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P9_TA(2023)0019

Small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives

European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2023 on the small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives (2021/2056(INI))

(2023/C 214/14)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Commission maritime economic paper No 08/2020 of 9 March 2021 entitled 'The EU fishing fleet 2020: Trends and economic results' ([1]),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 16 June 2020 entitled 'Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2021' (COM(2020)0248),

— having regard to Articles 38 to 44 and Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

— having regard to recital (4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC ([2]) (the 'CFP Regulation'), which states that the CFP should contribute to 'long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability' and to 'a fair standard of living for the fisheries sector including small-scale fisheries', and to recital (33) thereof, which states that 'access to a fishery should be based on transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature' and that 'Member States should promote responsible fishing by providing incentives to those operators who fish in the least environmentally damaging way and who provide the greatest benefits for society',

— having regard to Article 17 of the CFP Regulation, which states that, when allocating fishing opportunities, the Member States are to use 'transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature',

— having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 ([3]) (the 'CMO Regulation'),

— having regard to Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning ([4]),

— having regard to the amendments adopted by the European Parliament on 11 March 2021 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control ([5]),

([1]) Maritime economic paper No 08/2020, 'The EU fishing fleet 2020: Trends and economic results', European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, 9 March 2021.
([2]) OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.
([3]) OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1.
([4]) OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135.
([5]) OJ C 474, 24.11.2021, p. 218.

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 ([6]) (the 'EMFAF Regulation'),

— having regard to Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([7]) (the 'EMFF Regulation'),

— having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system ([8]),

— having regard to the report of the Commission's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) of 20 August 2019 entitled 'The 2019 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 19-06)' ([9]),

— having regard to the STECF report of 26 September 2019 entitled 'Social data in the EU fisheries sector (STECF 19-03)' ([10]),

— having regard to the STECF report of 8 December 2021 entitled 'The 2021 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 21-08)' ([11]),

— having regard to the STECF report of 10 December 2020 entitled 'Social dimension of the CFP (STECF 20-14)' ([12]),

— having regard to the conclusions of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Conference 'Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea', held in Algiers from 7 to 9 March 2016,

— having regard to target 14.b of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for access to marine resources and markets for small-scale artisanal fishers,

— having regard to the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication,

— having regard to the FAO report entitled 'The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020: Sustainability in action',

— having regard to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture for 2022, as proclaimed by the UN,

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([6]) OJ L 247, 13.7.2021, p. 1.
([7]) OJ L 149, 20.5.2014, p. 1.
([8]) OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.
([9]) 'The 2019 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 19-06)', European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 20 August 2019: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ca63ab82-c3bf-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1
([10]) 'Social data in the EU fisheries sector', European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 26 September 2019: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fd0f6774-e0dd-11e9-9c4e-01aa75ed71a1
([11]) 'The 2021 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 21-08)', European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 8 December 2021: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/77fb8e7b-58a7-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1/
([12]) 'Social dimension of the CFP (STECF 20-14)', European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 10 December 2020: https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/2672864/STECF+20-14+-+Social%20+dimension+CFP.pdf/a68c6c42-6b64-41fc-b5a0-b724c71aa78e

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— having regard to the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) and the concepts enshrined therein, such as planetary boundaries and ecological limits,

— having regard to the publication entitled 'Small-Scale Fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience and Governance' ([13]),

— having regard to the MedFish4Ever ministerial declaration and road map ([14]),

— having regard to the EMFF implementation report 2020 ([15]),

— having regard to the ministerial declaration of 2018 on the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea,

— having regard to the 2018 study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) entitled 'Relative Effects of Fisheries Support Policies' ([16]),

— having regard to the scientific article entitled 'Small-scale fisheries access to fishing opportunities in the European Union: Is the Common Fisheries Policy the right step to SDG14b?' ([17]),

— having regard to the scientific article entitled 'Defining Small-Scale Fisheries and Examining the Role of Science in Shaping Perceptions of Who and What Counts: A Systematic Review' ([18]),

— having regard to the 2017 study conducted for the Committee on Fisheries entitled 'Small-scale Fisheries and "Blue Growth" in the EU' ([19]),

— having regard to the 2021 study conducted for the Committee on Fisheries entitled 'Workshop on electronic technologies for fisheries — Part III: Systems adapted for small-scale vessels' ([20]),

— having regard to the study conducted for the Committee on Fisheries of July 2021 entitled 'Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU fisheries and aquaculture' ([21]),

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([13]) Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Pita, C. and Bavinck, M. (eds), *Small-Scale Fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience and Governance*, *MARE Publication Series*, Vol. 23, Springer, Cham, Switzerland, 2020.

([14]) https://www.actu-environnement.com/media/pdf/news-28756-declaration-malte-surpeche-mediterranee.pdf

([15]) EMFF implementation report 2020, European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring and Evaluation Support Unit, September 2021: https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-09/emff-implementation-report-2020_en.pdf

([16]) Martini, R. and Innes, J., 'Relative Effects of Fisheries Support Policies', OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Papers, No. 115, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/relative-effects-of-fisheries-support-policies_bd9b0dc3-en

([17]) Said, A. et al., 'Small-scale fisheries access to fishing opportunities in the European Union: Is the Common Fisheries Policy the right step to SDG14b?', *Marine Policy*, Vol. 118, 2020: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X20302475

([18]) Smith, H. and Basurto, X., 'Defining Small-Scale Fisheries and Examining the Role of Science in Shaping Perceptions of Who and What Counts: A Systematic Review', *Frontiers in Marine Science*, Vol. 6, 2019: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2019.00236/full

([19]) Study — 'Small-scale Fisheries and "Blue Growth" in the EU', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B — Structural and Cohesion Policies, 18 March 2017: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/573450/IPOL_STU(2017)573450_EN.pdf

([20]) Study — 'Workshop on electronic technologies for fisheries — Part III: Systems adapted for small-scale vessels', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B — Structural and Cohesion Policies, 30 July 2021: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/690863/IPOL_STU(2021)690863_EN.pdf

