



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0314

The role of social, economic and environmental standards in safeguarding fair competition for all aquatic food products and improving food security

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2026 on the role of social, economic and environmental standards in safeguarding fair competition for all aquatic food products and improving food security (2025/2010(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy¹ (CFP),
- 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 Fund² (EMFAF),
- 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 the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control³ (Fisheries Control Regulation),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC)

¹ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>.

² OJ L 247, 13.7.2021, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1139/oj>.

³ OJ L, 2023/2842, 20.12.2023, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2842/oj>.

No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000⁴,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing⁵,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999 (IUU Regulation)⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2023 on the small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2024 on the impact of illegal fishing on food security – the role of the European Union⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2024 on the implementation of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation in fisheries and aquaculture – Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2024 on the state of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 October 2023 on the implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food

⁴ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1379/oj>.

⁵ OJ L 316, 14.11.2012, p. 34, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/1026/oj>.

⁶ OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1005/oj>.

⁷ OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 150.

⁸ OJ C, C/2024/5732, 17.10.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5732/oj>.

⁹ OJ C, C/2024/5736, 17.10.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5736/oj>.

¹⁰ OJ C, C/2024/5734, 17.10.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5734/oj>.

¹¹ OJ C, C/2024/2652, 29.4.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/2652/oj>.

system¹²,

- 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 the Commission communication of 12 May 2021 entitled 'Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030' (COM(2021)0236),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 June 2025 entitled 'The European Ocean Pact' (COM(2025)0281),
- having regard to Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 May 2022 entitled 'Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions' (COM(2022)0198) and its resolution of 13 June 2023 on the assessment of the new Commission communication on outermost regions¹⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 19 February 2025 entitled 'A Vision for Agriculture and Food – Shaping together an attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations' (COM(2025)0075),
- having regard to the Commission foresight study of 7 January 2025 entitled 'Fishers of the Future',
- having regard to European Court of Auditors special report 20/2022 of 26 September 2022 entitled 'EU action to combat illegal fishing – Control systems in place but weakened by uneven checks and sanctions by Member States',
- having regard to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, the 11 ILO fundamental instruments and ILO Convention 188 of 2007 on Work in Fishing,
- having regard to the recommendation to the Commission of the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) of December 2021 on achieving greater sustainability standards of imported aquaculture products and a level playing field,

¹² OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.

¹³ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 67.

¹⁴ OJ C, C/2024/480, 23.1.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/480/oj>.

- having regard to the AAC recommendation to the Commission of July 2019 on the import of subsidized portion-sized rainbow trout from Turkey,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A10-0205/2026),
- A. whereas the main objectives of the EU fisheries and ocean policy are to ensure that fishing and ocean use are environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible; whereas strong governance frameworks and high social, economic and environmental standards have been established to achieve these objectives;
 - B. whereas fisheries and aquaculture are vital for food supply and food security; whereas the EU is highly dependent on aquatic food imports (around 70 %), this dependency has continued to increase in recent years, and measures must be urgently implemented to reduce it, with a view to increasing and securing the EU's food sovereignty, reducing food waste, as well as fostering a thriving European fisheries and aquaculture sector;
 - 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, and contribute to the availability of food supplies; whereas, however, while it incorporates environmental goals such as maintaining fish populations above levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield, it often falls short of achieving its desired outcomes and lacks equivalent targets for the social and economic objectives of the fishing sector, highlighting the need to improve its implementation and assess the need for its revision;
 - D. whereas Article 39 TFEU requires that the CFP must, among other things, ensure a fair standard of living for the fishing community and assure the availability of food supplies; whereas the EU has some of the most sustainable fisheries in the world thanks to the CFP's efforts to reduce overfishing and promote sector sustainability; whereas despite this, EU aquaculture production has stagnated since 2000, resulting in fewer jobs in the sector and a decline in the EU's self-sufficiency rate in aquatic products;
 - E. whereas among the main objectives of the European Ocean Pact are to make sure that fisheries and aquaculture, including the processing sector, improve their competitiveness and resilience and ensure stable supply for the EU market, while maintaining an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, and to promote at global level the EU's objectives of strengthening the sustainability of

imports and ensuring a level playing field;

