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New fishing legislation will ensure EU boats meet standards worldwide

Comment from Greens/EFA MEP Linnéa Engström

Ground-breaking new fishing legislation has been agreed this evening in the final negotiations between the European Parliament and the European Council. The new legislation will mean that all EU vessels fishing in external waters will have to comply with EU-wide regulations.

This is a major step forward for sustainability and transparency, says Greens/EFA MEP **Linnéa Engström**, who was the rapporteur for the parliament:

"For the first time, all kinds of fishing activities by EU vessels outside Union waters will be regulated, including fishing on the high sea and in private agreements between EU ship-owners and third countries. This will do a great deal to safeguard the future of international fish stocks and communities dependent upon them globally.

"I'm also pleased to have secured strong rules and greater transparency on chartering of EU vessels. Until now, we have had next to no information on these activities, so this is a crucial first step towards better regulation of this murky area.

"We also reached an agreement that the Commission shall collect information on the owners and beneficial owners of fishing fleets, helping to shed light on where responsibility lies for the fleets. While we would have liked to have made this information public, it is nonetheless an important step towards better monitoring of the ownership structures of the fishing industry."

Background

Until now, EU boats operating in third countries outside EU bilateral agreements, or in international waters where there is no international organisation, have not been subject to specific EU monitoring and conditions. Under this new regulation, EU vessels fishing outside Union waters will not be able to fish in third country waters or in the high sea unless they have been authorised by the Member State in which the vessel is registered and licensed. To obtain an authorisation, they will have to show that they comply with a set of criteria, which will be monitored on a regular basis. Member States will be required to withdraw an authorisation from a vessel that does not comply with rules. If a Member States fails to take action, the

Commission will have the possibility to stop non-complying vessels from fishing.

The regulations will also create a publicly available register including information on names and identification numbers of the vessels, what they fish and where they fish. A non-public part of the register will also include information about owner and beneficial ownership.

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Responsible MEPs



Linnéa Engström

Member

Contact person



David Weir

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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