([21]) Study — 'Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU fisheries and aquaculture', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, Policy Department B — Structural and Cohesion Policies, 7 July 2021: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/690880/IPOL_STU(2021)690880_EN.pdf

— having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy ([22]),

— having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on innovation and diversification of small-scale coastal fishing in fisheries-dependent regions ([23]),

— having regard to its resolution of 4 July 2017 on the role of fisheries-related tourism in the diversification of fisheries ([24]),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2021 entitled 'Towards a stronger partnership with the EU outermost regions' ([25]),

— having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2021 entitled 'Fishers for the future: Attracting a new generation of workers to the fishing industry and generating employment in coastal communities' ([26]),

— having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A9-0291/2022),

A. whereas the EMFAF Regulation defines 'small-scale coastal fishing' as fishing activities carried out by marine and inland fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 metres and not using towed gear and also by fishers on foot, including shellfish gatherers, and whereas this is the only definition of coastal fishing existing in EU legislation;

B. whereas the current definition of small-scale fishing included in the EMFF Regulation and the EMFAF Regulation excludes certain types of vessels, such as those using some traditional gears, which in turn struggle to obtain EU funding as a result of this exclusion; whereas this exclusion also reduces the visibility of small-scale fishing and its presence within EU statistics, as these units are not counted as belonging to the sector;

C. whereas there are other, less strict approaches to the definition of small-scale, artisanal and coastal fishing, such as in the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication or in the ongoing discussions of the working group on small-scale fishing within the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean;

D. whereas, in most Member States, the defining characteristics of small-scale fishing go beyond the EMFAF definition, as governments apply a range of additional criteria, including with regard to the gears allowed, the maximum vessel length, the engine power, the maximum duration of fishing trips, the distance from port at which vessels can operate, the area of operation, the maximum allowed travel time and vessel ownership;

E. whereas the current CFP does not properly define the concept of artisanal fishing, small-scale fishing or coastal fishing, basing it solely on the vessel's length, while other more appropriate and up-to-date definitions of this type of fishing are set out in international conventions; whereas the European definitions of artisanal fishing, small-scale fishing and coastal fishing should be revised;

F. whereas, in 2019, the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector in the EU-28 consisted of a fleet of 42 838 vessels — which represented only 7,5 % of the gross tonnage and 5,4 % of the landed weight across the Member States overall — and employed 62 650 fishers, accounting for 75 % of the active fishing ships and 48 % of crew; whereas the large-scale fleet represented 19 % of the total vessels and 67 % of the gross tonnage, employing 46 % of all fishers and accounting for 81 % of the landed weight recorded in the Member States; whereas the distant-water fleet numbered only 259 registered vessels, representing less than 1 % of the overall number of vessels but 19 % of the gross tonnage and 14 % of the total landed weight recorded in the Member States;

([22]) OJ C 419, 16.12.2015, p. 167.
([23]) OJ C 58, 15.2.2018, p. 82.
([24]) OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 20.
([25]) OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 18.
([26]) OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 67.

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G. whereas, in addition to very limited resources being made available for vessel support under the EMFF (EUR 500 million) and to a generally low implementation rate, small-scale fishing, despite its size and importance, is the least supported segment, receiving the smallest share of funds: it accounts for 38 % of the total number of vessel-linked operations, which in turn represent just 25 % of the total EMFF spending on vessels;

H. whereas the European fleet has continued to shrink in recent years and, in 2020, recorded decreases of 17 % in the value of the fish landed, of 19 % in employment and of 29 % in profits compared with 2019 ([27]);

I. whereas the small-scale fishing fleet is the fleet with the most limited financial resources;

J. whereas the typical features of small-scale fishing include its low environmental impact; its seasonally diverse nature in terms of species, fishing grounds and gears; the small scale of its production operations; its respect for the biological and migratory cycles of different species thanks to its versatile nature and a highly selective use of gears; its low levels of species bycatch and discards; and its capacity to generate more revenue per euro invested, greater catches per litre of fuel consumed and more socio-economic value per kilo of fish landed;

K. whereas due account needs to be taken of the marked differences between fleets, fleet segments, the environmental impact of different fleet segments, target species, fishing gear, productivity and the consumption preferences of the various Member States, in addition to the special characteristics of fishing activity resulting from its social structure, forms of marketing and structural and natural inequalities between the various fishing regions;

L. whereas the general characteristics of the small-scale fleet include very old segments and inadequate technology, highlighting the need for a specific support programme for small-scale fishing and strong public financial support for its modernisation and development, without which its continuity will be jeopardised;

M. whereas the EMFAF Regulation imposes an obligation on the Member States to take into account the specific needs of small-scale coastal fishing when carrying out the analysis of the situation in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats referred to in the Regulation;

N. whereas, in 2019, 64,9 % of the vessels in the EU-28's fishing fleet were at least 25 years old ([28]) and the average fleet age stood at 29,9 years overall ([29]) and 32,5 years for the small-scale fishing fleet, which necessarily implies that a very significant portion of the fleet is very old, thus not guaranteeing the best safety and operational conditions, increasing the associated risks and making operations costlier;

O. whereas the age profile of small-scale fishers is higher than for other types of fishing, with 72 % of small-scale fishing professionals being over 40 years of age and 11 % over 65 years of age;

P. whereas the limited nature of the existing statistics makes it difficult to conduct an accurate analysis of the role of women in fisheries; whereas, however, empirical evidence demonstrates that women play a significant part in small-scale fishing, taking a more prominent role in its operations in some communities, having an important presence in shellfishing and taking a leading role on land in the preparation of operations and gear, as well as in the sale and processing of fish, particularly in the canning industry;

Q. whereas, according to the report on the social dimension of fishing in the EU, women account for 5,4 % of the total number of people employed in small-scale fishing (more than double the respective figures for large-scale and distant-water fishing);

R. whereas the EU fishing sector plays a key role in supplying fish to the public and keeping food stocks in balance in the Member States and the EU as a whole;

([27]) Commission communication of 9 June 2021 entitled 'Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2022' (COM(2021)0279).

