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REPORT

on the role of ocean diplomacy for the competitiveness of EU fisheries and aquaculture
(2025/2054(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the role of ocean diplomacy for the competitiveness of EU fisheries and aquaculture

(2025/2054(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 2, 3(5), 43, 349 and 355 thereof,
- having regard to the EU’s common fisheries policy (CFP) and its external dimension,
- having regard to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks,
- having regard to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction of 19 June 2023 (the BBNJ Agreement),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2025/2077 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 October 2025 amending Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 June 2025 entitled ‘The European Ocean Pact’ (COM(2025)0281) and to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 24 June 2022 entitled ‘Setting the course for a sustainable blue planet – Joint Communication on the EU’s International Ocean Governance agenda’ (JOIN(2022)0028),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 October 2025 entitled ‘The Pact for the Mediterranean – One Sea, One Pact, One Future’ (JOIN(2025)0026), in particular Section II.6 thereof, entitled ‘Promoting a sustainable Blue Economy’,
- having regard to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,
- having regard to the agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean²,
- having regard to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries

¹ OJ L, 2025/2077, 14.10.2025, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/2077/oj>.

² OJ L 73, 15.3.2019, p. 3.

Subsidies adopted by the ministerial decision of 17 June 2022,

- having regard to the reports of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) entitled ‘Review of the state of world marine fishery resources – 2025’ and ‘The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024’,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on ocean governance, fisheries and the blue economy,– having regard to its resolution of 17 October 2023 on the implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward³,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A10-0043/2026),
- A. whereas oceans and seas cover 71 % of the Earth’s surface and over 65 % of the EU’s territory; whereas thanks to its outermost regions giving it a presence in every ocean, the EU oversees the world’s largest collective maritime area, comprising 25 million km² of exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and a coastline of over 70 000 km; whereas 40 % of people in the EU live within 50 km of the sea;
- B. whereas the EU fishing fleet, which embodies the EU’s presence on the seas, comprises approximately 69 000 vessels, 75 % of which are used by coastal and small-scale fishers, and is one of the most sustainable and strictly regulated fishing fleets in the world; whereas it faces shrinking quotas, high operating costs, administrative and regulatory burdens, the ageing of the fishing fleet and fishers, a lack of incentive to attract new generations into the sector, and unfair competition from non-EU countries with lower standards; whereas fair competition and sustainable fisheries management are key components for a prosperous and profitable sector, as shown in the 2024 annual economic report on the EU fishing fleet;
- C. whereas the lack of equal conditions for EU and non-EU fishers has led in recent years to a significant loss of EU vessels, which have either been exported temporarily or sold to non-EU countries; whereas when an EU vessel leaves a fishing ground under a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO), it is replaced by a vessel from a non-EU country, usually operating under lower environmental and social standards; whereas at the same time, imports from such countries into the EU market are increasing;
- D. whereas the EU’s fisheries and aquaculture sector contributes around EUR 5.5 billion per year to the EU economy and provides direct employment to around 193 000 fishers and aquaculture producers across Europe; whereas the EU has a fish processing and canning industry with a significant socio-economic dimension that must also be preserved and strengthened;
- E. whereas the EU imports 70 % of its seafood, creating strategic dependency, undermining self-sufficiency and risking exposing the sector to unfair practices; whereas this state of affairs requires traceability and transparency provisions, stronger border controls and the harmonisation of customs mechanisms and automatic safeguard

³ OJ C, C/2024/2652, 29.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/2652/oj>.

and reciprocity clauses, in addition to the establishment of an EU import control office to ensure that all imports comply with standards equivalent to those applicable in the EU;

