Basic information

2022/2148(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
The implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward **Subject** 3.15 Fisheries policy	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	KARLESKIND Pierre (Renew)	16/06/2022
	Shadow rapporteur MILLÁN MON Francisco José (EPP) MEBAREK Nora (S&D) GUERREIRO Francisco (Greens/EFA) STANCANELLI Raffaele (ECR) CASANOVA Massimo (ID) PIMENTA LOPES João (The Left)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	SINKEVIČIUS Virginijus

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
20/10/2022	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/09/2023	Vote in committee		
02/10/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0282/2023	Summary
16/10/2023	Debate in Parliament		
17/10/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0366/2023	Summary

17/10/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2022/2148(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/9/10198

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE746.650	05/04/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE749.111	23/05/2023	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0282/2023	02/10/2023	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0366/2023	17/10/2023	Summary

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency

Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
KARLESKIND Pierre	Rapporteur	PECH	16/10/2023	Ambassade de la Chine aurpès de l'Union européenne
MILLÁN MON Francisco José	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	03/05/2023	Benson Hill
KARLESKIND Pierre	Rapporteur	PECH	22/03/2023	Environmental Justice Foundation
GUERREIRO Francisco	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	09/02/2023	Environmental Justice Foundation
MILLÁN MON Francisco José	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	07/02/2023	Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes de Conservas y Productos Transformados de Pescados y Mariscos – Centro Nacional de Conocimiento y Tecnología para la Industria Marina, Acuícola y Alimentaria

The implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward

2022/2148(INI) - 02/10/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the own-initiative report by Pierre KARLESKIND (Renew, FR) on the implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward.

Ensuring maximum transparency

Members deplored the Chinese authorities' lack of transparency concerning the number of vessels making up its distant-water fleet. They are concerned and bewildered that, in the absence of reliable official figures, the various estimates of the size of China's distant-water fleet range from 2 900 to 16 966 vessels. They noted that the total Chinese fishing fleet contains up to 564 000 vessels, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO insisted on transparency, recognising that improvements are needed to more accurately assign China's distant-water fishery catches by area and disaggregate catches by species.

The Commission is called on to:

- encourage and guide the Chinese Government in implementing standards governing distant-water fishing with a view to moving towards sustainable fishing techniques;

- develop monitoring, tracking and geolocation instruments for vessels on the high seas by supporting the implementation of international initiatives designed to coordinate data systems and provide complete, precise data and transparent information on the location, origin and activity of fishing vessels;

- take measures to **stop the use of flags of convenience** and improve its system for identifying vessels engaged in IUU fishing, so that a boat's country of origin can be identified even if its flag state is unclear and so that boats on which human rights violations have been detected are also included;

- launch a **catch identification system** based on the recommendations in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes;

- initiate, with its international partners, a strategy for **monitoring bilateral agreements** entered into by China with a view to preventing distortion of competition whether in supply chains or trade.

Defending the EU against unfair trade practices

Member States are asked to strictly enforce EU law on the catch report and traceability system. It is believed that the digitalisation of IUU catch certificates via the CATCH system will reduce opportunities for fraudulent imports and alleviate the administrative burden on Member States. Therefore, the report called on Member States and the Commission to provide information on how many products that are caught by Chinese vessels subsequently enter the EU market. There is also a need to harmonise and step-up customs and port controls, as well as on commercial platforms, of all imported fishery products in order to restrict the movement of products deriving from illegal fishing on the single market. Enhanced **certification of origin** for imported fishery products is needed so that fisheries are subject to European legislation rather than flag state legislation, in order to ensure that products entering the single market come from sustainable sources and their origin and compliance have been checked and that it contributes to preserving public health and preventing the distortion of competition.

Moreover, the report expressed concern about the news regarding the presence of a number of Chinese vessels fishing unchecked in the high seas adjacent to the exclusive economic zones of some Latin American countries, including Ecuador and Argentina. Members encouraged China and the countries with which it has signed fisheries agreements to strengthen their capacity to monitor, detect, prevent and respond to IUU fishing incidents.

