge and lived experience;
67. Calls for public policies and funding instruments to prioritise support for fishers and communities that adopt sustainable gear and practises that contribute to biodiversity preservation and long-term resource stability; underlines that recognising and supporting sustainable techniques and an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries is essential for ensuring the resilience of coastal communities, preserving traditional knowledge and promoting a fair and inclusive transition in the sector;
68. Calls for the integration of AI-driven detection technology systems to support selective fishing practices, improve catch information and reduce unwanted catches; believes that combining smart technologies with innovative gear can enhance selectivity and environmental performance;
69. Stresses that the management of fishing gear and techniques should be grounded in inclusive and adaptive governance frameworks that reflect the diversity of fleets, sea basins and fishing practises across the EU, and points out the importance of ensuring that this regulatory framework is clear, predictable and with long-term political objectives; highlights the need to strengthen cooperation between scientists, fishers and authorities in the development, testing and evaluation of new gear, fostering mutual trust and

shared responsibility for sustainable outcomes; calls for time efficient decision-making processes that are transparent, participatory and capable of integrating evolving socio-ecological realities on the ground;

70. Highlights the need to improve the measurement of fishing effort through management tools that are not solely based on days at sea, and to start considering the actual time during which the gear is used for catching – ‘immersion time’ or ‘active fishing’; calls, therefore, for a review, where appropriate, of the definitions of ‘fishing activities’ in EU legislation so that they better reflect the differing operational characteristics of fishing gear and help to make the management of fishing effort more equitable and effective;
71. Encourages pilot projects and emphasises their importance both as innovation demonstrators and as stepping stones towards the attainment of the level of technological maturity that is needed to obtain needed approvals and be ready for both commercialisation and deployment on a larger scale; calls for the most effective pilot projects to be monitored to avoid the duplication of projects submitted or prevent the failure of projects that are nevertheless effective;
72. Points out that fishers may experience losses in catches and income when taking part in pilot projects; emphasises that the application of EMFAF rules to pilot projects is restricting some experimentation in practice; calls on the Commission, the Member States and regional authorities to develop the use of ‘living labs’ to reconcile innovation with local initiatives to allow for practical testing in order to ensure that new innovations work in practice and do not impose unnecessary burdens on the sector;
73. Calls for the development of a common EU labelling and traceability framework that enables consumers and buyers to identify fishery products that comply with high environmental, sanitary and social standards;
74. Underlines that the success of the ecological and digital transitions in the fisheries sector, including its decarbonisation and energy transition, depends on the availability of skilled and well-trained workers; calls for the improved use of existing EU programmes, such as Erasmus+, the European Social Fund Plus and the EMFAF, to support both formal and informal training in occupational safety, digital tools, environmental awareness and sustainable fishing techniques; highlights the importance of recognising and financing the vocational training required to implement and use new technologies and engines, and the practical skills acquired through experience and facilitating the intergenerational transmission of knowledge; stresses that training should be continuous, inclusive and

tailored to the evolving needs of fishers and coastal communities, particularly in remote and structurally disadvantaged areas;

75. Stresses the potential of the aquaculture, shellfish and algae farming sectors to lower the carbon footprint of our food system; welcomes increasingly frequent low-carbon practises, such as sustainable feed and the use of decarbonised barges, and calls, therefore, for such technologies to be developed on a larger scale on farms where this is appropriate; underlines that future developments should prioritise sustainable aquaculture producers who avoid causing harm to marine biodiversity while generating socio-economic benefits for coastal communities;
76. Is of the opinion that the establishment of a common aquaculture policy on the same footing as the CFP, with the adoption of quantified targets for the development of aquaculture, can adequately contribute to a well-considered decarbonation and energy transition process for the EU blue economy;
77. Highlights the importance of a clear and coherent legal framework with measurable sustainability criteria and indicators to guide and track the development of aquaculture in the EU, including better maritime spatial planning; calls, therefore, for increased investment and policies to support sustainable marine and inland aquaculture, shellfish and algae farming as an integral part of the European strategy for a low-emission blue economy and to enhance the resilience of aquaculture to climate change impacts;

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78. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.