- F. whereas generational renewal within the fisheries and aquaculture sector is vital for securing the strategic autonomy of the EU and for recognising that the adoption of innovative fishing gear and the digitalisation of fishing practices are crucial to attracting younger generations to the sector, ensuring a sustainable future for both the fishing and aquaculture sectors;
- G. whereas current fisheries legislation does not sufficiently address cross-cutting goals such as employment, economic viability, job security and workers' welfare; whereas decent working conditions, future prospects and effective social protection are essential to attracting a new generation of fishers;
- H. whereas the objectives of ensuring food supply, food security and a fair standard of living should play a more prominent role in the decision-making process; whereas it is therefore essential to incorporate specific social and economic indicators and objectives into the CFP regulatory framework;
- I. whereas aquatic food products, especially most wild-caught fish, are a source of high-quality protein with a low environmental footprint compared to many other protein sources; whereas particularly in the case of shellfish and seaweed farming the carbon footprint is especially low as they provide additional environmental benefits such as carbon capture and water purification;
- J. whereas in 2023 the EU fishing fleet numbered 70 280 vessels, of which 53 260 were still active in 2025; whereas engaged crew amounted to 119 479 fishers, corresponding to 73 974 full-time equivalents, marking a decline of around 2 % compared with 2022; whereas in 2023 the fleet landed 3,39 million tonnes of seafood valued at EUR 6,1 billion, representing a decrease of 2,6 % in volume and 12-13 % in value compared to the previous year; whereas revenue in 2023 fell to EUR 6,47 billion (a decrease of 10,6 %) and net profit decreased sharply to EUR 59 million, down 61 % from 2022, resulting in a net profit margin of just 0,9 %; whereas these figures highlight a loss of structural, economic and strategic capacity, as well as fishing opportunities and fishing grounds, which must be urgently addressed to ensure the EU's food sovereignty and the viability of the sector¹⁵;
- K. whereas aquatic food producers, including small-scale, artisanal fishers and shellfish gatherers and aquaculture producers and related sectors play a vital role for the society and for the communities they support;

¹⁵ The 2025 annual economic report on the EU fishing fleet (STECF 25-03 & 25-07), Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.

- L. whereas the 2024 Eurobarometer survey showed a decline in the consumption of aquatic food in the EU, which is mainly attributed to rising prices, but is also driven by limited availability of fresh or high-quality fish products and concerns over the country of origin and sustainability, among other factors, which tend to influence consumers' choices and lead them to opt for cheaper, unhealthier and less nutritious food alternatives;
- M. whereas the lack of a level playing field with non-EU countries sharing the same sea basin can distort competition and environmental sustainability in those regions;
- N. whereas administrative procedures, such as licensing, spatial planning and other obligations in Member States and the EU, particularly on islands and in outermost regions, are generally stricter compared to certain non-EU countries that have trade relations with the EU and export products to the EU market;
- O. whereas illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which may account for up to 19 % of global catches¹⁶, presents serious threats to marine ecosystems, fish stocks and the livelihoods of fishing communities, thereby jeopardising food security and the sustainability of the sector and its professionals; whereas the EU has adopted a zero-tolerance approach to IUU fishing, both within its own waters and in non-EU countries; whereas this approach should guide the EU in relation to the requirements set out in the sustainable development chapters of its new generation of free trade agreements;
- P. whereas women constitute approximately a quarter of the aquaculture workforce and around half of the workforce in the fish processing industry; whereas they also play a vital role in small-scale fisheries, contributing significantly to tasks such as fishing gear preparation and maintenance, transporting fish to auctions, sales, administration and logistics;
- Q. whereas coastal communities, islands, and the outermost regions are more vulnerable to unfair competition and the consequences of climate change, which significantly jeopardise natural resources, fishing activity, and the competitiveness, as well as future, of the sector, threaten aquaculture and EU food security, and adversely affect local economies and livelihoods;

Strategic importance of fisheries and aquaculture

1. Stresses that fisheries and aquaculture are vital for food supply, sovereignty and security in the EU; regrets, once again, the

¹⁶ European Court of Auditors special report 20/2022 entitled 'EU action to combat illegal fishing – Control systems in place but weakened by uneven checks and sanctions by Member States'.