([28]) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/FISH_FLEET_ALT__custom_1479572/default/table? lang=en

([29]) https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/facts_figures_en?qt-facts_and_figures=2

S. whereas it must be ensured that the centralisation of fisheries management advocated by the CFP is compatible with the local management that is essential for ensuring the sector's socio-economic viability;

T. whereas regionalisation is one of the pillars of the CFP and the decentralised approach is of particular importance for the small-scale coastal fishing sector, taking into account the differences in the fisheries sector among individual Member States;

U. whereas local co-management is key to ensuring the participation of the small-scale fisheries segment in the decision-making process;

V. whereas the CFP therefore does not offer the clear and differentiated legislative support for small-scale fishing that could help to ensure its socio-economic viability; whereas the Member States are also failing to establish effective measures for this type of fishing;

W. whereas, in many European coastal regions, and in particular in the Mediterranean, small-scale fishing and shellfish gathering operate at the intersection of the economic, social and environmental dimensions, making an important contribution to socio-economic well-being, employment and the promotion of economic and social cohesion in various coastal regions and outermost regions (ORs) that often face structural constraints and need support to harness opportunities for economic diversification;

X. whereas income from fisheries should therefore not be deemed only as profit, as it also contributes to perpetuating a way of life that has immense cultural and historical value for many coastal communities, while at the same time providing an important social and economic safety net; whereas, in this sense, SSF represent a solution to increasing depopulation, ageing populations and mounting unemployment, which are all major challenges for most of the coastal regions of European countries and islands; whereas SSF's influence on the social and cultural heritage of coastal areas is exceptional and diverse;

Y. whereas SSF can play a fundamental role in the achievement of the SDGs, as explicitly recognised by target 14.b; whereas SSF can also provide contributions to the other policy imperatives underlying the SDGs, such as SDG 2 — 'Zero Hunger' and target 2.3 thereof, SDG 5 — 'Gender Equality' and targets 5.a and 5.b thereof, SDG 8 — 'Decent Work and Economic Growth' and target 8.5 thereof, and SDG 13 — 'Climate Action' as a whole;

Z. whereas fishers have a role as 'guardians of the sea' and fishing makes a contribution to the supply of protein-rich foods for a healthy, balanced diet;

AA. whereas the vast majority of accidents and incidents on fishing vessels are the result of human factors (62,4 %), with system/equipment failures being the second most common cause (23,2 % of cases);

AB. whereas in many circumstances small-scale fishing is carried out with only one professional on board;

AC. whereas the safety- and comfort-related issues of the SSF fleet cannot be viewed in isolation from fishing effort and fish yield; whereas, in this regard, the gross tonnage limitation, as a criterion to measure fishing capacity, has a negative impact on the safety and comfort of the SSF fleet, as it limits the incentive to replace and modernise vessels or increase available space in order to improve crew comfort, safety and ultimately the attractiveness of the sector, especially for young people and women;

AD. whereas such safety-related issues cannot be viewed in isolation from the particularities of the SSF fleet in the Member States, such as the fact that the fleet may be exposed to high levels of risk as a result of the lack of specialised safety advice for the sector, the single-handed nature of operations, the long working hours or the danger of entrapment in the equipment; whereas operating conditions vary for the fleet; whereas part of the fleet operates from beaches or ports and harbours where operating conditions are very often precarious; whereas, in light of this situation, consideration should be given to tailoring the propulsion power to the fleet's characteristics and the operating conditions, without increasing fishing effort or catch rates, with a view to making conditions for the fleet safer when entering and exiting port;

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AE. whereas these aspects relating to an increase in engine power for specific safety reasons should be financed through subsidies and, under certain conditions, should be supported by the EMFAF, provided that they do not increase the fishing effort or the ability to catch fish; whereas, for these reasons, EMFAF support should also be available for port and harbour dredging operations;

AF. whereas small-scale fishing is much more dependent on sea conditions than large-scale fishing, which leads, depending on the type of vessel and gear, to greater irregularity in fishing periods, thus affecting the number of working days per year on which sailings are possible;

AG. whereas artisanal fisheries are sustainable in terms of the biological management of fish stocks and with regard to resources and selectivity, as well as socially and economically, all of which contributes to the deep-rootedness of this activity;

AH. whereas factors exerting pressure on fish stocks, and which also cause direct and indirect damage to fisheries, include pollution, habitat loss, maritime traffic and competition for space, as well as climate change, notable effects of which are rising water temperatures, acidification, changes to ocean currents, species asynchrony and the arrival of non-indigenous species;

AI. whereas it is necessary to increase capacities to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and crises by adopting measures to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities;

AJ. whereas small-scale fishing also has the potential to contribute to decarbonisation and increased energy efficiency and therefore ultimately to climate mitigation efforts;

AK. whereas small-scale fishing is very important in the EU, especially for a number of fishing communities, in combination with large-scale and distant-water fishing;

AL. whereas many of the causes of the worsening socio-economic situation in the sector have still to be addressed, including the need to strengthen the position of fishers in the supply chain;

AM. whereas the recognition of producer organisations, associations and fishing guilds would enable them to access financial aid, and the promotion of their active participation through co-management could clearly improve earnings in the sector;

AN. whereas earnings for small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries are impacted by volatile prices and sharp market fluctuations, which are sensitive to many external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic;

AO. whereas the different systems of income and wages in the fishing sector are highly variable and largely contingent on the fishing opportunities offered by the sea, and this is one of the factors that makes it less attractive to new generations;

AP. whereas fishing professionals are often paid low wages and have to contend with difficult — often precarious — working conditions in a profession that remains the most dangerous in the world, while the rising costs associated with starting up a fishing business, combined with the increasing concentration in the industry, make it a less attractive prospect, particularly to young people;

AQ. whereas markets are often dominated by a small number of established products and SSF products that offer a sustainable alternative to heavily exploited species do not receive sufficient marketing attention; whereas consumers are often prevented from obtaining full information about the product that they are buying or the production system and fishing gear involved;

AR. whereas the sustainable profitability of SSF is important to increase the attractiveness of the sector;

AS. whereas small-scale vessels are the most severely impacted by the challenges surrounding the allocation of fishing licences in UK waters, due to the difficulties that they face in proving their fishing history;

