

Fisheries: Commission welcomes provisional political agreement on new technical conservation measures

The new rules, in line with the [Common Fisheries Policy \(CFP\)](#) and the Commission's [Better Regulation](#) agenda, streamline the technical measures guiding how, where and when fishermen may fish, as well as determining the type of gear, catch composition and ways to deal with accidental catches.

European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** said: *"I am delighted that there has been an agreement on our proposal. The new technical conservation measures present an important step forward in delivering on a concrete EU commitment to a sustainable fishing sector and the protection of the marine environment. The agreement of today gives stakeholders and fishermen a tool to determine what the best measures for fishing are, taking into account their local context, while safeguarding the health of our oceans."*

The new rules simplify the existing technical conservation measures that so far at European level have become highly complex over the years. The new rules include provisions for the protection of the marine ecosystem, marine habitats and for avoiding by-catches of non-commercial and sensitive species.

The regulation introduces quantitative indicators to determine the effectiveness of technical measures in reducing unwanted catches of juvenile fish, by-catches of mammals like whales, dolphins and porpoises, and marine seabirds, as well as indicators defining the impact on the marine habitat. This is a novel approach intended to lead to better overview of results and higher accountability by the operators. The agreement is also good news for cetaceans and seabirds with the extension of the obligation for Member States to introduce mitigation measures to avoid by-catches of seabirds, whales, dolphins and porpoises in all sea areas, when justified by scientific evidence.

The co-legislators also agreed to introduce a ban on the use of pulse fishing gear from 1 July 2021, ensuring a phasing-out period to allow the sector to adapt. The agreement also provides Member States with the possibility to immediately prohibit or restrict the use of pulse fishing within their coastal waters. The Commission will continue to follow ongoing scientific developments closely.

Next steps

The provisional agreement will now have to formally be adopted by both the European Parliament and the Council.

Background

The [proposal](#) made by the Commission in 2016 aimed at a more flexible system of governance, empowering regional actors, who know their local context best, to customise technical conservation measures in their own sea basins. It also condensed a number of distinct Regulations into one single text, which should ease interpretation and facilitate compliance.