



Sustainable management of external fishing fleets

February 2019

EU vessels fishing in waters beyond Member States' jurisdiction, as well as third-country vessels operating in EU waters, are subject to an authorisation procedure defined by Regulation [2017/2403](#) on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets. The core principle of this regulation is that any EU vessel fishing beyond European waters must be authorised and monitored by its flag Member State, whatever the framework in which it operates. If EU vessels operate in waters under the jurisdiction of a third country, fishing activities may take place either in the framework of a bilateral EU fisheries agreement with the country in question, or if no such agreement exists, under a direct authorisation issued by the third country through a private agreement. If they fish in areas beyond national jurisdiction (also known as the 'high seas'), they may operate under the auspices of a regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO), or outside such arrangements, if no RFMO is responsible for the fisheries concerned.

[New rules for managing the EU external fishing fleet](#)

Briefing (fifth edition) by Irina Popescu, February 2018

The European Parliament and the Council have adopted a regulation on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets, revising the system of issuing and managing fishing authorisations so as to improve monitoring and transparency of the external fishing activities of EU vessels. The regulation extends the scope of the authorisation system to include practices such as private agreements between EU companies and third countries, and abusive reflagging operations. Member States are required to authorise fishing vessels using common eligibility criteria, complemented by specific conditions depending on the nature of the authorisation. Part of the electronic fishing authorisations register, showing who fishes for what and where, will for the first time be publicly accessible.

See also, on the same legislative procedure, the 'at a glance' notes concerning the [second reading](#) (December 2017) in plenary and the [first reading](#) (February 2017).

[Beyond the European seas: The external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy](#)

In-depth analysis by Irina Popescu, November 2015

The external dimension of the common fisheries policy provides a framework for the activities of EU vessels fishing beyond European waters, structured around two types of arrangements: multilateral agreements for fishing on the high seas, and bilateral agreements with third countries for fishing in areas under their jurisdiction. This analysis reviews the main aspects of the external dimension and its evolution over time.

[Expanding the network of EU tuna fisheries agreements](#)

Briefing by Irina Popescu, July 2016

Since 1980, the EU has set up a network of bilateral fisheries agreements, providing fishing opportunities for the EU fleet in the waters of third countries. These agreements were concluded with countries in West Africa (1980-1998), in the western Indian Ocean (1984-1989), and in the western-central Pacific (2003-2007). Over the past few years, the European Commission has considered the possibility of expanding EU fleet access to new partner countries' waters in the three regions. To put these fishing opportunities into perspective, this briefing provides an overview of EU tuna fisheries, outlining the activities of the different types of EU tuna fishing vessels within and outside the framework of EU agreements, and the importance of their catches to the EU market.

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EU-Morocco fisheries agreement

'At a glance' note by Irina Popescu, February 2019

During the February 2019 part-session, the Parliament voted on giving its consent to the conclusion of a new fisheries agreement and implementing protocol with Morocco, which also cover the disputed Western Saharan waters.

Mediterranean swordfish recovery plan

'At a glance' note by Irina Popescu, November 2018

Mediterranean swordfish, overfished for decades, is subject to a multiannual recovery plan aimed at rebuilding the stock, adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which is the regional fisheries management organisation responsible. The European Parliament is currently considering the Commission's proposal on the transposition of this plan into EU law.

EU-Mauritius fisheries agreement: New protocol

'At a glance' note by Irina Popescu, April 2018

European Parliament consent was needed for the conclusion of a new protocol associated with the EU's fisheries agreement with Mauritius. The protocol, allowing EU vessels to fish in Mauritian waters and setting out the fishing opportunities available to the EU fleet, as well as the EU financial contribution, was the subject of a plenary vote during the April 2018 session.

Denouncing the EU-Comoros fisheries agreement

'At a glance' note by Irina Popescu, March 2018

Following the listing of the Comoros as a non-cooperating country in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the Commission initiated the termination of the EU-Comoros fisheries agreement. Parliament's consent, requested for this first ever denunciation of a fisheries agreement on grounds of IUU fishing, was the subject of a plenary vote during the March 2018 part session.

Transposing international measures for Atlantic tuna fisheries into EU law

Briefing by Irina Popescu, January 2018

The European Parliament and the Council have adopted a regulation concerning the management of fisheries targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas, in particular the Mediterranean. The new regulation transposes into EU law a number of binding recommendations adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), a regional fisheries management organisation to which the EU is a contracting party.

South Pacific fisheries management measures: Transposition into EU law

'At a glance' note by Irina Popescu, June 2017

The European Union is a contracting party to the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), and therefore the binding conservation and management measures adopted by this organisation must be enacted into EU law. The European Parliament adopted the Commission's proposal on the first transposition of SPRFMO measures during the May 2018 part-session.

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