AT. whereas SSF enterprises are often undercapitalised or underfunded and have very limited access to basic accounting tools, credit, microfinance and insurance;

AU. whereas the SSF sector continues to experience economic difficulties and a substantial decrease in revenues as a result of the significant increase in operating costs and other aggravating factors such as the reduction in the value of first-sale fish and rising fuel prices; whereas these and other factors have rendered SSF ever more reliant on fuel subsidies and often require fishers to increase fishing effort in order to make their activity economically viable;

AV. whereas the TFEU and the EMFAF Regulation envisage and provide for specific support for the EU's ORs;

AW. whereas the SSF sector has traditionally suffered from a lack of organisational capacity; whereas the main factors that limit collective action by SSF include the large number of actors in the SSF sector, combined with their geographical dispersion; the nature of the business, which is mainly based on small family enterprises; the lack of trained staff devoted to management; and the lack of financial support for SSF organisations to take part in the decision-making process;

AX. whereas SSF in the EU have generally been neglected in terms of monitoring and control by fisheries scientists and fisheries managers at national and EU levels; whereas the monitoring and control of small-scale fisheries should be improved to substantiate the sustainable management of EU fisheries and provide proof of fishing activities when necessary;

AY. whereas greater investment is needed to conduct up-to-date research on and enhance understanding of the state of natural resources, marine ecosystems and specifically fish stocks, in order to ensure their sustainable management;

AZ. whereas management strategies based solely on the reduction of fishing days, such as that applied to the Western Mediterranean, are bringing the SSF sector to its knees; whereas such continuous reductions, combined with the already precarious situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, risk leading to the collapse of a large share of the sector, which would no longer be able to reach the minimum profitability threshold that guarantees its survival; whereas these reductions also raise numerous issues, such as concerns around safety on board, a heightened risk of injuries, an increase in illegal fishing and the social repercussions of unemployment;

BA. whereas fishers' associations such as guilds are key players in the food systems of some Member States, where they operate as not-for-profit social economy entities representing the fisheries sector, and especially the small-scale coastal fleet and shellfish gatherers, performing functions of general interest for the benefit of maritime fishing and workers in the fisheries sector, as well as carrying out business-related tasks, such as marketing products and providing advisory and management services;

BB. whereas there is a need to determine a fisheries resource management policy that respects collective access to fisheries resources, is based primarily on their biological aspects and takes the form of a fisheries co-management system that considers the specific conditions of fisheries resources and the respective sea areas, with the effective participation of those working in the sector;

BC. whereas the farm to fork strategy urges that associations such as guilds be recognised under EU law and be eligible to receive financial aid on an equal footing with producer organisations; whereas the Commission has been asked to adopt an initiative in this regard;

BD. whereas artisanal fishers have a need for training, including to develop new skills;

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BE. whereas work by women provides added value in the artisanal fisheries sector;

BF. whereas the SSF sector finds itself increasingly in competition with other blue economy activities, as well as with renewable energy interests that affect many activities along the coast, in beaches or harbour areas, thus potentially taking over areas previously used almost exclusively by SSF, resulting in displacement and 'sea and coastal grabbing';

BG. whereas gentrification processes occurring in many developing coastal areas risk making it increasingly unaffordable for small-scale fishers to live in coastal areas, pushing them far away from their place of work and thus rendering their activity even more difficult and inconvenient;

BH. whereas the increased focus on conservation promoted by the EU has a particular impact on small-scale fishing, an example of which is the implementation of marine protected areas (MPAs) and MPA networks, which affect small-scale fishing by restricting the associated activities and limiting mobility; whereas the impact on this segment is rarely considered in the design of these policies, an aspect that is aggravated by the fact that actors from the segment are not adequately involved in these processes ([30]);

BI. whereas the fishing sector in general and small-scale fishing in particular are under-represented when defining fisheries management policies and policies on the use of maritime space;

BJ. whereas there are various types of fishery organisations, with different levels of membership representing small-scale fishing: from producer organisations to fishers' associations, shipowners' associations and cooperatives, among others; whereas many small shipowners are not affiliated to any organisations; whereas professionals in the fishing industry are represented in fisheries trade unions; whereas it should be up to the sector to determine how it organises itself;

BK. whereas the disaggregation of the relevant data is inadequate, which makes access to detailed information difficult, particularly where small-scale fishing is concerned, and hampers analysis, in particular in terms of breaking down undertakings, shipowners, fishing professionals, vessels and gear, working conditions, age and gender, among other things;

Strengthening small-scale fisheries along the value chain, promoting higher fisheries incomes and providing income diversification opportunities

1. Takes the view that the future of small-scale, coastal and artisanal fishing depends not only on long-term and sustainable measures, but also on immediate, meaningful and effective measures to increase fishers' profit margins also through higher quota allocations in line with scientific advice; considers it necessary to enhance the organisational and commercial capacities of the sector and the profession's attractiveness, to provide training and targeted support for young people and to improve operating conditions, in particular for the inclusion of women on board vessels and in the sector more generally, and to strengthen its position in the supply chain; calls on the Commission, therefore, working in close cooperation with the Member States, to establish and implement support mechanisms, within the EMFAF framework, for small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries that make it possible to tackle the specific problems in this part of the sector;

2. Believes that the future of small-scale fishing requires that its specific nature be recognised in the CFP and that the present instruments be adapted in order to meet the needs of this sector;

3. Stresses the need for a common, broader and more appropriate definition of small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries; stresses that such a definition should be pragmatic, measureable and clear; also emphasises that the definition should result from an appropriate assessment, taking into account the characteristics and criteria of the SSF segment other than vessel length, in order to bring the EU definition of SSF into line with the reality of the segment, as is already the case with the existing definitions included within certain international conventions such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) or the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM);

([30]) See p. 8 of *Small-Scale Fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience and Governance.*

4. Stresses the fact that this definition should be included in a more horizontal regulation, such as the CFP Regulation, so as to encompass EU fisheries legislation in its entirety; considers that any change to the definition should not impact the implementation of the EMFAF for the current period; calls on the Commission to address this issue within the future review of the CFP Regulation;

