

SOS call to preserve coastal fishing communities in the Mediterranean Sea

- Press Release -

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Yesterday, during the meeting of the Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries, the Social Partners – ETF, Europêche and Copa-Cogeca – adopted a [joint resolution](#) on the situation of fisheries in the Mediterranean. The sector representatives seized the opportunity to call upon the European Commission to propose balanced measures that secure a future for fishermen, coastal communities and fishing resources alike in the Mediterranean Sea.

The appalling absence of officials from the Directorate-General on Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) at the Social Dialogue meeting dedicated to discussing the status of the Mediterranean was harshly criticized by the Social Partners. ETF, Europêche and Copa-Cogeca stressed that their Committee is a key actor of the democratic legislative process, enshrined in the EU Treaty, that cannot be overlooked.

The Social Partners called for fisheries policies based on proper socio-economic impact assessments and for fisheries management measures that fishers can cope with.

Juan Manuel Trujillo, ETF Fisheries Section Chair stated: *“We want to have a thriving Mediterranean fishing sector that is sustainable from an environmental point of view. But at the same time, we want the industry also to be capable of offering quality jobs to Europeans citizens and long-term economic perspective to companies”*. He warns that under no circumstances the social partners *“want to end up in a situation where the consumption of fishing products in the EU is delegated to imports of products of doubtful origin”*.

During the meeting, the Social Partners also insisted on the need to wait for the results of scientific evaluations measuring the effects of the restrictions introduced in 2019-2021 to adjust fishing effort before proposing further reductions that would only make the sector to suffer even more.

Europêche's spokesperson in the European social dialogue, Ment van der Zwan, added: *“Aware of the delicate situation in the Mediterranean Sea, the fishing sector is already taking its responsibility, reducing its activity at sea, which is benefiting the recovery of fish stocks as reported by scientific data. Yet, the obstinate application of the multiannual management plan on the Western Mediterranean, which has already reduced trawler fishing activity by 17.5% over the past two years (23.5% in 2022) accompanied by new measures restricting fishing operations, is driving most businesses below their breakeven point. The situation is untenable, we are destroying our own coastal communities, our culture, our heritage, to reach short-term unrealistic EU policy objectives”*.