Protecting fisheries resources and human rights

Noting that the intensity of the Chinese fishing fleet's activities is on the way to depleting fisheries resources, the report underlined that the status of all targeted fisheries resources globally should be **scientifically assessed** with a view to determining the level of exploitation. In addition, Members advocated the establishment of **management plans**, including regional ones, in countries with which the EU has signed sustainable fisheries partnership agreements. They stressed that introducing better governance of fisheries in developing countries should be a priority in order to combat IUU fishing and build suitable infrastructure, train a workforce qualified in port controls and organise an effective defence system to cope with interference at sea.

Members are deeply concerned about the information regarding **inhumane working conditions** on board some Chinese fishing vessels. In this regard, China is urged to ratify, as soon as possible, the International Labour Organization's Work in Fishing Convention (No 188).

The EU is also called on to step up its cooperation with the United Kingdom, the US, Japan and other key players in fisheries and ocean policy, using its diplomatic and trade instruments to encourage China to make progress on the necessary reforms of its fisheries governance framework.

Noting the increase in Chinese exports to the EU, Members requested that the Commission ensure a rapid, uniform and global implementation of the **CATCH IT system**, when it becomes mandatory.

Ensuring dialogue between China and the EU continues

The report encourages collaboration with China at global level, under the banner of the FAO, RFMOs and the WTO, with a view to devising global policies and regulations to combat IUU fishing. Members noted that the human and financial resources allocated to DG MARE and the EFCA to deal with China and cooperation with third countries are insufficient to cover the true needs. A better balance is needed to ensure that dialogue continues.

Lastly, the Commission is urged to ensure that its fisheries policy on China is consistent with all of its other policies, especially its trade, social and development cooperation policies. An interdepartmental working group on IUU fishing should be set up under the supervision of a Commission vice-president.

The implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward

2022/2148(INI) - 17/10/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 573 votes to 11, with 30 abstentions, a resolution on the implications of Chinese fishing operations on EU fisheries and the way forward.

Maritime strategy is an essential part of China's plan to expand its power. The politicisation and militarisation of its civil maritime sector can be observed, including with respect to fishing. The EU and China signed a bilateral agreement in 2018, known as the Blue Partnership, which aims to improve cooperation on global ocean governance. However, the Chinese seafood imported into the European market is the product of opaque operations and severely undermines the competitiveness of the EU single market.

Ensuring maximum transparency

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The Commission is called on to:

- support innovation and research to develop monitoring, tracking and geolocation instruments for vessels on the high seas by supporting the implementation of international initiatives designed to coordinate data systems and provide complete, precise data and transparent information on the location, origin and activity of fishing vessels;

- take measures to **stop the use of flags of convenience** and improve its system for identifying vessels engaged in IUU fishing, so that a boat's country of origin can be identified even if its flag state is unclear and so that boats on which human rights violations have been detected are also included;

- launch a **catch identification system** based on the recommendations in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes;

- initiate, with its international partners, a strategy for **monitoring bilateral agreements** entered into by China with a view to preventing distortion of competition whether in supply chains or trade.

Defending the EU against unfair trade practices

The resolution called for the protection of the European fishing industry from unfair trade practices. As China has considerably increased its tuna exports into the EU market through the autonomous tariff quotas, Parliament urged the Commission to ensure that the products benefiting from it do not come from IUU fishing.

Member States are asked to strictly enforce EU law on the catch report and traceability system. There is also a need to harmonise and step-up customs and port controls, as well as on commercial platforms, of all imported fishery products in order to restrict the movement of products deriving from illegal fishing on the single market.

Enhanced **certification of origin** for imported fishery products is needed so that fisheries are subject to European legislation rather than flag state legislation, in order to ensure that products entering the single market come from sustainable sources and their origin and compliance have been checked and that it contributes to preserving public health and preventing the distortion of competition.

Protecting fisheries resources and human rights

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