Commission's lack of prominence and ambition in relation to the contribution and potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in previous strategies, namely in the Farm to Fork Strategy and 'vision for agriculture and food'; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to redress this situation in its future 'vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture';

2. Highlights the critical role of the EU's fishing and aquaculture sectors, including the processing sector, as central elements of a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous European food system, providing nutritious, healthy, high-quality and sustainable aquatic food – produced in line with stringent standards on traceability – to meet EU food security needs, contribute to healthier diets and competitiveness vis-à-vis non-EU country producers; stresses in particular the important role played by producers of fish, shellfish and other aquatic food, including small-scale fisheries, in providing a source of fresh short-chain food to communities in coastal, island, remote and outermost regions; calls on the EU to support domestic production of aquatic food products in order to contribute to the objective of food sovereignty;
3. Highlights the need to raise awareness among EU citizens about the benefits of nutritious and sustainable European aquatic food, including short supply chains, and to promote responsible consumption of EU aquatic foods and reduce food waste, which also supports EU producers and local communities, as well as to contribute to protect marine biological resources for future generations;
4. Calls on the Commission and the Council, when formulating policies, to attach greater importance to the contribution of fisheries to food security by providing high-quality seafood products; recognises the efforts made by the fisheries and aquaculture sector during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or during the current Russian aggression against Ukraine, and others, as well as its contribution to the economic and social structure, and the cultural, touristic and gastronomic heritage of Europe's coastal and island communities and outermost regions and their identity; calls on the Commission to assess the economic and social impact of the measures it intends to adopt for the sector and ensure that these measures do not inadvertently create unjustified barriers or undue advantage for imported products;

Regulatory framework, coherence and level playing field

5. Considers that the high social, economic and environmental standards, as well as the governance frameworks, adopted in the EU, and the sector's commitment to meeting them, are key factors contributing to the quality and sustainability of EU fishery and aquaculture products; insists on the need to use the evaluation and

possible future revision of the CFP, including the common market organisation (CMO), to identify potential improvements to the regulatory framework, and to promote simplification and the reduction in administrative burden, in order to support and strengthen EU production of aquatic food and achieve the CFP's main objectives;

6. Emphasises that the EU's high environmental, social and economic standards, coupled with a reduction in administrative burden, and legislative simplification, where possible and needed, are vital for bolstering the resilience and efficiency of European fisheries and aquaculture, such as shellfish farming supply chains, as well as for supporting vital employment opportunities in coastal communities that depend on fisheries, notably small-scale fishers, and for supporting local jobs and attracting investment in these sectors, making it possible to mitigate vulnerabilities to market shocks, including price volatility and supply shortages, while also ensuring a stable and profitable market for European aquatic food products;
7. Believes that equal consideration should be given to socio-economic factors and food supply availability alongside environmental sustainability criteria in the implementation of the CFP; emphasises that ensuring sustainable growth, fair competition and long-term food security and sovereignty requires a coherent alignment of fisheries, cohesion, social, education, trade, technology, science, development, health and environmental policies;
8. Calls on the Commission to assess other fisheries-related policies; stresses the importance of addressing challenges and administrative burdens arising from implementation at Member State level, while ensuring that EU rules are implemented in a proportionate and non-discriminatory manner across the EU, drawing inspiration from, for example, the 2023 common agricultural policy simplification package;

Allocation of fishing opportunities and sustainable resource management

9. Stresses that, according to Article 17 of the CFP Regulation, the Member States must use transparent and objective criteria, including those of an environmental, social and economic nature, when allocating fishing opportunities; believes it is important that Member States take into account their different fleet segments, including the small-scale fishing segment, when setting their criteria; further highlights the need to adopt multiannual total allowable catches (TACs) and allocation of quotas as a principle, both for EU-only and shared stocks, ensuring fair distribution that provides stability and predictability for the sector; stresses the need to better support the diversification of the fishing fleet and the economic resilience of coastal communities, especially on islands and in

outermost regions; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to set TACs in line with the best available scientific advice and Article 2 of the CFP Regulation; recalls the need to provide incentives to fishing vessels to use more selective fishing gear or use fishing techniques with reduced energy consumption or habitat impact;

10. Welcomes the Vademecum adopted by the Commission presenting best practices that Member States could use for allocating fishing opportunities in order to improve transparency, promote sustainable fishing, and highlight possibilities used by Member States to support different fleet segments, such as small-scale fisheries, as well as dedicated implementation dialogues; insists on the recommendations included in its resolution of 7 June 2022 on the implementation of Article 17 of the CFP Regulation¹⁷;