5. Affirms the need to strengthen and shorten the sector's value chain between the producer and the consumer, thereby increasing the opportunities for direct sales from fisher to consumer and reducing the number of intermediaries in order, ideally, to reach the point where the producer is able to supply the final customer directly; stresses the need to promote marketing strategies, including through the promotion of new distribution channels, and to foster mechanisms to improve product differentiation, so as to obtain the maximum benefit for fishers, increase profitability, support higher remunerations and promote the fair and appropriate distribution of added value to fishers;

6. Calls for a fairer and more proper distribution of added value along the sector's value chain and for consideration to be given to forms of intervention along the lines of guarantee and guide prices, for which the production costs should be taken as a variable, in order to achieve the above aim and improve fishers' incomes; reiterates that when there are serious imbalances within the chain, Member States should have the power to intervene;

7. Stresses the fact that SSF are the weakest segment along the value chain and marketing arrangements often tend to favour the interests of the buyer rather than the fishers, who have little to no control over pricing, which in turn leads to marginal earnings for the products sold;

8. Calls for measures at EU or Member State level aimed at defending or creating markets of origin, thereby advocating preferential short sales channels for traditional products; stresses the importance of promoting and defending the qualities of fish caught by small-scale fishing such as, among others, freshness, seasonality, cultural heritage and sustainability; calls for stronger support for such products at trade fairs, small shops and restaurants, taking into account the population's eating habits, as a way of maximising the value of local fisheries products and promoting local development; insists on the creation of promotional campaigns for local fishing products taking full advantage of the common organisation of the markets (CMO) and CFP;

9. Stresses the need to promote product diversification through initiatives aimed at creating new markets, valuing lesser known edible and consumed species in order to improve SSF's market position, alleviate the demand for products whose constant supply throughout the year can only be guaranteed by imports and help reduce fishing pressure on overexploited species; reiterates the need to also support the promotion of product diversification in the canning industry, namely through the use of undervalued or less-consumed species;

10. Calls for the implementation of a training programme for the hotel, restaurant and catering (Horeca) sector, providing knowledge of seafood products and good practices to protect resources, in particular raising awareness of the 'non-sale' and 'non-consumption' of species during the closed season;

11. Emphasises the importance of implementing innovative projects in the retail sector, highlighting the cooperation work with fisher's guilds and associations of SSF, through which a close relationship with the final consumer is maintained;

12. Calls on the Member States and producer organisations to consider better ways to promote the marketing of processed fisheries products with higher added value, including canned products, following the example of certain agricultural products, and programmes for the external promotion of EU fisheries products, including their presentation at international competitions and fairs;

13. Stresses the fact that the seafood sector has very limited tools, such as labels, available to consumers in order to assess the sustainability criteria for the SSF segment and promote low-impact products; underlines that where labels exist, they could become a disadvantage to SSF, as it might be burdensome to access some of the data needed or they may lack the financial capacity to initiate a certification process;

14. Points out the need for an ambitious revision of the CMO Regulation with the aim of increasing its contribution to the sector's income and to market stability, as well as to improve the marketing of fishery products and increase their added value; in this context, stresses the importance of creating certified seafood labels and fisheries product brand mechanisms, as well as of increasing traceability in the supply chain, which would in turn improve information to consumers, encouraging them to buy locally and sustainably sourced seafood and raise their awareness of SSF products;

15. Calls for small-scale fishing support programmes to be facilitated through the EMFAF with a view to improving business management and organisational capacities, driving down production costs, improving first-sale prices and ensuring economic and environmental sustainability, in particular through a more sustainable and modern fleet;

16. Stresses the difficulties that the SSF sector is still experiencing, which can also be aggravated by fluctuating and rising prices for fuel and other inputs, a situation that particularly affects the less competitive fleet segments, namely small-scale, artisanal and coastal fishing;

Improving operating conditions and guaranteeing the future of small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries

17. Welcomes the fact that the EMFAF provides the possibility to support the modernisation, replacement or acquisition of newer engines that emit less CO_2, including engines using new energy-efficient technologies, and the conversion of petrol engines; considers that the highest existing co-financing rates should be used; warns that many of these alternative motorisation solutions have not yet been sufficiently developed or involve a significant increase in gross tonnage, such as in the case of some electric motors;

18. Underlines that in certain regions, the majority of the SSF sector is dependent on fuel subsidies; warns that the Commission's proposal for a Council directive restructuring the Union framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (COM(2021)0563), by ending the current mandatory exemption for the fishing sector and introducing a minimum rate of taxation, puts at risk the viability of the majority of the SSF segment, which cannot make long voyages in order to refuel in ports with lower prices; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure equal conditions at international level and therefore continue to exempt the fishing industry from fuel taxation; stresses that any new approach should not result in a burden for SSF and should focus on alternative solutions that allow the sector to combine a just transition towards the goals set in the Green Deal with the ability to thrive economically and guarantee decent conditions for its workers; considers, in that regard, and given the current extraordinary inflation of fuel prices, that extraordinary measures could be envisaged by the Member States to provide aid to the small-scale, coastal and artisanal fisheries segment for the expected rising production costs, in particular within the scope of the EMFAF and the national operational programmes;

19. Highlights the difficulties and the serious adverse economic and social effects that the COVID-19 crisis has had on the fisheries sector and the importance for Member States to channel the available national and EU funds, if needed, as well as the consideration of exceptional measures to help fishers, including workers, in overcoming crises or market disturbances; calls on the Member States to use the resources made available through the crisis mechanisms to support SSF; underlines that, in spite of the crisis, the small-scale coastal fisheries sector still continued to function, giving EU citizens access to seafood, especially in isolated coastal regions, islands and the ORs;

20. Urges Member States to allocate funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility to investment in the small-scale coastal fleet with the aim of helping fishers and operators who do associated work, mainly women, such as net menders, shore-based assistants and packagers, and workers;