- F. whereas the EU is a contracting party to 18 RFMOs and four regional seas conventions and plays a leading role in multilateral negotiations on fisheries management and marine conservation; whereas the EU recognises that RFMOs are the building blocks of international ocean governance for the management and conservation of fish stocks and are essential instruments for fostering international ocean diplomacy, strengthening cooperation among coastal and fishing nations and ensuring the sustainable governance of the high seas;G. whereas the EU has 20 sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs); whereas despite seven of them being dormant, the SFPAs create a network of agreements with partner countries, which also constitutes a platform for further cooperation in relation to global fisheries management and international ocean governance;
- H. whereas ocean acidification, marine litter, overfishing, plastic pollution, invasive species, habitat degradation and climate change through rising sea temperatures and the growing frequency of marine heatwaves pose a significant threat to marine biodiversity, while illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overfishing and shadow fleets threaten global and EU biodiversity and fisheries, and create unfair competition for EU fishers;
- I. whereas shadow fleets and opaque ownership structures represent a distinct and heightened threat to maritime security, public health and safety in coastal areas, including through the increased risk of oil spills, accidental discharges, hazardous waste releases and other incidents that endanger human life, livelihoods and coastal ecosystems;
- J. whereas freedom of navigation and the ability to operate at sea are increasingly challenged worldwide and essential maritime infrastructure faces growing risks;
- K. whereas hybrid threats, cyberattacks and recent acts of sabotage transcend borders, since they include damage to pipelines and underwater communication cables, global positioning system (GPS) interference in the Baltic and the Black Sea and assaults on shipping routes in the Red Sea; whereas tackling the exposure of maritime infrastructure, sea lines of communication, and global trade to hybrid threats, cyberattacks, piracy and rising geopolitical tensions, and therefore threats to maritime security, has become a strategic priority for the EU's economy, connectivity and digital sovereignty;L. whereas the fifth round of negotiations for a future global plastics treaty took place in August 2025 but without consensus on a treaty;
- M. whereas Brexit introduced new complexities to fisheries governance in the North-east Atlantic, negatively affecting structured and orderly cooperation in fisheries management and ocean governance, including quota allocation, access to fishing grounds and trade dynamics;
- N. whereas Regulation (EU) 2025/2077 strengthens the EU's ability to act against non-sustainable fishing practices carried out by non-EU countries, by defining clear criteria for 'failure to cooperate', grounded in international law and independent scientific

evidence, with the aim of safeguarding shared fish stocks, reinforcing cooperation within RFMOs and ensuring a level playing field for EU fishers operating under high sustainability standards;O. whereas the European Ocean Pact proposes six key priorities for the EU, including strengthening EU ocean diplomacy, protecting and restoring ocean health, enhancing maritime security and advancing ocean research and knowledge;

Strengthening ocean diplomacy

1. Emphasises that the EU should continue to lead the international ocean governance agenda, as it is uniquely positioned, considering the size of its maritime area, the geostrategic position of the outermost regions in all oceans, its historical leadership, its economic relevance and weight, and its legal and regulatory leadership; recalls that the EU has the largest EEZ in the world and is already one of the front runners in the sustainable management, protection, safeguarding and restoring of its marine habitats and resources for future generations;2. Stresses that the ocean is a geopolitical and economic asset central to Europe's competitiveness and cultural identity, and that ocean diplomacy is part of international ocean governance; believes that this should not be limited to geopolitical or security approaches only but should also take in consideration general ocean management and governance, which reflect the environmental, economic, cultural, social and territorial dimensions of the sea and the importance of the sea to fishing communities and the communities of the coastal, island and outermost regions;
3. Calls for the mainstreaming of ocean diplomacy in the EU's external action, including development, and its common foreign and security policy, to defend a rules-based maritime order through multilateral cooperation in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); notes that enhanced cooperation among Member States and EU agencies, in particular the European Maritime Safety Agency, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the European Fisheries Control Agency, the European Environment Agency and the EU Agency for the Space Programme, would help ensure the sustainable exploitation of marine resources, promote EU environmental, economic and social standards, notably in international organisations including the FAO, the International Labour Organization and the WTO, and counter IUU fishing, through stricter controls on unregulated fishery imports and stricter conditions for accessing EEZs;4. Underlines the importance of tackling shadow fleets, piracy, intimidation and hostile or violent acts originating from non-EU countries to the prejudice of EU fishers and EU maritime infrastructure, through specific measures such as naval missions, satellite monitoring using Copernicus, and naval drones; calls for the strengthening of EU military, non-military and naval missions dedicated to monitoring and combating IUU fishing activities, trafficking and phantom fleets, and controlling the safety of vessels; recalls that trafficking and phantom fleets are increasing the risk of major pollution incidents and endangering coastal areas and their populations; suggests the establishment of an EU emergency and remediation facility to assist in response and recovery efforts following environmental accidents linked to these operations;
5. Welcomes the objective of the European Ocean Pact to develop an integrated strategy that unites maritime policies and builds coherence across sectors, by integrating, among others, ocean diplomacy, the blue economy, environmental responsibility, protection, an

industrial maritime strategy, fisheries and aquaculture production, maritime security, trade, and development policy; underlines that, through a combination of naval deployments, infrastructure surveillance, insurance and market stabilisation measures, enhanced cyber defences and robust legal enforcement, the EU can maintain secure and dependable trade routes and fishing spots, thereby bolstering its credibility and leadership in the global rules-based order; calls for ‘oceans summits’ to be organised regularly at EU level, involving all relevant ministers, Parliament and the Commission, to follow up on the implementation of the European Ocean Pact and to develop strong and dynamic international ocean governance and ocean diplomacy, contributing to a broader EU ocean agenda and to the global rules-based order;

