

Fisheries control

2018/0193(COD) - 10/02/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Clara AGUILERA (S&D, ES) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council

Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control.

As a reminder, the aim of the proposed regulation is to have a simple, transparent and effective fisheries control system that ensures effective, uniform and up-to-date compliance in the EU Member States, without leading to an increase in the administrative burden.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Enhanced harmonisation

In order to promote greater clarity and harmonisation of the EU regulatory framework and thus improve its application, the committee proposed harmonising specific terms such as 'direct sale', 'sensitive species', 'inspections', 'traceability', etc.

Identification of vessels

Members proposed that Member States should ensure that data from the automatic identification system is made available to their national fisheries control authorities for control purposes, including cross-checks of automatic identification system data with other available data. Masters of Union fishing vessels of less than 12 metres' length overall, as well as natural persons engaging in fishing without vessels, should keep an electronic logbook in a simplified format.

Electronic monitoring

Members proposed equipping fishing vessels with CCTV technology on a voluntary basis provided that an incentive such as catch quota uplifts or freedom of choice of method in conducting a fishery is granted by the competent authority.

Fishing vessels should be equipped with CCTV technology on a temporary and mandatory basis if they have committed two or more serious infringements.

Training for inspectors

It is proposed that inspectors should receive the training necessary to perform the tasks assigned to them and shall be equipped with the tools necessary to conduct the inspections. In order to standardise controls across the EU, Member States should use a common form for inspection reports containing the same basic information on the checks conducted. EU inspectors should report to the authorities of the Member State or to the Commission any non-compliant fishing activity by fishing vessels flying the flag of a third country in international waters subject to requirements and/or recommendations issued by a regional international body.

EU vessels operating outside EU waters are often checked by third country inspectors who need to be aware of the applicable EU rules. EU inspectors should also be able to train inspectors from these third countries where EU vessels operate.

Non-compliance and infringements

To prevent unfairness and differences in treatment within the EU, the Commission needs to help Member States determine the seriousness of infringements and ensure uniform interpretation of the various penalties applicable. In all cases, no more than one Member State may institute proceedings or impose sanctions for each act of infringement.

EU register of infringements

Members proposed that a European register of infringements should be set up to record individual Member States' data concerning the infringements identified, with the aim of improving transparency and monitoring the penalty points system more effectively.