21. Urges the Commission to facilitate, under the aegis of the EMFAF, SSF sector-specific support for the installation of storage, freezing and refrigeration infrastructure and for maintaining the cold chain from boat to final consumer; considers this support a decisive element to enable the SSF segment to take full advantage of fisheries resources — without destroying or depleting stocks — as well as to ensure a regular supply and delivery of fresh and high-quality products to the public, the Horeca sector and the food processing industry;

22. Considers that proper storage conditions in ports could facilitate and guarantee the preservation of fish and assist commercial placement, with a view to improving the profitability of fish by acting indirectly in price formation; recalls, in this context, the possibilities provided for in the CMO and by producer organisations;

23. Takes the view that the EMFAF and the new national operational programmes should strengthen and provide clear support to small-scale fishing, in order to contribute to ensuring the sustainability and future viability of the countless coastal communities that are traditionally dependent on fishing, so as to address the specific problems of this segment and support the local sustainable management of the fisheries involved;

24. Considers that the support channelled by Member States when implementing the EMFAF should be marshalled to address structural failures, thereby contributing to increased incomes from fishing, promoting jobs with rights in the sector and ensuring fair prices for producers, supporting the development of related activities, upstream and downstream of fishing, contributing to the development and cohesion of coastal regions within a framework of sustainable fishing and a future for the SSF sector;

25. Stresses that, with a view to improving the execution rate of EMFAF financing and ensuring that SSF have access to support, it is necessary to look into and implement measures to streamline procedures, thereby reducing the red tape, complexity and approval time surrounding applications; amend the funding process for receiving aid and replace it with a system of pre-financing; and fully utilise the fund's financing limits;

26. Stresses that the EU is missing a tool to understand the extent of EMFF and EMFAF investments in the SSF sector, the number of good practices funded, the delivery of concrete results and how Fisheries Local Action Groups are working and effectively implementing the CFP; calls on the Commission to establish such a tool as a fundamental step in order to understand how to scale up good practices and replicate virtuous fishing methods on an EU-wide scale;

27. Calls on Member States to provide technical assistance at local level to facilitate small-scale fishers' access to EU and national funding;

28. Warns of the high average age of the small-scale fishing fleet and stresses, in this regard, the need to make the fishing activity of this segment attractive for young people and women; emphasises the need to renew and update the small-scale fleet with a view to improving safety and living conditions on board, improving energy efficiency and making the segment more environmentally friendly, while ensuring that there is no increase in fishing capacity in the overall fishing fleet and improving the social and economic sustainability of the fishing communities that depend on the fleet; in this context, highlights the need to address situations where vessels have become obsolete bringing increased operating, maintenance and reclassification costs (economically and environmentally), which in turn compromise the guaranteed safety conditions during operations; stresses that the gross tonnage criteria to measure fishing capacity, by also including the space reserved for crew facilities and comfort, might hinder the modernisation of fishing vessels and the much-needed improvement of the working conditions of the small-scale fishing fleet; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to review these criteria and other interlinked provisions in order to find a solution capable of balancing the needs of small-scale fishing workers with the need to ensure that the EU fleet's fishing capacity is not increased;

29. Reiterates that support for the required renewal and/or modernisation of the fleet is necessary for improving the safety, working conditions and economic and environmental sustainability of activities; stresses, however, that this should only be achieved without increasing fishing capacity;

30. Takes the view that ignoring the need for fleet renewal and the maintenance and improvement of vessels, particularly but not exclusively, of obsolete and inefficient vessels, would endanger the future of small-scale fishing, especially in the ORs;

31. Points out that the EMFAF provides opportunities for investments in safety, better living conditions and energy performance for vessels, which may also benefit the small-scale coastal and artisanal fleet, and that it should also offer funding opportunities for the renewal, restructuring and resizing of vessels, and the purchase of new vessels in the small-scale fishing fleet — especially in the identified cases where this fleet is of an advanced average age and does not

guarantee essential conditions of safety and operability — as well as for increases in engine power where duly justified in order to ensure better safety conditions on board during operations and at entry and exit from the sea, and to increase the time spent at sea, provided that there is no increase in fishing effort capacity, particularly in the ORs;

32. Urges the Member States to ensure the full implementation of EU standards and regulations in relation to safety, labour and living conditions on board fishing vessels;

33. Emphasises that Member States should continuously work on maintaining and upgrading their ports and harbours to ensure that catches can be landed and unloaded in conditions of safety;

34. Stresses the socio-economic importance, in terms of employment and social cohesion, of the fisheries sector, including small-scale, artisanal and coastal fisheries for the ORs, areas that are characterised by structural constraints and fewer opportunities for economic diversification; calls, therefore, for an increase in EU support for the SSF sector in those regions;

35. Notes the support, provided under the EMFAF, for the fisheries sector in the ORs, with a view, in particular, to providing support for the additional costs arising from remoteness when it comes to selling certain fisheries products from some ORs;

36. Points to the specific features of the fisheries sector value chains in the ORs and maintains that special attention is needed in order to strengthen them and facilitate their access to markets, an aim that could be achieved by not only re-establishing a POSEI scheme for fisheries, but also by establishing a similar scheme for transport;

37. Highlights the potential of tourist fishing in these regions as a way of attracting young people into the profession and diversifying fishers' incomes without increasing their fishing effort, respecting the fishing effort limits and raising public awareness about the traditions of the sector and sea literacy; stresses the need to guarantee a reduction in bureaucracy related to this activity and to provide EU support for these activities;

38. Considers that the future of small-scale fishing requires that EU regulations ensure a regulatory environment that strengthens the position of fishers in the supply chain and provides investments for the long-term sustainability, stability and economic competitiveness of the sector;

39. Takes the view that the objectives of a fisheries policy should include guaranteeing the supply of fish to the public — as part of ensuring food security and sovereignty — developing coastal communities, while ensuring that fisheries activities develop within ecological limits, and promoting the fisheries-related professions by increasing their attractiveness; highlights that the implementation of the CFP should also recognise the socio-economic role of SSF in fishing communities, providing jobs and improving the living conditions of fishers and of the workers carrying out auxiliary tasks, usually women, with the improvement of working, habitability conditions and safety conditions for crews, in order to attract young people and achieve a generational renewal of this activity, within a framework of guaranteed sustainability and good resource conservation;

