

Recommendation n.º 73

European Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics – Simplified Data Collection

Considering the public consultation launched by the European Commission (EC) on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council [COM (2025) 435 final, 2025/0246 (COD)] on European fisheries and aquaculture statistics¹, which aims to simplify and harmonise the collection of statistical data, the Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRP) hereby expresses its opinion:

The European outermost regions (ORs) of Saint Martin, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Mayotte and La Réunion present unique characteristics within the context of the European Union, notably the predominance of artisanal and polyvalent fleets, the presence of less-studied subtropical and tropical species, and a strong socio-economic dependence on the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

CCRP has repeatedly highlighted the importance of collecting adequate scientific data to underpin management measures tailored to the specificities of the ORs. Data collection is essential for the sustainable use of fishing opportunities, as it makes it possible to assess the real status of marine resources, support management decisions, plan fishing activities with greater certainty, and respond more effectively to environmental, economic and social challenges. Moreover, the use of robust data facilitates access to financial support and strengthens the ability to defend the interests of the ORs before the European institutions, promoting an exploitation of marine resources that is both sustainable and competitive.

Canary Islands

In the Canary Islands, our members identify gaps in the availability of reliable data on recreational fishing, whose activity has an impact on fisheries resources. While the professional sector regularly reports its catches, the absence of effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms for recreational fishing prevents a reliable assessment of total fishing effort. With the entry into force, in January 2026, of the Implementing Regulation on the Control of Recreational Fisheries (EU) 2025/274, which will make the electronic reporting of recreational catches mandatory, it is essential to ensure its effective and harmonised implementation in the OR, promoting a more balanced management between the different

¹ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council [COM (2025) 435 final, 2025/0246 (COD)]

segments of the sector.

Our members note that the third final provision of the [Draft Royal Decree XX/2025, concerning the regulation of fisheries resource management measures](#), introduces adjustments only regarding recreational sea fishing in external waters. However, a substantial part of recreational fishing effort and catches of demersal species in the Canary Islands take place in internal waters, under regional competence. In this context, it is considered important to provide for a coordination mechanism between the Spanish State and the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands to ensure a homogeneous and effective application of the electronic reporting system established by Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/274. The absence of coordination may limit the availability of essential scientific data and compromise the sustainability of fisheries resources in the OR.

We consider the European Commission's efforts to reduce administrative burdens and improve data comparability at European level to be positive. However, we draw attention to the risk that the application of uniform simplification rules, without specific adaptations to our regions, may lead to the loss of critical information, further weakening an already limited scientific base and undermining the ability to support tailored management measures. On the contrary, in the case of the OR, data collection should be strengthened rather than merely simplified, to ensure that the biological and socio-economic diversity of these territories is properly considered.

In this context, the Expert Working Group EWG 24-06² of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) identified the limited number of stock assessments in most OR as the main constraint to the effective application of balance indicators, in particular the Sustainable Harvest Indicator (SHI) and the Stocks at Risk Indicator (SAR). This limitation undermines the ability to ensure the long-term viability of the sector. For this reason, STECF recommended a review of national assessments to increase the number of assessed stocks and thereby improve the reliability of the calculation of these indicators.

² Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – EWG Outermost Regions (STECF-24-06). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024. Edited by Borges, L., Jung, A., Gras, M. JRC Science for Policy Report. ISSN 1831-9424.

Accordingly, the CCRUP recommends to **the concerned Member States** (France, Spain and Portugal):

1. Collection of empirical data, through professional fishers' associations, on practices of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, as well as on the main fishing ports where multiple reports of such practices have been identified, with the annual reporting of the analysis of this information to the competent scientific bodies, the European Commission and the CCRUP;

2. Strengthening the collection and analysis of data on recreational fisheries catches, through targeted training, systems adapted to the specific characteristics of local recreational fishing (gear, geography and connectivity), and the implementation of information campaigns that promote effective compliance with obligations, given that in the OR - such as the Canary Islands - recreational fishing effort is high and limitations in control persist. In this context, these requirements cannot be effectively implemented without additional technical resources;

3. Regarding the fisheries sector, improving the collection of catch data for stocks subject to quotas or for which there is evidence of overfishing;

4. Ensuring the systematic and comprehensive reporting of catch and production data from the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to European scientific organisations, as well as to the European Commission;

5. Annual submission to the CCRUP of a statistical analysis of the status of stocks subject to data collection, for the information of member organisations;

6. Coordinating with regional administrations to ensure a homogeneous and effective implementation of the electronic catch reporting system established by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/274.

We also recommend to **the European Commission**:

1. That the proposed Regulation include flexibility mechanisms allowing for differentiated data collection in the ORs, in line with their environmental, social and economic specificities;

2. That adequate financial and technical resources be ensured to support data collection in the ORs, to prevent these regions from being placed at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the European Union;

3. That data collection in the ORs be strengthened, and not merely simplified, including not only biological data but also socio-economic data, as well as information on artisanal fleets, subtropical and tropical species, and local aquaculture production systems.

The President of the Executive Committee of the CCRUP,

(Ruben Farias)