



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS  
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

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## **EU fishing industry calls for urgent measures to secure fish supply**

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The EU fishing sector has presented to European authorities the critical measures that have to be taken in order to overcome the operational, commercial, and safety problems that the sector has only begun to endure and which will inevitably and without doubt worsen in the coming weeks due to the protective measures taken against the spread of the COVID-19. The primary concern of the sector is the continuity of fishing activities and food supply to EU citizens. Measures are also needed for those vessels forced to cease operations.

In a position paper sent to EU decision-makers the sector points out severe operational problems such as port and equipment supply restrictions, logistical difficulties, and soaring freight prices on shipments of fish. With regard to commercial factors, the sector shows concern over the collapse in first-sale fish prices, largely due to the closure of restaurants, schools, businesses and food markets and the strict limitations imposed on travel and tourism. Europêche reminds EU consumers that seafood is a vital part of a healthy diet and remains a safe, smart choice at grocery stores. Europêche underlines that the industry is increasingly limited in performing crew rotation or changes due to quarantines, get supply of drugs or protective materials or simply repatriate fishermen.

In order to alleviate as much as possible the current situation of trade and value chain disruptions and evaporating market demand resulting in falling price levels, Europêche asks for legislative changes to enable fishermen to carry over more than the existing 10% of their fishing quotas to next year and for fair intervention prices for unsold fish. In the document, the industry demands a series of measures that guarantee the logistical needs of crews and ships, such as the transport of crews, equipment, health protocols tailored to each fleet and guaranteeing the supply of masks and gloves both to ships and to fish markets or fish auction halls.

Europêche also urges policy-makers to modify the fisheries fund regulation in order to quickly adjust and provide financial aid for those fishing companies that are forced to cease their operations for imperative reasons such as member states measures to avoid the spread of the COVID-19, designation of high risk areas, crew infections or lack of market demand.

In addition to these vital mitigation measures the sector calls on Member States to introduce national measures such as VAT reduction, suspension of social security contributions and tax exemptions.

Furthermore, in view of the current developments, it only seems logical to extend the Brexit transition period with another 12 months at least, although Européche understands that such decision depends on agreement by the UK.

Daniel Voces, managing director of Européche, declared: *“Our fishermen are doing a fantastic job. While far away from their homes and families, they continue bringing healthy seafood to our plates in a very challenging environment. They deserve the full attention of our public authorities to secure their safety, their economies and the continuity of the food supply”.*

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