

**Press Release****Europêche condemns slanderous campaign against trawling**

**Brussels, 3 April 2025** – Europêche strongly denounces the list of vessels published by the NGO Bloom and the subsequent calls for supermarkets to boycott fish caught by the listed trawlers. The list is based on flawed and misleading information, misrepresenting the European fishing industry and the actual purpose of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

**A Call for Rational, Science-Based Decision Making**

It is important to remind that there are a multitude of categories of MPAs (more than 11 in France) which meet specific and different objectives, ranging from protecting seabed habitats, protecting cetaceans or protecting bird species, etc. Not all MPAs pursue the goal to suppress all human activities, as BLOOM falsely claims; only few MPAs are indeed defined as no-take zones. The regulation must therefore mirror this reality.

The industry is more than open to regulation of economic activities in MPAs but calls for a science-based decision-making process and a selective and specific approach rather than global one as some NGOs are demanding. This case-by-case approach for MPAs is mandated by EU environmental legislation such as Natura2000 and underlined by both the European Commissioner for Oceans & Fisheries, Costas Kadiis and the French Minister for Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forestry, Sea and Fisheries, Agnès Pannier-Runacher.

**A Campaign built on inaccuracies**

The methodology used by the NGO is both structurally inaccurate and unreliable. As such, the report is riddled with errors, falsely accusing vessels of illegally fishing in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), thus demonstrating Bloom's lack of knowledge and serious scientific work on the matter. Here are a few examples of the most shocking inaccuracies:

The use of AIS data to identify "trawling activity" in MPAs.

- This could not be more wrong: the use of Automatic Identification System (AIS) says nothing of the activities carried out by a boat, it simply helps locate it. As such, a vessel transiting through an MPA to reach its targeted fishing zone outside the MPA is accused of illegal fishing activities in MPAs by the NGO.

Flawed metrics

- The NGO uses the speed of the boats navigating in MPAs as evidence of fishing activities. This demonstrates a serious lack of knowledge of the issue: numerous MPAs have speed limits in place for safety and security reasons, which explains the recorded low speed of boats crossing them.

Lack of knowledge

- Finally, Bloom accuses several boats of illegal fishing in MPAs while the said MPAs have no fishing restriction for all fishing or marine activities. Even more astonishing, the list includes non-fishing vessels, such as a Belgian research ship.

Europêche remains **committed to open dialogue** and urges policymakers to base decisions on **scientific evidence and sustainable management principles**, rather than misleading activist campaigns.

**Ivan Lopez, Europêche reacted:** *“We are not surprised to see that Bloom’s report is riddled with inaccuracies, it has become a habit for them. As always, Europeche will continue its relentless fight against inaccuracies and destabilization attempts of the industry by radical activists through a scientific, open and transparent approach.”*

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