6. Welcomes the new Pact for the Mediterranean as a flagship initiative to strengthen peace, stability and prosperity in the region; notes, in particular, the emphasis on promoting and improving legal frameworks relating to RFMOs and combating IUU fishing in the Mediterranean through capacity building, monitoring, control and surveillance; notes also the aim of helping to mobilise large-scale regional projects that create opportunities for people and business; underlines that the Mediterranean fishing fleet is predominantly composed of small-scale vessels, accounting for around 80 % of the total EU fleet in the region, and that it and the fleets of neighbouring countries are already facing multiple challenges that affect the sector’s attractiveness and socio-economic sustainability; recognises the importance of fostering regional cooperation on maritime security, environmental protection and the sustainable development of the blue economy; calls on the Commission, in close partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean and other regional bodies, to prioritise the implementation of this pact and to draw on the experience and best practice of previous initiatives of this kind to ensure tangible benefits for coastal communities, with a particular focus on young people, women, small businesses, ecosystems, food sovereignty and economic resilience across the basin and the connected Black Sea;
7. Calls on the Commission to make full use of robust international ocean governance and ocean diplomacy as a strategic tool to advance common objectives and EU strategic interests through its participation in RFMOs and through its network of SFPAs, with a particular focus on sustainable governance, thereby ensuring a genuine level playing field, compliance and fair competition between EU fishers and those of non-EU countries, while emphasising the need for the EU to maintain a fishing fleet that can take advantage of the new fishing opportunities created by the expansion of SFPAs to secure EU food sovereignty, while contributing to local economic resilience and sustainable resource management;
8. Welcomes the announcement of a new generation of SFPAs, as outlined in the European Ocean Pact, which are aligned with the EU’s regional strategies for Africa and the Indo-Pacific; stresses the need to ensure that these agreements respect scientific advice and human rights, while further deepening bilateral cooperation with partner countries and strengthening common action in international forums such as RFMOs, and that they also reinforce the EU’s global leadership in promoting sustainable fisheries partnerships; emphasises that this new generation of SFPAs should also provide an opportunity to improve fleet sustainability, reduce pressure on highly exploited stocks, diversify the origins of fishing products and reduce the EU’s dependence on fishing products from non-EU countries; calls on the Commission to

adopt a globally influential communications strategy to assert its ambitions and its leadership;⁹. Calls for attention to be given to dormant agreements, to either activate them by initiating negotiations or terminate them, in order to enable EU operators to explore other arrangements in compliance of applicable EU rules, such as direct authorisations; underlines that the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies of 2022 explicitly excludes SFPAs from its scope;

10. Calls, furthermore, on the Commission to persist in its efforts, notably through its action in RFMOs, its network of SFPAs and memoranda of understanding, to bring greater transparency and accountability to all fishing nations, especially those that not uphold the same high social, safety and sustainability standards as EU fleets, ensuring that they endorse standards that protect workers in line with International Labour Organization conventions, provide detailed information on their fleet activities, report their catches accurately and comply with conservation and management measures;
11. Calls for the EU and its Member States to promote the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, to protect small-scale fishers' tenure rights and access to fishing resources and to ensure the participation of small-scale fishers in the decisions that affect them;
12. Calls on the Commission to explore, with Mediterranean partner countries, ways to promote and harmonise shared management of marine resources and a level playing field in terms of rules and controls, regional stability and security, in order to secure the long-term economic future of operators, for example, by deepening cooperation in RFMOs or concluding an SFPA;
13. Stresses that SFPAs must guarantee fair and non-discriminatory treatment of EU vessels, with access fees and conditions that are proportionate, transparent and aligned with the principle of a level playing field; underlines that all vessels operating in partner countries' EEZs should be subject to the same financial and technical requirements as EU vessels, for instance through mirror measures; calls for the strengthening of the non-discrimination clause in future SFPA protocols to prevent partner countries from granting more favourable conditions – financial or technical – to other foreign fleets; emphasises the need for effective monitoring and enforcement of these clauses, noting the current lack of detailed information in Commission evaluations regarding their implementation and effectiveness; calls, therefore, on the Commission to systematically include comprehensive analysis and data on this aspect in future SFPA evaluation reports;
14. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in order to improve the implementation of the IUU Regulation⁴, to address the lack of transparency in the fishing sectors of non-EU countries that results, for example, from flags of convenience, flag hopping, complex corporate structures and a lack of public information on beneficial owners; highlights, furthermore, the importance of preventing the EU fleet from being replaced by less sustainable non-EU fleets;

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999 (OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1005/oj>).