Transparency, labelling and consumer information

11. Notes that different standards on labelling between EU and non-EU products could place EU fisheries and aquaculture operators at a competitive disadvantage, and therefore requests that the Commission and the Member States, in the framework of the evaluation of the CMO Regulation, improve, streamline and propose enhanced consumer information and new mandatory labelling requirements for all fishery and aquaculture products, whether fresh or processed, covering the entire value chain, including the HORECA (hotel, restaurant and catering) sector, retail and wholesale; strongly believes that labelling requirements should apply equally to imported products in order to combat fraudulent labelling and IUU fishing while providing consumers with clearer, more precise, reliable and accessible information, in particular as regards sustainability, fishing areas of origin and fishing gear used, so as to unequivocally allow consumers to have more information about a product and distinguish EU and non-EU products;
12. Calls on the Commission to ensure that information, such as the designation of the species and its scientific name, the catch or farming location and production method, as well as all other mandatory information as defined in Article 35 of the CMO Regulation, is always clearly visible and made available to consumers; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to ensure that, where applicable under EU food information legislation, additional information, including nutritional information, as well as Omega-3 content, is also made available; calls for clear distinctions to be made between wild-caught and farmed seafood, as well as between seafood and plant-based products; considers that the use of the commercial designation of aquatic species should be prohibited for products that do not contain such species; invites the Commission to assess and

¹⁷ OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 62.

propose how information requirements on the origin of aquatic food products sold and served in the HORECA sector could be implemented; calls on the Commission to develop and standardise a digital system for product labelling;

13. Urges the Commission to draw up a European blue food action plan by the end of 2026 to promote the production, processing, marketing and consumption of aquatic food products, ensuring their meaningful inclusion in the EU's future food-related policies; notes that this plan should enhance innovation, improve food security, health and nutrition, and encourage circular economy practices throughout the blue food sector; considers that this plan should make the EU's fisheries and aquaculture sector more resilient and competitive, while promoting transparency and fair trading practices throughout the aquatic product value chain, in line with the EU's international trade commitments;
14. Calls on the Commission to promote EU products by supporting the creation of a clear and voluntary 'EU aquatic food product' label to be used by all kinds of producers to certify their products' origin, not limiting the possibility of other voluntary certifications; advocates, in this context, the launch of an EU-wide campaign in 2027 to raise awareness of the benefits and added value of sustainable aquatic food products from the EU, in line with the European Ocean Pact;

Import controls and enforcement mechanism

15. Considers it crucial to reinforce and harmonise Member States' import controls and actions to ensure the legality of fishery and aquaculture products placed on the EU market, notably by addressing the shortcomings and disparities observed in controls on imported products; considers it essential, in this regard, to ensure greater harmonisation in the application of customs rules, including in relation to sanctions and identical customs controls in all Member States, strictly in line with Article 9 of the IUU Regulation, to prevent operators from using points of entry with fewer controls to their advantage to import goods subject to lower standards; highlights the important changes introduced in the recently reviewed EU Fisheries Control Regulation, especially in digitalising the system; invites the Commission to report in a timely manner on the state of play and effectiveness of the CATCH IT implementation, mandatory from January 2026, and requests that particular attention be paid to outermost regions, which are more exposed to unfair competition and IUU fishing from neighbouring non-EU countries;
16. Calls on the Commission to develop the necessary instruments to support Member States in allocating adequate human, technical and financial resources, including by increasing the number of trained staff in fisheries inspectorates, customs authorities and port authorities, and to promote the CATCH certificate among non-EU

countries to encourage their adoption of similar control systems; welcomes, in this regard, the EU customs reform and the establishment of the new EU Customs Authority in Lille; highlights the importance of applying the same equitable socio-economic and environmental standards for imports of aquatic products and to prevent IUU products and products resulting from forced labour from entering the EU market; urges the Commission, in collaboration with the European Fisheries Control Agency and other relevant EU and national authorities, to enhance capabilities in preventing the import of illegal fishery products, in particular by providing information and support, including through the active use of the mutual assistance system and sharing detailed information on issues related to the application of the IUU Regulation;

