Common fisheries policy (CFP): restrictions to the access to Union waters

2021/0176(COD) - 05/07/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to extend by ten years the period during which Member States may limit access to their waters under Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: under Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the CFP, Member States are authorised to:

- restrict fishing to fishing vessels that traditionally fish in those waters from ports on the adjacent coast in waters up to 12 nautical miles from their baselines;

- restrict access to waters up to 100 nautical miles from the baselines of the Union outermost regions referred to in the first paragraph of Article 349 of the Treaty to vessels registered in the ports of those territories.

As these derogations are in place until 31 December 2022, the proposal aims to avoid a discontinuation of the specific access regime whose objective remains as valid today as it was in previous decades. This is due to the current conservation status of many stocks, the continued sensitivity of coastal waters for conservation and ongoing difficulties in coastal areas that are highly dependent on fisheries and unlikely to benefit from other economic development.

CONTENT: the proposal aims to **extend the existing derogations concerning restrictions on access to EU waters for a further 10 years** in order to ensure the continuity of the protective measures in force and to avoid disturbing the balance that has gradually developed following the introduction of this special regime.

The proposal also amends Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and following a joint request by Italy and Greece concerning access for Italian vessels to the Ionian Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Libyan Sea.

Annex I fixes, for each Member State, the geographical zones within the coastal bands of other Member States where it may pursue fishing activities and which species it may fish.