15. Considers it important for an EU presence and access to fishing grounds for vessels flagged in the EU to be prioritised in negotiations; believes that having vessels flying the flags of EU Member States is preferable for food supply, and its control and sustainability, and contributes to the EU's strategic autonomy in food security;
16. Recognises the strategic importance of joint ventures in fishing as a useful model of cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries; highlights the fact that these schemes generate economic and social value, both within the EU and in non-EU countries, while ensuring the supply of high-quality and sustainably caught marine protein to EU consumers, helping to promote responsible fishing, fair employment and sustainable growth, and contributing directly to several Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to the EU's objectives in ocean governance;
17. Notes with approval the joint communication of 24 June 2022 from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's international ocean governance agenda and the Commission's recent adoption of the European Ocean Pact, the implementation of which must be supported by the necessary financial means, which includes the EUR 1 billion pledged at the third United Nations Ocean Conference for voluntary commitments to safeguard marine biodiversity and reinforce the development of a sustainable blue economy; welcomes the integration of the European Ocean Pact into the Competitiveness Compass as a strategic element for long-term EU growth, while regretting the risk of competition among maritime sectors for access to the funding;
18. Calls for the EU to support relevant stakeholders in establishing a European maritime industrial alliance that integrates fisheries, aquaculture, shipbuilding, shipping, strategic investments and technology, while acknowledging the interdependence of all maritime sectors in terms of competitiveness, employment, energy and digital transitions and the sustainable use of marine and aquatic resources;
19. Calls for the European External Action Service (EEAS) to significantly increase investment in the training of EU diplomats on ocean-related issues, with a particular emphasis on strengthening expertise in maritime and ocean governance within EU delegations and missions to non-EU countries, especially coastal countries; stresses the need to enhance their understanding of EU blue economy investments, operations and challenges within their areas of competence, and in line with the Global Gateway strategy; calls for the involvement of the EEAS in promoting the strategic importance of the European Ocean Pact, with support or guidance from the relevant directorates-general of the Commission, including the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE);

Fisheries and aquaculture competitiveness

20. Calls on the Commission, as part of the ongoing evaluation of the CFP, to present solutions to reduce administrative burdens and simplify administrative procedures through an omnibus proposal and to expedite procedures for projects that enhance food security and sovereignty; considers that leading with the example of a profitable sector will strengthen common sustainability standards, to lead the way in the development of these standards globally;

21. Emphasises that actions such as simplifying access to land and coastal areas, developed in close cooperation with the European Investment Bank and regional and local authorities, are essential steps for maintaining a sustainable, resilient and competitive aquaculture sector; underlines that a revised CFP or a new common aquaculture policy should help enhance food security and sovereignty by ensuring stable seafood supply for EU consumers;
22. Stresses that fisheries and aquaculture are strategic assets for food security, sovereignty and coastal rural development; urges the Commission to fully integrate fisheries and aquatic food production into the EU's wider food security, nutrition and sustainability strategies; insists that the three CFP sustainability pillars should be equally developed and none should undermine the viability of the others; calls for the EU and the Member States to strengthen cooperation between fishers and other maritime stakeholders under the sustainable blue economy framework, in areas such as maritime spatial planning, the deployment of renewable energy, the organisation of the seafood supply chain, the circular economy and diversification, acknowledging the broader identity and role of fishers as guardians of the marine environment and drivers of local development in coastal communities;
23. Urges the Commission to thoroughly assess the structural and environmental factors and trends affecting the long-term sustainability, competitiveness, dependence and profitability of fisheries, aquaculture, and first-sale and processing operators, especially in the island and outermost regions; suggests that measures be developed to address those factors and trends through specific and immediate action that prevents the gradual disappearance of EU fishing activities;
24. Points out the need to make the EU fishing and aquaculture sector attractive and competitive when compared with global competitors; calls on the Commission to ensure that all Member States and relevant stakeholders commit to the swift implementation of the CATCH system for all fishery and aquaculture products imported into the EU, and to promote the voluntary use of the system by non-EU countries;
25. Calls for targeted measures to ensure generational renewal and to enhance the attractiveness of fishing careers, also for women, by ensuring the sustainable management and rebuilding of fish stocks, investment in modern, safe and digitalised fishing fleets without increasing their fishing capacities, training programmes, safety at sea, the development of vocational training, particularly in the maintenance of maritime drones and remotely operated robots, the prevention of occupational and non-occupational disease, risk prevention initiatives and improved working conditions;
26. Recalls that the island and outermost regions face permanent natural and geographical constraints that affect the competitiveness of their fishing fleets and island economies; calls for specific attention to be given to investments in and measures, funding and support for, for example, the decarbonisation, renewal and modernisation of fishing fleets and infrastructure improvements, particularly in the outermost regions, in order to enhance attractiveness, safeguard generational renewal and the future of the fisheries sector in those regions, and contribute to sustainable local development; asks the Commission to pay particular attention to the involvement of the outermost regions in the EU's fisheries partnerships with non-EU countries, especially with neighbouring