Market protection and trade policy tools

17. Calls on the Council and the Commission to increase the effectiveness and impact of sanctions on Russia in order to definitively undermine Russia's ability to continue waging its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and threatening the security of other neighbouring countries; calls, in this regard, for enhanced controls on imports and to further restrict imports of all aquatic food, especially cod and Alaska pollock originating from Russia, including when reprocessed or repackaged in non-EU countries before entering the EU; points out that such imports are against objectives set out in European decisions or sanctions and risk flooding European markets, also putting additional pressure on the European fisheries industry;
18. Calls on the Commission, in the context of the implementation of the IUU Regulation, to assess, in a proportionate and non-discriminatory manner and in line with World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations, including the general exceptions under Article XX of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, whether current trade-related instruments, including the autonomous tariff quota (ATQ) regime under EU trade agreements, may affect the effectiveness of EU fisheries policy objectives, with a view to ensuring that these instruments do not undermine the EU's sustainability objectives, to guarantee that yellow card measures are not stagnated and that countries do not continue to benefit from ATQs while remaining non-compliant with the IUU Regulation, and to encourage prompt resolution; highlights that ATQs should only be used in the event of insufficient aquatic food supply for the EU market and provided that their use remains proportionate, the impact on the competitiveness of EU producers is taken into account and remains consistent with the objectives of the CFP, in order to ensure fair competition; calls for the EU to further promote rules-based international ocean governance by using ocean diplomacy to encourage non-EU countries benefiting from the ATQ regime to ratify key international fisheries agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the

Law of the Sea, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the Compliance Agreement of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in order to foster a level playing field and support sustainable practices;

Standards and level playing field in relations with non-EU countries

19. Calls on the Commission to address any gaps within the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) and EU trade agreements, whether already in force or under negotiation, and to modernise the obsolete customs union agreement, in order to guarantee a level playing field for the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector and to ensure that all products, including fresh and processed products, comply with equivalent standards to those established for the EU; stresses that aquatic products from non-EU countries should only be allowed market access if their domestic food safety, environmental, health and social requirements are demonstrated to be equivalent to EU standards in a non-discriminatory and scientifically sound manner, in accordance with WTO principles on non-discrimination and fair trade;
20. Calls on the Commission to support reciprocity of standards, including the introduction of mirror measures in trade agreements concluded by the EU, in order to ensure level playing field in the fisheries and aquatic food sector – particularly in outermost, island, and coastal regions – thereby safeguarding the competitiveness of the EU sector and fair conditions for EU fishers; urges the Commission to speed up the works on how to improve trade agreements, ensuring sustainability of imported fisheries and aquaculture products, especially those under the ATQ regime;
21. Calls on the Commission, alongside the Member States, to remain vigilant in ensuring that non-EU countries exporting fisheries and aquaculture products to the EU adhere to international standards, particularly those promoting decent working conditions; urges, furthermore, the timely implementation and rigorous enforcement of relevant regulations, including the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive¹⁸ and the Fisheries Control Regulation, to prevent the entry into the EU of products linked to a high risk of human rights abuses and/or IUU fishing, while, in line with WTO commitments, appropriately sanctioning businesses that violate these regulations and as a result threaten efforts to create a level playing field;

¹⁸ Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on corporate sustainability due diligence and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and Regulation (EU) 2023/2859 (OJ L, 2024/1760, 5.7.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1760/oj>).

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully implement Regulation (EU) 2024/3015 on the prohibition of products made with forced labour on the Union market¹⁹, in particular with regard to fishing and aquaculture products, and to promote the strengthening and harmonisation of import controls, enforcement regimes and sanctions across the Member States to ensure that products stemming from forced labour do not enter the EU market;
23. Emphasises the importance of strengthening traceability systems and notes that the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, as revised under the Omnibus package, should be implemented in a targeted, risk-based and proportionate manner;

Actions against IUU fishing

24. Calls on the EU to continue to lead by example by applying its zero-tolerance approach to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, in particular through dialogue with non-EU countries, using the IUU carding system and the leverage of the EU market; emphasises the need to intensify efforts to protect marine biodiversity and combat overfishing and IUU fishing, particularly by non-EU fleets operating in international waters where oversight and enforcement are weaker, while noting that EU fleets are already subject to a comprehensive, robust control and legal framework; calls on the Commission when adopting yellow and red cards in accordance with the IUU-Regulation to also assess the impact of those decisions on the supply chain, including on the different fleet segments in the non-EU countries;
25. Calls on the Commission, beyond import controls, to make full use of all the international tools available in order to ensure that products stemming from IUU activities cannot enter the EU market or come from catches resulting from IUU or non-sustainable fishing; highlights that monitoring, control and surveillance activities related to IUU fishing and SFPAs cannot be hindered by insufficient resources in the Member States and in the Commission;
26. Welcomes the revised rules for stronger EU action against non-EU countries that allow non-sustainable fishing; calls for increased efforts by the Commission in both bilateral and multilateral forums to improve dialogue and address non-cooperative behaviour, including in regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), to foster a level playing field, fair competition and adherence to the international rules-based order, in order to support EU efforts

