



European Union Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea-Fisheries

PRESS RELEASE

European Social Partners issue urgent call to protect Mediterranean coastal fishing communities

Brussels, 13 November 2024 – The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), Europêche and COGECA - European fisheries social partners - jointly adopted a resolution at their plenary meeting, urgently addressing the critical state of the Mediterranean fisheries. This decision highlights shared concerns about the situation of fisheries in the Mediterranean where coastal communities are suffering from sizeable reductions of fishing effort, and the need for sensible EU policies to support both environmental, social and economic dimensions.

The resolution stresses the progress in sustainable stock management, with overexploitation rates in the Mediterranean falling to their lowest level in a decade. However, the social partners stress that, despite these improvements in sustainability, socio-economic indicators in the region reveal a concerning downturn, with decreasing number of companies, vessels and jobs.

The social partners call for a balanced approach that considers not only environmental goals but also the sustainability of local communities, jobs and the overall role played by fisheries in the society. Key demands in the resolution include:

- **Freezing fishing efforts at 2024 levels:** The resolution urges a halt to further restrictions until the full impact of current policies is assessed in 2027.
- **Integrated approach:** A shift towards a comprehensive strategy that aligns environmental, economic, and social factors to ensure a sustainable future for the Mediterranean fisheries sector.
- **Support for affected communities:** Including compensation, training programmes, and economic support for coastal communities impacted by reduced fishing activities.
- **Extended environmental timelines:** Acknowledging the need for realistic timeframes to achieve targets like Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), allowing businesses to adapt without undue strain.

The social partners emphasize the importance of fair legislative processes, urging the EU to adhere to established procedures and avoid bypassing consultations with stakeholders and Member States.

ETF, Europêche and COGECA reaffirm their commitment to sustainable fishing and insist that regulatory actions must strike the right balance between environmental, economic and social viability. The joint resolution represents a unified call for policies that sustain the Mediterranean's fishing industry, support local jobs, and maintain food security in Europe.