countries or regions, for instance in the form of infrastructure, fleet or sectoral support, in order to avoid any situation of unfair competition between fishers in the outermost regions and fishers in neighbouring non-EU countries whose vessels are being renewed;

27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote consumer awareness and encourage transparency and traceability, ensuring that detailed information is provided, also digitally, on the origin, quality and sustainability of all seafood products; stresses the need to ensure that EU seafood and marine products and those imported into the EU meet similar environmental, social, traceability, sustainability and animal welfare standards, enforced by effective monitoring and sanctions, in line with WTO rules and future mirror clauses;
28. Calls for action in relation to decarbonisation efforts and fleet renewal and modernisation, paying specific attention to the situation and needs of the fishing fleet in the outermost regions and islands; points out that its recent study⁵ suggests that future support instruments for fisheries should consider less restrictive conditions for support for the first acquisition of a fishing vessel, for engine renewal or replacement and for vessel improvements requiring additional tonnage while, at the same time, applying restrictions to avoid overcapacity or overfishing at the level of individual segments or the entire national fleet; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to address this when evaluating and simplifying unnecessary regulatory barriers within the CFP and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF);

Environmental and scientific leadership

29. Welcomes the EU's leadership in international ocean governance, particularly through its role in creating the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction High Ambition Coalition of 47 members; welcomes the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement under the UNCLOS to ensure the effective conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in order to ensure, in turn, the effective protection and sustainable management of the high seas; calls for the new framework to operate in a coordinated and complementary manner with existing international bodies including RFMOs, the FAO and the International Maritime Organization, and with the CFP; stresses that the agreement should be implemented and the directive transposed respecting the competences of these bodies, the EU *acquis* and the competences of the Member States;³⁰. Welcomes the confirmation that the failure to adopt, implement or enforce fisheries management measures – whether under RFMOs or bilateral and multilateral agreements – now constitutes a failure to cooperate under EU law; asks the Commission, in this regard, in cooperation with the Member States, to use all available instruments to ensure that non-EU countries cooperate, including Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012⁶, which establishes a framework for identifying and adopting measures for non-EU countries that fail to cooperate and that allow non-sustainable fishing of a stock of common interest for the Union;

⁵ European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, 'The future of the EU fishing fleet – First assessment of Member States' EMFAF programmes for 2021-27', November 2024.

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing (OJ L 316, 14.11.2012, p. 34, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/1026/oj>).

31. Recognises the importance of the precautionary principle of an international moratorium on deep-sea mining as a matter of global environmental responsibility that might affect ocean governance and fisheries; highlights, in this regard, the importance of applying the precautionary principle to deep-sea mining projects until their effects on the marine environment and biodiversity have been sufficiently studied and researched; insists that the EU continue to participate actively in the global efforts on research and exploration of the deep sea, while setting the highest standards for sustainable resource management; welcomes the precautionary pause on deep-sea mining advocated by the Commission; calls, therefore, on the Member States to support this approach, including through the International Seabed Authority, until comprehensive scientific research and knowledge on the impact of deep-sea mining is available and until it can be demonstrated that such activities can be managed without causing biodiversity loss or degradation of the ecosystem;
32. Calls for support for an international moratorium on deep-sea mining and reminds the EU and its Member States, as members of the International Seabed Authority and in accordance with the UNCLOS, of their legal obligation to respond with appropriate measures to any attempts to bypass the International Seabed Authority as the competent international body for regulating deep-sea mining activities beyond national jurisdictions, as such attempts might have an impact on international ocean governance;³³ Calls on the Commission and the Member States to push for the international moratorium on whaling and the hunting of large cetaceans of the International Whaling Commission and international bodies to be respected by all countries and regions, and for existing exceptions not to be abusively used as support for commercial objectives;
34. Stresses that the designation of any marine protected areas (MPAs) must be preceded by full impact assessments and the effective consultation of concerned stakeholders, and must have clear objectives and effective monitoring, control and surveillance measures, based on the best available scientific knowledge and advice; highlights the need to take into account the three pillars of sustainable development that must go hand in hand with EU strategic autonomy and the importance of fishers and coastal communities in EU cohesion;
35. Recalls the need to pay specific attention to the Arctic region, in line with the 2021 Arctic strategy, and expresses its support in particular for the efforts made on the establishment of the two new MPAs in the eastern Antarctic and the Weddell Sea in the Antarctic Ocean; notes the impact assessments and the opposition to MPA proposals expressed by some parties within the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources; calls for active advocacy of these marine protected areas as part of a necessary response to the growing and potentially unsustainable ambitions of other global actors in these regions and for the bilateral and multilateral efforts to be intensified to secure support for the establishment of new MPAs;
36. Stresses that scientific evidence must remain the backbone of decision-making in international ocean governance, serving as a common currency in multilateral negotiations and supporting sustainable governance in fisheries and aquaculture; further emphasises the need to invest in and assist scientific bodies that provide the evidence underpinning such decisions;³⁷ Recalls the importance of the EU's global