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) 2024/3015 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 (OJ L, 2024/3015, 12.12.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3015/oj>).

towards environmental sustainability and to safeguard EU competitiveness;

Global ocean governance and international agreements

27. Calls on the Commission to strengthen international cooperation and leadership on ocean governance, especially under the framework of the European Ocean Pact, giving a central role to fisheries, aquaculture and shellfish farming and thus also to aquatic food security; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to fully leverage the opportunities created by the Ocean Pact to actively encourage non-EU countries, particularly in the framework of RFMOs, to adopt rules consistent with EU standards and provide adequate data on stocks, catches and fishing fleets to combat IUU fishing, particularly in RFMOs and international waters; underlines the importance of guaranteeing a level playing field for EU fleets operating legally and sustainably in international waters, and calls for special vigilance and support when needed for regions that are particularly vulnerable to this type of competition;
28. Calls on the Commission, in the context of EU external action, to invest more effort in promoting the EU's high standards as a model for sustainable fisheries management in RFMOs, EU trade agreements and SFPAs, and more generally in international and global forums, such as the UN and the WTO; urges the Commission and the Member States to continue to promote among non-EU countries the ratification and implementation of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures, the IMO Cape Town Agreement on Fishing Safety, the BBNJ agreement and welcomes the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies; stresses that this is essential to ensure fair competition for EU operators and to defend the interests of the EU's fisheries and aquaculture sector at global level;
29. Encourages Member States to actively consider signing these agreements aimed at improving decent working conditions in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, covering the entire production process, including logistics and processing; calls on the Commission to promote the ratification of these agreements by non-EU countries and to use the Union's Ocean Diplomacy agenda and SFPAs to advance these agreements;
30. Considers that SFPAs are a key tool to promote the CFP's key principles and values at international level, ensuring mutual benefits, contributing to inclusive development of the sector outside the EU and enhancing cooperation between the EU and its partners; highlights that SFPAs must ensure safe working conditions in respect to the international labour rights requirements; urges the Commission to expand and negotiate SFPAs with new non-EU countries; urges the Commission to improve communication with

local communities to enhance engagement and raise awareness of the benefits provided by the SFPAs signed with the EU;

31. Takes the view that shared sea basins, such as the Mediterranean, present specific challenges for the sustainable management of fish stocks, and notes that the absence of proper compliance and enforcement measures distorts competition, penalising European operators who comply with rigorous conservation standards and fisheries management, as seen, for example, in the Strait of Sicily, Malta, Cyprus and Greece, where the competitiveness of fisheries and the sustainability of fish stocks are at risk because of unregulated fishing practices by neighbouring non-EU country fleets; welcomes, however, the efforts made by the EU and other contracting parties to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean over recent years to ensure sustainable fisheries management in the Mediterranean Sea;

Boosting EU aquaculture

32. Strongly regrets the stagnation in the EU aquaculture sector and emphasises the fact that priority 2, Article 26, objective 1.1a of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of aquaculture production, has not been fully realised, further hindering the sector's growth and development; urges the Commission to explore options for boosting aquaculture in Europe, including by considering actions such as the development of a possible common aquaculture policy to support sustainable growth and innovation across the sector;
33. Stresses the need, in relation to aquaculture, to improve access to water usage rights and streamline the process for granting production licences in Member States to ensure that new licences are issued efficiently, thus fostering growth in EU aquaculture production while maintaining a commitment to sustainability; calls on the Member States to simplify and harmonise regulatory and administrative procedures for the installation of aquaculture sites and to facilitate access to maritime and land space, in order to boost the development of sustainable aquaculture in the EU;
34. Recalls, in this context, 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; 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 their activities, and should also consider the need to ensure an international level playing field;

