

Europêche welcomes ILO Guidelines promoting fair labour market services for migrant fishers

- Press Release -

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Europêche, the representative body of Europe's fishing sector, welcomes the successful conclusion of the *Meeting of Experts on Guidelines for Fair Labour Market Services for Migrant Fishers*, held under the auspices of the International Labour Organization (ILO) from 27 to 31 October 2025 in Geneva.

The newly adopted Guidelines for Fair Labour Market Services for Migrant Fishers provide a comprehensive framework to assist governments and social partners in promoting ethical recruitment and fair treatment of migrant fishers across the world. They clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of States and industry stakeholders involved in recruitment, work agreements, complaint mechanisms, enforcement measures and data collection. The Guidelines are complemented by eight practical tools to facilitate implementation and methodological guidance to strengthen data collection on migrant fishers, thereby improving policymaking and monitoring efforts.

Representing the employers' group through the International Organization of Employers (IOE), Europêche members and experts actively contributed to the discussions, with Cor Blonk, spokesman for the employers in the meeting and Chair of the EU Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries (Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association – PFA), Rosa Meijide (ARVI), and Daniel Voces and Anne-France Mattlet (Europêche Secretariat) participating on behalf of the sector. Experts appreciated the guidance and support of Mr. Luis Rodrigo Morales (Director of Policy), Ms. Natalia Privee Boudeguer (Adviser), and Ms. Stéphanie Winet (Head of Migration Portfolio) from the International Organization of Employers (IOE).

Building on EU leadership in fair recruitment

The ILO's work builds upon years of constructive dialogue and progress supported by the EU Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries¹. Earlier this year, the EU Social Partners presented at the European Parliament the outcomes of the EU project '*Pillars of the Sea 3: Roadmap towards socially sustainable fishing*'², a major initiative supported by the European Commission.

This project delivered actionable tools to improve social sustainability in fisheries, including:

- **Guidelines for Fair Recruitment of Migrant Fishers**, promoting transparency and ethical hiring practices.
- **A Training Programme for Medical Practitioners** performing mandatory fitness examinations under the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188).
- Research on **trade measures to combat forced labour in fisheries**

These initiatives have laid the foundation for fair labour market services, ensuring that social responsibility becomes a core element of sustainable fisheries management.

¹ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/eu-employment-policies/social-dialogue/cross-industry-and-sectoral-social-dialogue/sea-fisheries-sectoral-social-dialogue_en

² https://socialdialogueseafisheries.eu/publications_and_resources/

A longstanding commitment to fair work at sea

Europêche has consistently defended the full respect of social and labour rights for all fishers, including migrants, within ILO fora. Since the *2017 Tripartite Meeting on Issues Relating to Migrant Fishers*, Europêche has called for stronger coordination among UN agencies, simplified procedures for lawful recruitment and harmonisation of safety and labour standards under the ILO C188 Convention.

Cor Blonk, stated: *‘I am proud to have contributed to the development of these important ILO Guidelines. I’m certain this joint work—together with workers’ representatives and governments, following a week of constructive debates—will greatly benefit the sector. It provides stronger protection for migrant fishers worldwide and greater legal certainty for national authorities, employers and recruiting agencies. These Guidelines are a milestone for a fairer and more attractive global fishing industry, inspiring from the work of Social Partners in Europe.’*

About Europêche

Europêche represents national fisheries associations of EU Member States, advocating for responsible, competitive and sustainable fisheries in Europe and globally. Through active participation in the EU Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries, Europêche promotes fair working conditions, health and safety, and ethical recruitment practices across the fishing sector.

For more information, see the ILO’s meeting of experts on Guidelines for Fair Labour Market Services for Migrant Fishers.³

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³ <https://www.ilo.org/meetings-and-events/sectorial/meeting-experts-guidelines-fair-labour-market-services-migrant-fishers>