

DEFEND AND PROTECT THE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVE FISHERIES SECTORS



The impacts of Covid-19 are already striking the fisheries sector, particularly the small scale and artisanal fisheries. This segment of the fleet, economically the most fragile, has very limited access to EU funds. The lack of protective equipment, the risk that the temporary cessation periods are exhausted before the end of the restrictions imposed, the reduction of demand in fishing products with huge consequences for the price of first sale negatively affecting incomes, are amongst the immediate effects of the pandemic.

The current situation needs to improve in terms of social protection. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) must be further changed in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak, beyond the proposal of the European Commission, which was insufficient. To protect the sector, to protect small scale and artisanal fisheries, to protect incomes and to assure food security. At the same time the objectives defined in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, in particular SDG 14 on the Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, should always be respected, seeking a positive impact on nature and the environment.

To protect incomes and assure food security, we propose that the EMFF may be changed in order to:

- Finance a Wage Guarantee Fund based on the previous average income of each professional by reallocating existing financial resources of the EMFF;
- Assure that the temporary cessation support is not subject to a maximum period and that it is extended to shellfish-gatherers, fishers on foot and small and medium scale aquacultures;



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- Support the creation and operation of a system of minimum prices for first sale, in order to defend incomes, as well as public structures that ensure covering the operation expenses and the disposal of fish in emergency situations;
- Support to storage aid.

To protect the sector, to protect small scale and artisanal fisheries and the sustainable use of oceans, we propose that the EMFF may be changed in order to:

- Accommodate expenses related to actions aimed at promoting crisis response capacities in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, rising EU co-financing up until 100%;
- Relaxing the financing ceilings in the regulation to a minimum of 90%;
- Flexibility of the use by the Member-states of the allocated and not used EMFF financial resources;
- Simplify the administrative procedures;
- Support investments on board or in individual equipment related to specific needs in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak;
- Amend and replace the financing process for receiving aid by a pre-financing system;
- Adapt the Member-states fleet to a sustainable exploitation of the available resources;
- Provide opportunities to fishermen who wish to cease their fishing activities permanently, in order to reduce overcapacity;
- End overfishing by 2020 as agreed in Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the United Nations.

GUE/NGL MEPs on European Parliament Committee on Fisheries.