



16 April 2020

EU SECTORIAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON SEA FISHERIES

JOINT RESOLUTION ON THE NEED OF A STRONG SOCIAL DIMENSION IN THE CFP

Having regard of:

- Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP);
- Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund;
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work;
- ILO Convention on Work in Fishing (C188);
- Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 of 19 December 2016 implementing the Agreement concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention (C188), 2007 of the International Labour Organisation;
- The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F 1995);
- The outcome of the EU-funded project “A Socially Sustainable Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)” ran by the European Transport Workers’ Federation (ETF) and the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism (EFFAT);
- European Economic and Social Committee opinion “Social dimension of fisheries” adopted on 25 September 2019.

Whereas:

- The current CFP focuses on economic and environmental sustainability, leaving aside social sustainability. The EU has narrowed down the social dimension in fishing to just levels of employment, which sadly has a downward trend of 2% per year, disregarding other important considerations such as working and living conditions of fishers, the viability of the value chain and the effect of technical measures on fishers’ safety, health and income. These factors are not consistently included in the development of fishing rules, or funding provisions, for the industry.
- The catching sector has considerable safety risks associated with it. The latest high-level analysis of accidents reported by the EU Member States in the European Marine Casualty Information Platform (EMCIP) shows that in 2018 alone 567 casualties and incidents occurred in the fisheries sector which led to 12 fatalities,

208 persons injured and 12 ships lost across the EU¹. The situation is likely to be worse due to the lack of data and miss-reporting.

- Health and safety protection is not funded adequately for such a profession of commercial fishing which is considered as one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. The way health and safety measures are funded differs from company to company and from Member State to Member State.
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is often linked with labour abuse, however the current EU IUU definition does not incorporate it. The IUU Regulation only seeks to ensure that illegally-caught fish does not enter the EU; it does not ensure that fish associated with worker abuse is also banned from import.
- IUU fish is not the only high risk area for workers. Fish products imported into the EU may come from third countries with lower social, labour and safety requirements both in the capture, farming and processing sectors; meaning that there is no level playing field for those sectors at global level.
- EU consumers do not have the elements to judge whether the imported fish they buy is not produced at the expense of vulnerable workers in third countries, particularly for processed and canned products.
- Furthermore EU operators lose out by having to compete with non-EU companies with lower costs due to weaker regulations. Eventually this could lead to fishing businesses in the EU failing; workers losing their jobs; or EU operators tempted to take inappropriate risk to compete with lower priced products.

The Social Partners call on the European Commission to:

- Include in the Common Fisheries Policy overarching social objectives in parallel with environmental objectives, acknowledging that the wellbeing of workers on board of fishing vessels is essential for the future of the industry.
- Include social indicators and targets in fishery instruments such as fishing opportunities and multi-annual plans and provide adequate funding to achieve these objectives by placing the social dimension as a strong pillar within the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).
- Undertake a European study to identify the health and safety needs of all workers in the chain, since health and safety in the catching, farming and processing industry is currently lacking data. The study should also determine how to monitor ongoing performance, how to include workers' health and safety in the CFP and the budget to effectively implement the needed measures.
- Set minimum levels of basic training for all seafood workers in the CFP, as it is fundamental to increase health and safety. This compulsory minimum training should take place in all Member States before starting working in the industry and regularly after that. Proper funding for the training must be provided. The STCW-F 95 Convention should be used as the common standard to ensure that personnel sailing

¹ European Maritime Safety Agency, Annual Overview of Marine Casualties and Incidents 2019.

on fishing vessels are qualified (as evidenced by official certificates) and fit for the job (on the strength of a medical certificate) and transposed into an EU Directive.

- Take appropriate measures to ban access to the EU market of fish products that come from countries where workers' abuses are identified. ILO Work in Fishing Convention's (ILO C188) seafood labour standard could be used as a benchmark for importing countries and companies.
- Enhance consumer information, particularly by making mandatory to display in the label of processed and canned seafood products, *inter alia*, the origin (FAO catch area, flag of the vessel) and method of production. To date, and opposite to fresh and frozen products, this information is voluntary and often not declared to avoid consumer awareness of possible food quality/provenance issues.
- Include social impact assessment studies in the procedures before fishery management rules are adopted and implemented.