Conservation of fish stocks: measures in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing

2024/0224(COD) - 09/07/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 681 votes to 4, with 4 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing.

As a reminder, the proposal is a targeted amendment to Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 and aims primarily to clarify certain elements of the conditions to trigger the identification of a country as allowing unsustainable fishing, for increased legal certainty.

The European Parliament adopted its position at first reading by amending the Commission's proposal as follows:

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)

The amended text clarifies that it should be possible for a country to be considered as allowing non-sustainable fishing if it does not implement or enforce the necessary fishery management measures, and that such measures include control measures, including within the framework of RFMOs.

It is also appropriate to reinforce the procedures prior and subsequent to the adoption of measures in respect of countries allowing non-sustainable fishing, including within the framework of RFMOs.

Failure to cooperate

Members stated that ‘failure to cooperate’ means the failure by countries to engage in good faith and have meaningful consultations, including within the framework of RFMOs, in which substantial effort is made with a view to reaching an agreement on the adoption of necessary fishery management measures. Examples of failure to cooperate include, but are not limited to:

- refusing to consult or to involve in consultations all the relevant coastal States and fishing States;

- unjustified unilateral breaking-off of consultations;

- undue delays, including in replying to requests or engaging in consultations;

- withholding information relevant for consultations;

- making unreasonable information requests;

- disregarding agreed procedures;

- systematically refusing to take into consideration counter-proposals or other parties’ interests;

- systematically insisting upon own positions for an extended period, irrespective of flexibility offered by other parties in the consultations;

- refusing to take into account the best available scientific advice or historic fishing activities regarding the relevant stock or stocks.

Countries allowing non-sustainable fishing

A country could be considered a country allowing non-sustainable fishing when:

- it fails to adopt, implement or enforce necessary fishery management measures, including control measures, ensuring the effective conservation and management of stocks of common interest, including within the framework of an RFMO or where agreed bilaterally or multilaterally; or

- it adopts fishery management measures, such as quotas or discriminatory measures, without due regard to the rights, interests and duties of other countries and the Union, and those fishery management measures, when considered in conjunction with measures taken by other countries and the Union, lead to fishing activities which could result in the stock being in an unsustainable state.

Procedures prior to the adoption of measures concerning countries authorising unsustainable fishing

Where the Commission considers it necessary to adopt measures concerning countries authorising unsustainable fishing, it shall **notify** the country concerned of its intention to identify it as a country allowing non-sustainable fishing. In such a case, **the European Parliament and the Council shall be immediately informed** and regularly updated on developments and the actions taken.

Where the stock of common interest falls under the scope of an RFMO, the Commission shall raise the matter of a country allowing non-sustainable fishing with the compliance body of that RFMO prior to the notification with a view to remedying the situation.

Measures with respect to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing shall cease to apply when the country allowing non-sustainable fishing adopts appropriate corrective measures necessary for the conservation and management of the stock of common interest.

Best available scientific advice

Members introduced a clear definition of 'best available scientific advice', meaning publicly available scientific advice that is supported by the most recent scientific data and methods and has been issued or reviewed by an independent scientific body recognised at EU or international level.