Working conditions and professional development

35. Emphasises the crucial role of labour rights, decent working conditions, fair wages and a safe working environment, including on fishing vessels, in ensuring fair and ethical practices, tackling social dumping, and making the profession more attractive to women and younger generations; stresses that such improvements are essential for encouraging generational renewal in fisheries, aquaculture, the shellfish farming sector and the downstream sector; calls for targeted investments towards ensuring equality and intergenerational fairness while urging the Commission to promote respect for core social and labour standards in the context of SFPAs and RFMO agreements, in a manner that ensures legal certainty and a level playing field for EU operators;
36. Emphasises the need to empower women by ensuring equal access to opportunities, resources and leadership roles to strengthen the sector's inclusivity and foster innovative approaches; calls on the Commission to promote the employment of women and young people in fisheries and aquaculture through targeted programmes and incentives, fostering growth, inclusion and sustainability in coastal and outermost regions and on islands; notes that, while women often play a critical role in certain sectors, they still face a pay gap in comparison to men doing similar jobs; notes, further, that this pay gap also has a negative impact on the level of support accessible to them through social security schemes; calls on the Commission to properly investigate the challenges faced by women in the fisheries, aquaculture and shellfish sectors, with the aim of making recommendations to improve their economic status and social protections;
37. Calls on the Commission to take action to improve and harmonise the training and certification of fishing vessel personnel in the EU, as well as to continue to raise awareness among non-EU countries to ratify the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) convention; stresses, in parallel, the need to strengthen training related to aquaculture and the blue economy; emphasises the importance of such training in order to contribute to generational renewal in the sectors; highlights that establishing common standards such as the STCW across the Member States would enhance safety on board and support the professionalisation of the sector and fisheries workers' mobility within the EU;
38. Considers that representative entities of all fishers, including small-scale, artisanal fishing and shellfish farming, such as the *cofradías*, play a vital role in promoting social, economic and environmental

standards in coastal communities, but are not always given full recognition under the current regulatory framework; calls on the Commission to take action, in this regard, by coordinating with the Member States concerned, including by considering adapting the CMO rules accordingly, where necessary;

Innovation, research and technological development

39. Urges the Commission and Member States to prioritise research and innovation within the blue economy by supporting the development and scaling-up of blue technologies, while ensuring better access to funding for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are vital to driving sustainable growth and enhancing the resilience of the sectors; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take every opportunity to invest in research and innovation – including for the marketing and commercialisation of fish products, including also for the small-scale fisheries – aimed at improving the fisheries sector’s competitiveness, economic sustainability, energy transition, training and capacity-building, avoiding unnecessary administrative barriers that hinder the adoption of new technologies;
40. Stresses that innovation is one of the drivers of modernising and renewing the fishing fleet and developing more sustainable and selective fishing and aquaculture practices, including gear, minimising the environmental impact, reducing fuel consumption and bycatches, and facilitating the decarbonisation of vessels; underlines the potential of innovation to add value in the fisheries products processing sector, and in turn increasing the sustainability and competitiveness of the entire value chain;
41. Highlights that the high average age of the EU fleet, currently standing at 32 years, and therefore fleet renewal and modernisation is vital not only for competitiveness but also for security, improved working conditions, and access to resources, particularly in the outermost regions; stresses the need for accessible and targeted funding, particularly through EU funds, to support small-scale fishers in this transition, recognising the affordability challenges and limited availability of viable alternatives on the market;
42. Emphasises the importance of innovative devices designed to reduce interactions with marine animals; notes the Commission’s commitment to adopting technical specifications for such devices for the EU fleet; calls on the Commission to actively promote the uptake of these devices in non-EU countries;

Funding and investment

43. Underlines the need to streamline administrative procedures for accessing EU funds in the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2028-2034, so that they can be more effectively accessed by all final beneficiaries, and to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles that

hinder effective use of those funds, particularly by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of the fisheries and blue economy sectors in many EU coastal regions, islands and outermost regions; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission's competitiveness compass, aimed at reducing red tape for businesses by at least 25 % in general, and by 35 % for SMEs, as well as its simplification efforts going beyond reporting obligations; urges the Commission and the Member States to provide adequate support to facilitate access to funding while also evaluating costs associated with fishing management measures, fishing ground closures, fiscal pressure, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, in order to improve the fisheries sector's economic competitiveness; calls also on the Member States to increase investment in coastal communities and outermost regions by supporting the blue economy, enhancing education and upskilling opportunities, and optimising the use of EU funds;