40. Reiterates that the reality of fisheries in the EU is complex and varies widely from Member State to Member State in terms of the respective fishing fleets, the environmental impact of different fleet segments, fishing gear, fish stocks and their state of conservation, and the consumption habits of the population; highlights the possibility of the regionalisation, where appropriate, of fisheries management within the framework of the CFP, while at the same time ensuring a level playing field for all fishers, including in regional fisheries management organisations; reaffirms that this great diversity requires the management of fisheries to be accompanied by exceptions that permit Member States and regions to implement more specialised management practices, that take into account specific characteristics, promote dialogue, involve the sector and coastal communities in the decision-making process, in defining and implementing policies, and that are based on sound scientific knowledge;

41. Believes, therefore, that management initiatives at local level through co-management need to be considered in the Member States' EMFAF programmes;

42. Emphasises that the revision currently under way of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 on the control of fisheries should respect the special features of small-scale fishing activity and not overload it with bureaucracy, particularly in relation to geolocation or electronic sending of catch data; calls for a control system that is specifically designed and suited to the reality and the diversity of the small-scale coastal fleet, including shellfish gathering and fishing without vessels, in which proportionality and a phased approach are key;

43. Considers that the diversification of activities within the broader sustainable blue economy is important, entailing shoring up the culture of communities, promoting fishing by-products and products that, while they have potential, have no commercial value; considers, however, that such activities should not compromise fishing activity or fishers' historic rights to the sea;

44. Believes that the use of maritime space for other areas of economic exploitation should not compromise historic fishing rights; considers that small-scale fishing should be fully integrated into the strategic planning of these policies; believes that a similar situation exists in inland waters, where SSF face increasing conflicts over resources and freshwater use, competing with industries that have a negative impact on riparian habitats and fish resources;

45. Stresses that the socio-economic and environmental challenges arising from the management of MPAs offer a potential solution to reconcile conservation and sustainability objectives on the one hand with the integration of the SSF sector into management decisions in and around MPAs on the other; calls, in this regard, on the Commission and the Member States to develop participatory approaches to the management of MPAs, based on biological and socio-economic data jointly formulated, implemented and revised together with MPA practitioners, concerned stakeholders and the SSF sector; calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider developing participative management practices, also with a view to striking a balance between the sustainable development of SSF and, where applicable, the sustainable development of responsible tourism;

46. Points out the need for economic and social protection during non-fishing periods and in the event of disasters that hamper activities; highlights the need for mechanisms providing for wage compensation for lost earnings during such periods; stresses that such compensation should be treated as actual working time for the purposes of the retirement pension and other social security entitlements;

47. Believes that, if we wish to see generational renewal, attractive conditions for young people and women must be put in place, which means valuing the income of fishing while ensuring its stability, and the application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, increasing quota allocation to SSF in line with scientific advice, ensuring training under conditions that take due account of the diversity of fishing practices, fishing gears and needs of each Member State, as well as guaranteeing adequate working conditions and safety on board; recalls that the EMFAF provides support for training and professional development; considers that training should guarantee a strong practical component, taking into account the specific reality of the national, regional or local context in which it takes place; holds the view, in addition, that it should be possible to combine this with theoretical training, while also profiting from the accumulated knowledge of those who have been or are at sea;

48. Calls for the financial and technical resources for fisheries research in each Member State to be increased with a view to developing activities targeted at fisheries and fishery resources, stepping up and improving data collection and the assessment of the state of resources;

49. Calls for an increase in the financial and technical resources for fisheries-related scientific research and development in the EU and in each Member State; in particular, stresses the need to support research institutes and laboratories in this area with material and human resources with a view to developing activities targeted at promoting small-scale, coastal and artisanal fisheries, and guaranteeing better understanding of the various causes of fish stock depletion, and the conservation of fish resources; stresses the need to involve fishers and fishers' associations in scientific monitoring, mapping, data collection, management and control activities, in order to take full advantage of their knowledge;

50. Calls on the Commission to launch a comprehensive and region-wide mapping action to develop an accurate and complete body of baseline data on SSF with a view to measuring the economic and social impact of SSF both in quantitative and qualitative terms and to estimate the value of the output produced by SSF; their economic impact on coastal communities; and their impact on related sectors;

51. Calls on Member States and the Commission to support research into practices increasing and diversifying the income of fishing communities and the fishing sector, including SSF; believes that the result of such research should be disseminated in the EU with a view to replicating, implementing and promoting projects both at national and EU level;

52. Highlights that in spite of improvements in data coverage, there is still a lack of exhaustive economic, social and territorial statistical data and indicators at European level on SSF; stresses that this lack of statistics does not allow for a proper analysis of the segment and therefore make it more difficult to put in place proper legislative action to tackle the most critical issues SSF are facing;

53. Calls on Member States to step up and improve the proper collection and disaggregation of data on fisheries, obtaining adequate statistical data on catches and landings with a view to better resource assessment and management, including associated activities, social and economic aspects, and analyses of other commercial uses, particularly for SSF and the communities associated with them;

54. Calls on the Commission to launch a comprehensive and region-wide mapping of social protection systems and the national legislation in place and available to SSF in the Member States with a view to identifying and promoting the most successful options, including legislative and institutional mechanisms which ensure the full participation of SSF in all activities related to the sustainable development of the sector, such as the development of alternative activities, co-management, financial support, labelling, traceability and the right to decent work and social protection;

55. Takes the view that when implementing the CFP, Member States must ensure that the implementation of the necessary environmental objectives must go hand in hand with defining social and economic objectives, and that their interdependence should be taken into account by the Commission and the Member States, both when implementing legislation and when designing future legislative initiatives;

56. Stresses that producer organisations can play a key role in the management of the commercialisation structures of SSF products, in improving market access for SSF products and in increasing the availability of local food products within coastal communities; stresses in particular the fact that these strengthening and promotion activities would help to put SSF in a better position to negotiate prices, and would promote healthy intra-sectoral competition and a more efficient use of their own structures and resources through collective action;

