

# **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Area: conservation and management measures**

2021/0103(COD) - 31/01/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Isabel CARVALHAIS (S&D, PT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down conservation and management measures applicable in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Area and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 520/2007.

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

## ***Scope and purpose***

The amended text stipulated that the Regulation should apply to Union fishing vessels carrying out fishing in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Area. Its aim is to incorporate into European Union law the conservation and management measures (CMMs) adopted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

The mission of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) is, *inter alia*, to organise the operational coordination of fisheries control and inspection activities by Member States for the implementation of international control and inspection programmes such as the ones implemented in WCPFC CMMs, and to assist Member States in reporting information on fishing activities and control and inspection activities to the Commission and third parties.

It is therefore appropriate for the EFCA to be the body that receives from Member States and transmits to the WCPFC Secretariat information relating to control and inspection, such as at sea inspection reports and notifications of the WCPFC.

## ***Sea turtles***

Members stressed that Union fishing vessel should bring on board any captured hard-shell sea turtle (family Cheloniidae) that is comatose or inactive as soon as possible after capture and foster its recovery, including giving it resuscitation, before returning it to the water. Masters and operators of Union fishing vessels should ensure that crew is aware of and use proper mitigation and handling techniques.

## ***Marine pollution***

The amended text stipulated that Union fishing vessels should be prohibited from discharging marine waste produced on board or any plastics, including plastic packaging, items containing plastic and polystyrene into the sea.

## ***Record of fishing vessels***

Members, once again, stressed the need to include the EFCA in the information exchange scheme to and from the WCPFC secretariat, Member States, fishing vessels masters, fishing inspectors and Regional Observer Programme observers. In this regard, Member States should notify EFCA, with the Commission

in copy, of any factual information showing that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a vessel is that not on the Record is or has been engaged in fishing for or transshipment of highly migratory fish stocks in the Convention Area. Submission of vessel record data to the Commission, with EFCA in copy, should be in an electronic transmission that meet the electronic formatting specification.

### ***Regional Observer Programme (ROP)***

ROP observers should remain attentive and shall collect information on any practices that could harm the environment. The observers should, *inter alia*, observe the ethnic traditions and customs of the flag State of the entire crew.

### ***Infringements***

Any intimidation of or physical attacks on the ROP observer should constitute a serious infringement. Moreover, any fishing activities of non-contracting party fishing vessels should also be reported by the Member States to EFCA, with the Commission in copy, and the flag State of the vessel in question.