

Fisheries control

2018/0193(COD) - 11/03/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 401 votes to 247 with 47 abstentions amendments to 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) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control.

The matter was referred back to the committee responsible for interinstitutional negotiations.

The main amendments adopted in plenary concern the following points:

Monitoring compliance with the landing obligation

Members suggested that a minimum percentage of fishing vessels of an overall length equal to or greater than 12 metres flying the flag of Member States which are considered to be at high risk of non-compliance with the landing obligation should be equipped with closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems with continuous recording incorporating data storage, in compliance with all applicable rules on the protection of privacy and the processing of personal data.

In addition, fishing vessels should be required to be equipped with CCTV technology if they have committed two or more serious infringements.

Operators could equip their fishing vessels with CCTV systems on a voluntary basis. In this respect, the competent authority should adopt incentives, such as the allocation of additional quotas or the removal of penalty points.

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.

Traceability throughout the whole food chain

The rules applicable to the placing of fishery and aquaculture products into lots should be clarified. Members considered that it should be possible to merge lots in order to create a new batch, as long as the traceability requirements are fulfilled and it is possible to identify the origin and species of those fishery and aquaculture products throughout the whole food chain.

Serious infringements

Serious infringements should include:

- fishing for, retaining on board, transshipping, transferring or landing species subject to a moratorium or for which fishing is temporarily closed or prohibited;
- failing to comply with technical and other measures aimed at reducing the incidental catch of juvenile fish and protected species;
- intentionally discarding fishing gear and marine litter at sea from fishing vessels;
- failing to comply with obligations relating to the use of fishing gear or obligations relating to technical measures and protection of the marine environment.

Members also considered that recreational fishermen who fail to comply with conservation measures or EU fishing rules should be penalised.

The Commission should publish, prior to implementation of the provisions on sanctions, guidelines to ensure standard determination of the seriousness of infringements in the Union and uniform interpretation of the various sanctions applicable.

EU register of infringements

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