57. Stresses, in this regard, the crucial importance for the SSF sector to have a stronger dedicated organisational capacity in order to strengthen its position in the value chain; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take measures to increase the bargaining power of small-scale fishers and to support, encourage and facilitate the creation of producer organisations, associations and cooperatives for this segment as an important tool in improving their strength in the supply chain and increase their negotiating power vis-à-vis other market actors, in order to ensure good profit margins and to better manage their fishing activities;

58. Insists that associations and guilds must be recognised and eligible to receive financial aid on an equal footing with producer organisations; calls on Member States and the Commission, in particular within the framework of the reform of the CMO, to adopt initiatives on this matter with the aim of removing any discrimination between guilds and producer organisations;

59. Calls, in this regard, on the Commission and the Member States to follow up on the CMO Regulation by establishing regional plans for SSF producers' organisations in order to increase the SSF sector's profitability and improve the quality and traceability of its products;

60. Stresses the importance of involving small-scale fishers in decision-making processes at the EU, national and local levels, and calls on the Council and Member States to improve transparency in the decision-making process concerning SSF to ensure accountability; encourages the empowerment of associations of small-scale fishers to share responsibility and decision-making power in the drafting and implementation of co-management plans with national authorities in co-management committees;

61. Stresses that the viability of SSF critically depends on secure access to resources and fishing areas on the one hand, and to value-added markets on the other; calls, in this respect, for a differentiated approach to the management of SSF that includes priority access to inshore fishing areas;

62. Considers that co-management is a vital tool for SSF, making it possible to optimise the management of fishing resources using an integrated approach, taking into account all aspects of sustainability, including environmental, social and economic aspects, and incorporating the active participation and involvement of the administration, the fishing sector, the scientific community and civil society organisations;

63. Underlines the low environmental impact of fisheries and its healthy food production, as it does not involve artificial feeding, antibiotics, fertilizers or any use of chemical pesticides;

64. Stresses that an artificial conflict between industrial versus small-scale fishers should not be created; takes the view that the industrial and small-scale fishers are not in competition with each other, as they mostly fish for different species in mostly different fishing grounds; takes note of the fact that the so-called industrial fishing companies are also family businesses that have existed for generations and are deeply rooted in and connected to local fishing communities;

65. Points out that the declaration of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture constitutes an exceptional opportunity for directing global attention to the work done by this segment of the fleet for food security and the sustainable use of natural resources, as well to ensure that artisanal fishing gains visibility and is included more actively in decision-making processes;

66. Considers that improving selectivity and making the transition towards low-impact fishing techniques is key for the survival and prosperity of SSF;

67. Stresses that public institutions should facilitate access to finance to the weakest segments of the fleet in order to foster value chains and prevent market failures; in this regard, calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up legislative initiatives to facilitate access to formal finance for the SSF sector; stresses that this should include access to both formal credit for capital expenses and financing for fishing operations; the development, in partnership with financial institutions, of facilities and financial products for medium to long-term investment; and the application of formal financing schemes such as production contracts or storage receipts, with the participation of fishers, traders and public authorities;

68. Highlights that marine spatial planning (MSP) is key in ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in decisions concerning the use and protection of the marine environment; highlights that MSP is a key tool to ensure the participation of small-scale fishers in the decision-making process;

69. Maintains that the continuous fall in EU support for the sector under successive multiannual financial frameworks and, in particular, the cut in funding for the EFF/EMFAF and the CMO, is one of the factors which has been serving to worsen the situation in the sector; reiterates, therefore, that the EU's financial support for the fisheries sector needs to be stepped up considerably;

70. Considers the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication to be a valuable contribution in defining a framework to safeguard, maximise and promote small-scale fishing within the context of a fisheries management policy;

71. Calls on all Member States to enhance the role of work by women in fishing through specific projects and by giving full legal recognition to the role of women as 'assistants' and co-workers in family fishing firms, with the aim of ensuring greater labour guarantees, income for the future and social security benefits;

72. Considers it appropriate to strengthen cooperation with a view to recognising basic training provided by schools or educational institutions that are recognised by the national education systems of each Member State or third country and which are internationally recognised;

73. Considers that building points of unity between the diverse range of organisations representing the sector would be an important element in defending its claims and ensuring that it is duly taken into account in defining fisheries management policies and policies for the use of maritime space;

74. Calls on the Commission to promote projects, in the context of cohesion policy, that will make a contribution to protecting coastal and island areas as integral parts of fishing and maritime heritage;

75. Stresses that the SSF sector, more than the rest of the fleet segments, may bear the brunt of the impact of the growing need for renewable energy sources to meet the goals set by the EU Green Deal; stresses that SSF will be particularly affected if displacement deriving from the installation of a growing number of offshore windfarm units within inshore fishing grounds takes place, as they may not have the capacity to move to fishing grounds further afield or to change fishing methods; calls, in this regard, for appropriate marine spatial planning in order to guarantee the interests of all sectors and for fair compensation to small-scale fishers as a last resort;

76. Stresses the opportunities deriving from possible synergies between SSF and other sectors and, in particular, with coastal tourism that shares the same assets and infrastructures as the SSF sector; stresses that such synergies would enable diversification in the local economy, provide additional jobs and income to families, and help stabilise the declining profitability and employment in the fisheries sector; calls, in this regard, for a clear definition of 'pesca-tourism' that allows for a regulated activity and at the same time for professional small-scale fishers to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by synergies with the blue economy sector;

77. Highlights that within the SSF sector women continue to be under-represented; stresses that in spite of this, women have always played an active, although frequently invisible, role within the SSF sector; stresses that this 'invisibility' is attributable not only to cultural reasons, but also to the lack of official statistical data on women's employment within the SSF sector; calls on the Commission and Member States to support projects dedicated to collecting information on women's employment, as well as to enable women to enter the SSF sector and occupy a central role within it;

78. Considers that guaranteeing an accessible working environment, including within the fisheries sector, with a view to reintegrating into the labour market both active and former fishers and other workers in the fishing industry who suffer from physical or mental disabilities, would lead to more social inclusion and help to create more incentives for income generation in the fisheries sector and fishing communities;

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79. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.