44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure strong, easily accessible and clearly ring-fenced funding for the implementation of the CFP in the new MFF, with a view to providing support for the development of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and their transition towards greater sustainability and competitiveness; stresses that such funding should also contribute to ensuring a fair standard of living for fishers and aquaculture farmers, enhance the sector's attractiveness for a new generation, and strengthen its contribution to food security, while duly recognising the unique characteristics of fisheries and aquaculture; rejects, in this context, the proposed 67 % reduction in ring-fenced funding; recognises that the current EMFAF alone is insufficient to cover the substantial costs of modernising and renewing the EU's fishing fleet and that significant investments, estimated at between EUR 10 billion and EUR 25,6 billion²⁰, are required to renew, modernise and decarbonise the fisheries sector, which small businesses cannot always afford through ordinary resources alone;
45. Underlines the importance of strengthening support for traditional and sustainable practices, ensuring proper financing for projects and measures contributing to that aim;
46. Calls for enhanced additional budget allocations aimed at tackling increases in operational costs, supporting implementation of the Fisheries Control Regulation, and addressing global competition, decarbonisation, fleet modernisation, generational renewal, digitalisation, and the adoption of more selective and sustainable practices; emphasises that the financial instrument should be applicable, flexible, accessible and tailored to the realities of the sector, allowing for investment in innovation, fleet renewal and

²⁰ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5b930b14-12c0-11f1-8870-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> .

modernisation, onboard welfare and productivity improvements; calls for an assessment of fishing capacity measurements to better reflect the operational reality by excluding spaces used as galleys, cabins, toilets and rest areas, which have no bearing on a vessel's capacity to locate or catch fish; suggests the use of alternative methods such as 'net tonnage' to make rules fairer, improve crew welfare, and facilitate the modernisation of the fleet; calls also, therefore, on the Commission to swiftly remove regulatory and administrative barriers hindering vessel renewal;

47. Believes that an EU fleet renewal plan is crucial for a successful decarbonisation and transition to more sustainable fishing; calls on the Commission to consider raising the ceiling for de minimis aid for the fisheries, aquaculture and shellfish farming sectors, as provided for in Regulation (EU) 2023/2391²¹, to support the adoption of low-emission technologies, sustainable renewal or adaptation of the fleet, and energy efficiency throughout the supply chain; notes, furthermore, that emissions or fuel used for fishing activities should not be taxed following an EU-level obligation until new propulsion technologies and carbon-neutral fuels are commercially available and accessible; urges the Commission to ensure that social and economic sustainability, especially for coastal artisanal fishing, are on an equal footing with environmental sustainability; considers, furthermore, that innovative practices must be developed with the full cooperation of the industry and believes that sub-state legislatures and governments with competencies in fisheries management have a crucial role to play in ensuring locally adapted and effective solutions; calls on the Commission to ensure that price shocks in fuel costs are mitigated for the sector;

Small-scale fisheries and outermost regions

48. Stresses that small-scale coastal fishing, particularly in island and outermost regions, is a cornerstone of the economic, social and cultural fabric of many local communities; calls, as a matter of priority, on the Member States to strengthen financial and policy support for traditional sustainable fisheries practices, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, as well as shellfish gatherers; recognises the need for specific measures and increased support for the outermost regions in order to support the sector in overcoming structural disadvantages and ensuring the viability of local fishing communities; encourages these regions and the respective Member

²¹ Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2391 of 4 October 2023 amending Regulations (EU) No 717/2014, (EU) No 1407/2013, (EU) No 1408/2013 and (EU) No 360/2012 as regards de minimis aid for the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, and Regulation (EU) No 717/2014 as regards the total amount of de minimis aid granted to a single undertaking, its period of application and other matters, (OJ L, 2023/2391, 5.10.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2391/oj>).

States to use all possibilities under the CFP to allow for the necessary and better adaptation of rules and procedures to local specificities and realities; calls on the Commission to evaluate the possibility of re-establishing a programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity, based on the so-called Fisheries POSEI Regulation²², which is now integrated into the current EMFAF, in order to support the sector in overcoming structural disadvantages and ensuring the viability of local fishing communities;

49. Points out that in the outermost regions, investment in port and cold storage infrastructure is essential to guarantee the quality of aquatic food; highlights that enhancing inter-island logistics and improving connections to the mainland and broader markets will ensure that aquatic food reaches consumers promptly and in optimal condition; considers, furthermore, that supporting digital direct marketing platforms, such as by facilitating direct sales from fishers and aquacultures to consumers, can further promote local products;

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

²² Council Regulation (EC) No 791/2007 of 21 May 2007 introducing a scheme to compensate for the additional costs incurred in the marketing of certain fishery products from the outermost regions the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, French Guiana and Réunion, (OJ L 176, 6.7.2007, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2007/791/oj>).