



European Association of
Fish Producers Organisations



Association of National Organisations of
Fishing Enterprises in the EU

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PRESS RELEASE

Critical need for mackerel sharing arrangement, EU mackerel still a responsible choice

On the eve of the next round of Coastal States consultations on mackerel, the EU fishing industry urges once again decision-makers to finally agree on a comprehensive sharing arrangement for this stock. If this fails, fishers would welcome an interim emergency arrangement for 2026. In the meantime, the industry reminds consumers and retailers that EU mackerel remains responsibly sourced mackerel.

Mackerel Coastal States (EU, UK, Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland) reconvene on 16-17 October for consultations on the Total Allowable Catch for 2026 and a sharing arrangement. As stated in its recent position paper on fishing opportunities¹, the EU industry sees no other option than to follow the scientific advice for 2026 (174 357 tonnes, a decrease of 70%), in the interest of the stock and our own future as mackerel fishers. The EU continues to pay the price for the longstanding overfishing - up to 40% - by other fleets. Action against this irresponsible behaviour is needed without delay, as the most important and valuable EU pelagic fishery is at risk of collapse.

The industry calls on all Coastal States to do their utmost to secure a comprehensive sharing arrangement that reflects genuine, sustainable historic track records and interests. The current overfishing should not be accepted to count towards an increased fishing track record for those Parties concerned. An emergency arrangement could be inspired by the allocation key of the previous sharing arrangement, in order to boost the stock's chances of recovering to a more resilient biomass. Both an emergency arrangement and a definitive one should include provisions to limit catches in international waters and to take those catches fully into account towards utilisation of each Coastal State's quota.

As it is deemed scientifically responsible to fish 174 357 tonnes of mackerel in 2026 (and 576 958 tonnes in 2025), and as the EU is the only one left upholding these limits, it is a slap in the face of EU fishers that some environmental NGO's are calling on retailers and consumers in the EU to stop selling and buying all mackerel - including EU-caught - and that retailers in some EU Member States are in fact doing just that.

Tim Heddema, spokesperson for the EU pelagic fishing industry, comments: *"These actions by NGOs and retailers are extremely disappointing and uncalled for and don't do justice to the scientific advice. The impact will be felt by precisely those fishers who are to blame the least for the current stock decline, whereas these calls for a boycott are absent in Coastal States responsible for overfishing. Those Parties will not suddenly change their attitude if Anna from Amsterdam can no longer find mackerel in her local supermarket. The solution to the problem is an agreement between Coastal States and that is what everyone's focus must be on. In the meantime, EU mackerel remains a responsible choice for consumers."*

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¹ [EAPO-NPWG position paper on fishing opportunities 2026](#)