leadership in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that recognises the importance of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) as a complementary approach to MPAs; stresses the importance of including OECMs to reach the target of protecting 30 % of the oceans globally by 2030, provided that the OECMs meet the criteria in this framework;

38. Supports the European Ocean Pact's commitment to establishing a pan-European ocean observation initiative as a cornerstone for improving the understanding and management of marine ecosystems; supports the creation of an European Deep Sea Observatory in the Atlantic, while promoting the creation of a global network of observatories that share data and encourage mobility among scientists; calls for enhanced cooperation within the EU on research and innovation to strengthen marine scientific collaboration and mobility and reinforce EU leadership in marine science; calls for the EU, in view of the backsliding observed in certain global partners' efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to step up its efforts in and commitment to scientific cooperation for the preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems; underlines the need to provide adequate financial support;³⁹ Calls on the Commission to establish, under the European Ocean Pact, a dedicated 'clean Baltic' initiative addressing the unique environmental and safety challenges of the Baltic Sea; underlines that the sea basin remains heavily affected by eutrophication, pollution and the presence of hazardous wartime remnants, including munitions, chemical agents and other contaminants on the seabed;

Trade policy and global ocean governance

40. Stresses the EU's responsibility to maintain its leadership role in international forums by driving multilateralism, engaging with all relevant partners in fisheries' sustainability and ocean governance, including the United States and China, and setting global standards for marine sustainability and fair competition; highlights, furthermore, the important role of the advisory councils, such as the Long Distance Advisory Council, in giving advice to the Commission on policy formulation and implementation; points out the importance of their advice being duly taken into account in decision-making;⁴¹
Welcomes the entry into force of the WTO's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies; underlines that this agreement is a milestone in the elimination of harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity, thereby fostering a level playing field and sustainable management of marine resources worldwide; encourages the Commission to build on this success through ocean diplomacy, by engaging proactively with non-EU countries, in particular with major fishing nations, to promote the ratification and effective implementation of this agreement and ongoing negotiations to agree the next steps, and to advance global commitments for sustainable, transparent and equitable fisheries management;
42. Stresses that well-managed RFMOs, catering for effective multilateral negotiations resulting in strong common rules and good compliance of those rules, are central to achieving competitiveness in fisheries and aquaculture, thereby highlighting the importance of investment in the capacity of these RFMOs, of cooperation with UN agencies and of strengthening the EU's diplomacy in these forums; stresses that the RFMO compliance bodies remain underused by the EU and calls, therefore, on the Commission to raise and address cases of non-compliance by non-EU countries in the relevant RFMO compliance committees;

43. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen customs checks with enhanced powers, making full use of a new EU customs agency to protect fishers from traffickers of drugs and migrants and from other illicit activities that threaten fishers' safety and regional stability; recalls that ensuring the traceability of seafood products, effective compliance with sustainability standards and reciprocity with non-EU countries in fishery and aquaculture products protects fishers from illegal activities and maintains consumer confidence; emphasises that criminal networks using the fisheries sector in their operations undermine sustainable ocean governance, distort local economies and endanger livelihoods in coastal regions; stresses that effectively tackling organised crime in fisheries will contribute to a safer and more resilient ocean economy;
44. Welcomes the long-term arrangements between the EU and the United Kingdom that grant full reciprocal access to fishing waters until 30 June 2038; asks the Commission to exercise vigilance in monitoring the actions that are taken by the UK, in order to safeguard the interests of the EU and of its operators and citizens, and to remain firmly opposed to any unilateral decisions that would de facto reduce EU fishers' access to UK waters, such as those related to the implementation or planned designation of MPAs and the sand eel fishing ban, and to use the mechanisms of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement to remedy any resulting loss of fishing rights; calls on the Commission to also ensure long-term and stable EU-UK fisheries arrangements beyond 2038;
45. Calls for the EU to intensify its engagement with Norway through the high-level roundtable on fisheries and oceans dialogue, to resolve outstanding issues such as the cod debt from 2021 owed by Norway to the EU and to ensure a fair and level playing field between EU and Norwegian fishers; calls on the Commission to make every effort to reach a comprehensive agreement on shared stocks with coastal states in order to prevent overfishing of those stocks and to guarantee EU fishers fair and sustainable fishing opportunities; calls on the Commission to make use of all the options offered by Regulation 1026/2012 with regard to countries that allow unsustainable fishing, including sanctions;
46. Stresses that the EU should use its market power as a strategic tool to defend its interests and promote sustainability; underlines that access to the EU market must be conditional on compliance with EU standards, ensuring that seafood imported into the EU does not originate from illegal or unsustainable sources or from activities linked to human rights abuses;
47. Highlights the EU's long-standing relationship with Greenland on fisheries-related matters and points out the importance of deepening the relationship for EU fishers and for joint actions to ensure sustainable management of fish stocks in the North Atlantic;
48. Calls on the Commission to ensure proper and full implementation of EU rules related to non-EU countries allowing non-sustainable fishing, to provide greater legal clarity on non-sustainable fishing practices and to trigger EU enforcement measures under EU law, including trade restrictions such as import bans, in order to strengthen the EU's ability to address unsustainable practices, particularly those affecting small-pelagic stocks such as mackerel, and to ensure consistency between trade policy and ocean diplomacy objectives; stresses that many of these practices are already well identified yet insufficiently addressed by current enforcement measures;49. Urges the

Commission to strengthen monitoring, control and enforcement mechanisms concerning Russian fishing activities and seafood trade flows, including transshipments and re-exports through non-EU countries; calls for further restrictions on imports of fisheries products from Russia; calls for strict traceability requirements and coordinated inspections to be introduced and for the entry into the EU market of fish caught or processed by Russian operators to be prevented;

50. Stresses the importance of ensuring consistency between the standards imposed on EU producers and those applied to imported products, particularly in the context of current or future trade agreements between the EU and its trade partners, for example by introducing mirror measures; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to continue assessing the relevance of autonomous tariff quotas in view of their impact on the EU fishing industry and to adapt them where necessary; reiterates its call for canned fish and seafood to be treated as ‘sensitive products’ in trade negotiations; calls on the EU authorities to exercise caution and step up controls to ensure that any exports benefiting from autonomous tariff quotas are not a product of IUU fishing;
51. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the CFP objectives are fully integrated into the EU’s position in all international forums, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, where marine biological resources, including fisheries resources, are discussed;

Budgetary and institutional measures

52. Strongly insists on the need for significant funding for ocean governance and diplomacy, especially in order to maintain a strategic fishing sector, to ensure that the EU can deliver on its global commitments, strengthen its strategic role and support the future resilience of coastal communities; notes with concern that the proposals for the next multiannual financial framework indicate a ring-fencing of only EUR 2 billion for fisheries and aquaculture for the 2028-2034 period, representing barely one third of its previous guaranteed funding level;
53. Calls on the Commission to guarantee an adequate level of funding in the post-2028 multiannual financial framework for fisheries-related expenditure, such as the objectives currently covered in the EMFAF; points out the importance of EU funds remaining a strong tool to support generational renewal, gender equality, food security, fleet modernisation and socio-economic sustainability;
54. Highlights the crucial role of small-scale fisheries in sustaining local economies and communities across the world; stresses that, for the EU to improve its strategic and food autonomy, it is crucial to rebuild EU stocks and, in order to create the conditions for the EU’s long-term resilience and competitiveness, it is essential for the EU’s small-scale fishing sector to be adequately supported both by the EU and at national level;⁵⁵.
Notes that all diplomacy implies a costly projection capacity, and it would therefore be appropriate to establish a specific financial instrument for fisheries in island and outermost regions, for instance by re-establishing the Programme of Options Specifically Relating to Remoteness and Insularity (POSEI-Fisheries), which has been integrated into the EMFAF, in order to support the sector in overcoming geographical

and structural constraints and ensuring the long-term viability of local fishing communities; highlights the importance of ensuring the use of current tools, such as the Copernicus Marine Service, and new capabilities or technologies, such as drones;

56. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that fishers and stakeholders in the blue economy have effective and simpler access to financing instruments, with the allocation of minimum dedicated funds, such as the European Competitiveness Fund, which supports investment in a sustainable blue economy, and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, which underpins ocean governance and diplomacy and efforts to combat IUU fishing, as well as funding for SFPAs and complementary funding sources such as the Just Transition Fund, REPowerEU, Horizon Europe and the European Investment Bank; urges the Commission to guarantee sufficient administrative and legal stability for private investments to foster the development of maritime sectors;

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57. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Europe's maritime economy is a cornerstone of its prosperity: the blue economy contributes EUR 250 billion annually in gross value added, supports 5 million jobs, and underpins the functioning of global trade, with 90 % of the value of international trade and 80 % of EU external trade transported by sea, and 99 % of intercontinental internet traffic carried through undersea cables.

Small-scale fisheries are the backbone of many coastal communities, providing economic livelihoods, preserving traditions, and ensuring food security, but face declining generational renewal and unattractive working conditions. In particular, the Mediterranean fishing fleet is predominantly composed of small-scale vessels, accounting for around 80 % of the total EU fleet in the region, and is already facing multiple challenges affecting the sector's attractiveness and socio-economic sustainability.

The common fisheries policy (CFP) is an exclusive EU competence and a cornerstone of EU food security and environmental policy, built on environmental, social, and economic sustainability, regional cooperation, and science-based decision-making.

The EU has the largest exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the world and engaged already in safeguarding its resources for future generations. EU is thus uniquely positioned to lead global ocean governance due to its maritime size, economic weight, and legal and regulatory leadership.

Ocean diplomacy is no longer an optional foreign policy tool but a strategic necessity for Europe's security, trade, environmental sustainability, and economic resilience. A coherent EU Ocean Diplomacy Charter should be used to influence trade partners, create binding sustainability obligations, secure fair access to stocks, and make Marine Protected Areas more efficient.

Fisheries and aquaculture are strategic assets for food security and rural development. It is important to acknowledge the broader identity and role of fishers as custodians of the marine environment, contributors to environmental tourism, and drivers of local development in coastal communities. The environmental measures must not undermine socio-economic viability.

The over dependence on seafood imports must be mitigated through self-sufficiency policies by engaging third countries to meet equivalent environmental and social standards as well as to prevent unfair competition. Cooperation between fishers and other maritime stakeholders in areas such as maritime spatial planning, renewable energy deployment, seafood supply chain organisation, the circular economy, and diversification under the sustainable blue economy framework must be strengthened.

The trust between fisheries stakeholders and EU institutions must be rebuilt through improved transparency, evaluation, and engagement in policy development processes. It is essential the international scientific cooperation and an increased investment in marine research to address global challenges and support evidence-based policy making.

A strong cooperation with the United States is vital through e.g. the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), recognising the role of transatlantic partnerships in advancing ocean governance and science. The withdrawal of the US from several multilateral organisations is regrettable, which has weakened collective action.

The common fisheries policy (CFP) must be supported by adequate and stable funding to achieve its objectives.

ANNEX: DECLARATION OF INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that she included in her report input on matters pertaining to the subject of the file that she received, in the preparation of the report, prior to the adoption thereof in committee, from the following interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register⁷, or from the following representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies:

1. Interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register
DG MARE
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO
2. Representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that she has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do>), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.

⁷ Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinst/2021/611/oj).

**INFORMATION ON ADOPTION
BY THE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE**

Date adopted	25.2.2026	
Result of final vote	+:	18
	-:	4
	0:	4

**FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL
BY THE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE**

18	+
ECR	Carlo Ciccioi, Nora Junco García, Piotr Müller, Bert-Jan Ruissen
PPE	Carmen Crespo Díaz, Paulo Do Nascimento Cabral, Isabelle Le Callennec, Francisco José Millán Mon, Jessica Polfjård, Sander Smit, Željana Zovko
Renew	Asger Christensen, Emma Wiesner, Michal Wiezik
S&D	Sakis Arnaoutoglou, Thomas Bajada, André Franqueira Rodrigues, Giuseppe Lupo

4	-
ESN	Siegbert Frank Droese
PfE	Ton Diepeveen, António Tânger Corrêa, Séverine Werbrouck

4	0
The Left	Luke Ming Flanagan, Emma Fourreau
Verts/ALE	Isabella Lövin, Ana Miranda Paz

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention