

Technical measures in fisheries: Council confirms deal with the EP

The EU is modernising its rules which govern how, where and when fishermen may fish, the so-called **technical measures**.

EU member states' ambassadors today endorsed the agreement reached on 13 February between the presidency and European Parliament's representatives on new rules on the **conservation of fishery resources** and the **protection of marine ecosystems**. These measures include specifications for fishing gears and mesh sizes, closed areas and seasons, and measures to minimize the impact of fishing on the marine ecosystem and environment.

This agreement on simpler and better technical measures is a milestone in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and for the sustainability of our seas. These rules will make fishermen's' lives easier and allow member states and the fishing sector to have a greater say in deciding what is appropriate for different sea basins and local specificities.

Petre Daea, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania and President of the Council

The regulation on technical measures will take the EU **a step closer to** achieving the **objectives** and targets set out in the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) such as the reduction of unwanted catches and by catches of sensitive species. In particular the new rules will help reduce as far as possible the number of caught **juveniles**, and minimise the impact of fishing activities on **seabeds**.

In line with the CFP, the new rules set out a framework for the **regionalisation** of technical measures. They do that through a **bottom up approach** by which member states, cooperating closely with the industry in local **Advisory Councils**, will be able to submit joint recommendations on issues of vital importance. These joint recommendations will then be taken into account by the Commission in adopting secondary legislation.

Regionalisation will contribute to improving the **environmental footprint** of fishing activities. For instance regional groups of member states will be allowed to develop additional **mitigation measures** in their joint recommendations to reduce the impact of fishing on sensitive species and habitats. Similarly member states will have other tools at their disposal, such as **real-time closures** and restrictions on the construction and operation of certain **fishing gears**, to improve selectivity and the protection of the environment under certain conditions.

A **list of prohibited species** that fishermen will not be able to fish is also established.

Electric pulse fishing will be prohibited after **30 June 2021**. A **phase out** period, during which no new licences will be granted, is nonetheless foreseen in order to allow the industry to adjust to new conditions.

Scientific research will continue although it will have to be carried out in line with stringent conditions. In order not to close the door to innovation in the sector, the regulation includes the requirement of a future **Commission report** including ICES advice – the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea – on the impact of **innovative gears** on marine ecosystems, sensitive habitats and selectivity.

Next steps

The text will now undergo legal and linguistic review. The Parliament and the Council will be called to adopt the final text at a later date.

The new rules will apply on the day after their publication on the Official Journal of the European Union (mid 2019).

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