

# COVID-19: Council adopts rules to help EU fishermen

The Council today adopted new rules intended to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the fishery and aquaculture sector. The new rules take the form of amendments to the regulation on the European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF) and the regulation on the common market organisation (CMO). They are expected to enter into force by the end of the week.

The new act introduces the following specific measures:

- support in relation to the temporary cessation of fishing activities with a maximum co-financing rate of 75 % of eligible public expenditure
- support in relation to the temporary suspension or reduction of aquaculture production and sales
- inclusion of fishermen on foot as eligible for support in case of temporary cessation
- derogation for temporary cessation for new vessels
- flexibility in order to use 10% of the budgetary funds allocated to Union Priority 3
- granting working capital and compensating the reduction of sales and additional storage costs for aquaculture farmers and processors
- provisions for Outermost regions adapted to deal with the consequences of the crisis

In relation to storage, the new rules also provide for support to producer organisations and associations of producer organisations for the storage of fishery and aquaculture products. The quantities eligible for storage aid will be increased to 25 % of the annual quantities of the products concerned. Further to that, an amendment to the CMO regulation makes possible the resort to the storage mechanism if member states have not set and published trigger prices. It also allows aquaculture producer organisations to benefit from the storage mechanism.

The expenditure for the operations supported under these new measures will be eligible as of 1 February 2020.

The Council's vote on the amendments was taken by means of a written procedure, which was concluded today. The European Parliament voted on 17 April. Both institutions negotiated and processed the proposal as a matter of urgency.

It is expected that the amending regulation will be published in the EU Official Journal on 24 April 2020. It will enter into force on the day following that of its publication.