The role of ocean diplomacy for the competitiveness of EU fisheries and aquaculture

2025/2054(INI) - 28/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 430 votes to 107, with 115 abstentions, a resolution on the role of ocean diplomacy for the competitiveness of EU fisheries and aquaculture.

Strengthening ocean diplomacy

Parliament stressed that the EU should continue to play **a leading role in the international governance agenda for the oceans**, given its unique position due to the vastness of its maritime zone. The ocean represents a vital geopolitical and economic asset for Europe's competitiveness and cultural identity. Members of Parliament called **for ocean diplomacy to be integrated into the Union's external action**, particularly in support of development, and into its Common Foreign and Security Policy, in order to uphold a rules-based maritime order through multilateral cooperation.

Parliament stressed the importance of **tackling ghost fleets**, piracy, intimidation, and hostile or violent acts perpetrated by non-EU countries against EU fishermen and maritime infrastructure through specific measures, such as naval missions, satellite surveillance via Copernicus, and the use of naval drones. It called for strengthening the EU's military, non-military, and naval missions dedicated to monitoring and combating IUU fishing activities, trafficking, and ghost fleets, as well as ensuring vessel safety.

While welcoming the European Ocean Pact, Members called for regular '**ocean summits**' to be organised at Union level and for all relevant ministers, Parliament and the Commission to participate, in order to establish strong and dynamic international ocean governance and ocean diplomacy.

Partnership agreements in the field of sustainable fisheries

Parliament welcomed the new Pact for the Mediterranean, a flagship initiative aimed at strengthening peace, stability, and prosperity in the region, as well as the announcement of a **new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements** (SFPAs). These agreements must respect scientific advice and human rights, while deepening bilateral cooperation with partner countries and strengthening joint action in international forums such as RFMOs.

Members stressed that this new generation of Fisheries Partnership Agreements should also be an opportunity to improve fleet sustainability, ease pressure on heavily exploited stocks, diversify the origins of fishery products, and reduce the Union's dependence on fishery products from third countries. SFPAs must guarantee fair and non-discriminatory treatment of Union vessels, with proportionate and transparent fees and access conditions.

To improve the implementation of the IUU Regulation, the Commission and Member States are invited to address the lack of transparency in the fisheries sectors of third countries which results, for example, from flags of convenience.

Competitiveness in the field of fisheries and aquaculture

Parliament invited the Commission, as part of the ongoing evaluation of the CFP, to present solutions to **reduce administrative burdens** and simplify administrative procedures by means of an omnibus proposal, and to accelerate procedures relating to projects that strengthen food security and sovereignty.

Stressing the need to make the European fisheries and aquaculture sector attractive and competitive with global competitors, Members called for: (i) targeted measures to ensure **generational renewal**; (ii) support measures for decarbonisation, renewal and modernisation of fishing fleets and for infrastructure improvements, particularly in **outermost regions**; (iii) promoting **consumer awareness** and encouraging transparency and traceability, so that detailed information is provided, including in digital form, on the origin, quality and sustainability of all seafood products.

Leading role in environmental and scientific matters

Parliament welcomed the EU's leadership in international ocean governance, particularly through its role in creating the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction High Ambition Coalition of 47 members.

Members called for support for an **international moratorium on deep-sea mining**. They reiterated the need to pay particular attention to the **Arctic region** and the importance of the EU's leading role at the global level in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and called for the establishment of a specific initiative for a clean Baltic Sea.

Parliament stressed that **scientific evidence** must remain the backbone of decision-making in international ocean governance.

Trade policy and global ocean governance

Parliament believes the EU must maintain its **leadership role in international forums** by promoting multilateralism, engaging in dialogue with all relevant actors such as the United States and China, and setting global standards for marine sustainability and fair competition. It called on the EU to intensify its dialogue with Norway and deepen relations with Greenland. Members stressed that **access to the EU market must be conditional on compliance with EU standards**. They asked the Commission to ensure the full implementation of EU rules concerning third countries that permit unsustainable fishing and called for further restrictions on imports of fishery products from Russia.

Lastly, Parliament stressed the need for significant funding for ocean governance and diplomacy. Noting with concern that only EUR 2 billion is earmarked for fisheries and aquaculture in 2028–2034, it called on the Commission to **ensure adequate post-2028 funding** for fisheries.