



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/Unit/ER (2021)

Subject: Reply to recommendation #14 Concepts of Recreational Fishing and Touristic Fishing

Dear Mr Pavon,

Thank you for your recommendation on recreational fishing, more specifically your recommendation to redefine the concept of recreational fishing as currently defined in Regulation (EU) 2017/1004¹. I would like to add that Article 4(28) of the Control Regulation² contains the same definition, defining recreational fisheries as “*non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living aquatic resources for recreation, tourism or sport.*” I want to emphasize that the different activities falling under this definition are not commercial fishing activities, and one of the consequences is that the sale of catches from these activities is prohibited.

Your recommendation to redefine this definition is to clarify the concept of tourism fishing – acknowledging that it is a profit-making activity and as such should be subject to specific management measures in order to differentiate it from non-profit recreational fishing. You also recommend that the specificities of the different typologies of recreational fishing should not be analysed as a whole but rather in an individualised manner. All this to create easier management and control processes that are more appropriate.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008

² Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy.

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Member States should ensure that recreational fisheries are conducted in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy³, as it can have a significant impact on fish resources. The Commission is aware and equally concerned that recreational fisheries can have an impact on the state of some stocks. This is the case e.g. for Baltic cod, Atlantic sea bass or European eel, where in some instances recreational catches are more important than the commercial ones. The Commission is monitoring the situation closely, and proposes measures for recreational fisheries on a case-by-case basis, as was the case for recreational catches of sea bass and European eel⁴. Reliable and uniform data collection remains vital for the Commission to assess the impact of recreational fishing on specific stocks and to set appropriate measures.

In addition to control, monitoring and data collection requirements, the Technical Measures Regulation⁵, adopted in August 2019, foresees that certain provisions apply to recreational fishing⁶. According to this Regulation, in cases where recreational fishing has a significant impact in a particular region, the Commission has the power to adopt, on the basis of a joint recommendation submitted by the relevant Member States having a direct management interest, delegated acts to establish minimum conservation sizes for specific recreational fisheries. The Commission wrote to the Member States regional groups and other stakeholders, urging them to come up with such joint recommendations. In 2020, certain technical measures have been adopted specifically for recreational fisheries in the North Sea and in the South Western Waters⁷.

The Commission's proposal for the revision of the Control Regulation⁸ contains a licensing system for recreational fishers and compulsory reporting, to improve control and monitoring. Support of the Council and the European Parliament is of importance in this matter, as well as other stakeholders such as the Advisory Councils. At the request of the European Parliament, DG MARE launched in November 2019 a pilot project to develop and test a "control scheme for recreational catches of sea bass" (MARE 2019/006). An external contractor has developed an integrated IT tool to allow recreational fishers to inform quickly about their daily catches by registering those catches in the app "Fishfriender" and a web-based platform – RecFishing.eu. This pilot

³ 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

⁴ Council Regulation (EU) 2021/92 of 28 January 2021 fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1380/2013, (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973, (EU) 2019/472 and (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2549/2000, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005

⁶ According to Article 2(2) of the Regulation, the following provisions apply to recreational fishing: Article 7 (Prohibited fishing gear and methods), Article 10 (Prohibited fish and shellfish species), Article 11 (Catches of marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles) and Article 12 (Protection for sensitive habitats including vulnerable marine ecosystems).

⁷ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/2013 of 21 August 2020 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards technical measures for certain demersal and pelagic fisheries in the North Sea and in the South Western Waters

⁸ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and 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) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control, COM/2018/368 final

project shows that it is possible to have an integrated EU catch reporting system for recreational fisheries.

In your letter, you also mention the need for the Commission to support local structures in the creation, investment and analysis of all the ecological, economic, social and historical dimensions of this type of fishing. Financial support under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture fund (2021 – 2027) for data collection also covers recreational fisheries; and recreational fishers are eligible for support insofar as their projects help achieve the fund's objectives. For example, they can participate in actions that protect the marine environment and in partnerships on sustainable maritime tourism in local communities.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

Enclosure: [List the enclosure\(s\) here. Use Shift+Return to add lines.](#)

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