



Dear Member of the Fisheries Committee,

On behalf of the environmental organisations Birdlife, BLOOM, ClientEarth, Seas At Risk and WWF, we reach out to you as we are extremely worried about the current negotiations on the future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (the post-2020 EMFF). This financial instrument will determine the allocation of more than 6 billion euros of public funding to tackle challenges at seas, including supporting the management of fisheries and aquaculture sectors as well as to the protection of the marine environment for the period 2021-2027.

It is now beyond any reasonable doubt that our human activities, including unsustainable fishing and fish farming, are causing a collapse of biodiversity and an impoverishment on a scale not seen for 65 million years. The recent UN global assessment on the state of biodiversity pins harmful subsidies as one of the main driver of the ecological collapse of fish stocks and the mismanagement of fisheries.

Last April, the former European Parliament (EP) adopted a disastrous position re-introducing harmful subsidies, including subsidies for the construction of new fishing vessels banned since 2004. Fisheries scientists and economists have alarmingly stated that these subsidies will inevitably increase fishing effort and cause overfishing.¹ **The new PECH Committee has an extraordinary opportunity to turn the tide on fisheries subsidies at the upcoming committee meetings.**

While 69% of the European fish stocks are overfished,² the post-2020 EMFF has the power to end the "*vicious circle in which Europe's fisheries have been trapped in recent decades*".³ The EU has taken international commitments to implement Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.6, which mandates banning harmful subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity by 2020. The EMFF constitutes a key tool for ensuring we uphold this international commitment. There can be no sustainable fisheries if the European Union maintains economic incentives to fish beyond ecological limits.

The former EP's position is also in complete contradiction with the position defended by the European Union in the current negotiations taking place at the World Trade Organization to implement SDG 14.6, as with the advice given by many fisheries scientists and economists to ban harmful subsidies for the sake of sustainability of the resources and the sector and EU international credibility.⁴

¹ <http://www.leparisien.fr/economie/choisir-entre-la-protection-des-oceans-ou-sa-destruction-31-03-2019-8043246.php>

² Froese et al. (2018) Status and rebuilding of European fisheries. *Marine Policy*, 93: 159-170

³ European Commission (2009) Green Paper. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Brussels. Available here: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0163:FIN:en:PDF>

⁴ https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02054-0.epdf?author_access_token=Axm-kYoeAuAA4rDNZyZbtRgN0jAjWel9jnR3ZoTv0PZdiOb8_Pi1GMhx7dxssCq4JiuEJC0s0BF-0VUQ0eXhLFeh55vfclZsQ28kBJ8aapKK4ZC-bHR96VMk1TAVOgINu0DsJb9mWXq5RBt1iSdw%3D%3D

It is now up to the newly elected European Parliament to decide on the follow-up of its own position before entering Trilogue negotiations with the Council. The newly elected MEPs are not bound by the former EP position and have the opportunity to define their own position for this critical regulation.

We respectfully urge you to amend the former Parliament's position, eliminating harmful subsidies and ensuring the protection and restoration of the marine environment.

Yours faithfully,

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