



## EU Sea Fisheries Social Partners: Advancing Social Sustainability

Brussels, 10 July 2024 – As we finalise the deliverables of the "Pillars of the Sea 3" project, we are pleased to present our achievements and future initiatives. Co-funded by the EU, this project advances the Social Dialogue Committee roadmap for socially sustainable fishing, building on our previous successes. Notably, our work on medical guidelines for fishers led to the adoption of new guidelines on medical examination of fishers by ILO and IMO, confirming our essential role in advancing the health, safety, and sustainability of the fishing industry. As we move forward, we remain committed to enhancing the working conditions and safety of fishers across the EU and beyond.

### Our Journey and Achievements

In previous work, the EU Social Partners in the fisheries sector<sup>1</sup> created comprehensive medical guidelines for fishers. We are thrilled to announce that these guidelines have been adopted globally by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO)<sup>2</sup>. This new set of guidelines, finalised during a joint meeting from 12 to 16 February 2024 in Geneva, will help improve the medical examination process for fishers worldwide. These guidelines, developed in collaboration with the International Maritime Health Association (IMHA), aim to ensure that fishers are healthy and fit for their important but demanding roles, ultimately improving their health and safety at sea. The IMO will introduce a similar requirement through its newly developed Code of the International Convention on the Standards of Training and Certification of Watchkeeping of Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F).

### Project Overview

"Pillars of the Sea 3" builds on our previous achievements, addressing various pressing issues through its four key pillars:

1. **Guidelines for the Recruitment of Migrant Fishers:** This pillar continues the development of model contracts to facilitate compliance with EU and international labour regulations, addressing abusive and fraudulent practices in recruitment.
2. **Training Programme for Medical Practitioners:** Building on the guidelines developed in the previous project, this pillar aims to train medical practitioners in the specific health risks associated with fishing, ensuring they can provide appropriate medical care and certification.
3. **Legal Analysis on Market and Custom Tools to Combat Forced Labor:** This pillar explores the potential for EU customs and legislative tools to restrict seafood imports from vessels or countries identified for labour abuses, aligning with the EU's commitment to human rights and sustainability.
4. **Refining the 'Fishery Speak' App<sup>3</sup>:** Enhancing this interactive glossary with additional languages and technical updates to improve communication and safety on board fishing vessels<sup>4</sup>.

### Join Us at Our Dissemination Conference

We invite policymakers, fisheries stakeholders, and media to keep an eye out for the upcoming dissemination conference in the fourth quarter of the year in Brussels, date to be determined. This

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<sup>1</sup> [Cross-industry and sectoral social dialogue - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> [New global guidelines for medical examination of fishers.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Fishery Speak Website.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Fishery Speak Informative Video.](#)

event will highlight the impactful results of our project and discuss future steps toward ensuring socially sustainable fishing practices in the EU and beyond.

### **Background**

Fishing, a fundamental yet challenging industry, has often seen legislative attention centred on environmental issues, overshadowing the essential working conditions of fishers. The sector suffers from low ratification levels of international conventions on fishers' working conditions and a lack of coordination among national and international bodies. This gap has led to a decline in EU citizens joining the profession and labour challenges worldwide.

### **ENDS**

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