



Declaration

ETF and Europêche, EU level social partners in the fisheries sector, organised, in the framework of an EU co-funded project, a seminar on *'The promotion of the ratification of ILO work in fishing Convention by EU member states'* which took place in The Hague on 14 April 2016 and adopted the following declaration:

ETF and Europêche:

- Express concern over the fact that, to date, only one EU member state, France, has ratified ILO Convention 188;
- Recall that Convention 188 is key to deterring forced labour and abuses in fisheries and provide a level playing field for work in the sector at global level;
- Point out that the European Union and its member states should play a leading role in promoting decent working conditions in fisheries;
- Note that in some member states the ratification process is slowed down by the lack of proper internal coordination among the various competent departments;
- Reiterate their disappointment for the fact that the social partners' agreement (SPA) they finalised in 2013 has not yet been presented before the European Council;
- Welcome the readiness expressed by the Dutch presidency of the EU to start working as soon as possible on the SPA;
- Condemn the fact that the fisheries sector suffers discrimination compared to maritime transport as far as the institutional engagement in improving working conditions is concerned;
- Denounce the unfair competition from those fleets which do not apply decent working conditions.

Therefore, ETF and Europêche:

- Encourage all EU member states to pursue the ratification of ILO Convention 188 ;
- Emphasise the role that dialogue between governments, trade unions and employers as well as improved coordination should play in the ratification process;
- Call on the European Commission to finalise the cost/benefit study of their SPA and to present the agreement before the Council of the EU as soon as possible;
- Call on the Council of the EU to start the work on the SPA as soon as this will be presented by the Commission;
- Call on the EU to integrate working and living conditions into its common fisheries policy;
- Call on the European Commission to propose an enforcement directive on inspection and compliance with the Directive implementing the SPA on C188 and to integrate port state control within the *aquis communautaire*;
- Recommend the establishment of a task force made of all competent Commission services to tackle in an integrated way working conditions in fisheries, particularly with respect to human rights and human trafficking and in order to ensure traceability of fish caught in a socially responsible way throughout the supply chain.