

## Recommendation No. 80

### **Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture in the Outermost Regions**

Having regard to the call for evidence launched by the European Commission (EC) under the initiative ‘Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture’<sup>1</sup>, which aims to establish a strategic framework to guide the development of the European Union (EU) fisheries and aquaculture sector up to 2040, while ensuring the sustainability, competitiveness and social viability of coastal and island communities;

Considering the structural specificities of the Outermost Regions (ORs) of *Saint Martin, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane Française, Açores, Madeira, Canarias, Mayotte* and *La Réunion* – namely their remoteness from mainland Europe, the limited size of their markets, climate vulnerability, dependence on the maritime sector, infrastructure constraints and reduced administrative capacity, all of which are referred to in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and warrant differentiated legal, financial and operational treatment, reflected in concrete, proportionate instruments tailored to the specific circumstances of each region. In this context, it is imperative that all European initiatives applicable to the ORs within the framework of this strategic process incorporate differentiated impact assessments, avoiding uniform approaches that do not reflect the diversity of our territories;

The Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRUP) hereby issues the following opinion, focusing on the objectives of Vision 2040:

#### 1. Competitiveness and financing of the sector

A balanced and technologically advanced fleet will enable greater productivity while ensuring a reduced environmental impact. In the ORs, the detection of fish shoals is still carried out predominantly using traditional methods, despite the ongoing development of technologies with promising results, such as satellites and hydrophones.

In this context, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission and the Member States concerned promote the integration of these technologies into fishing activity**, as they may

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14854-Fisheries-and-aquaculture-Vision-2040\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14854-Fisheries-and-aquaculture-Vision-2040_en)

not only enhance its efficiency but also contribute to the energy transition by reducing one of the greatest weaknesses of pole-and-line fishing: its carbon footprint.

In this respect, it is equally important to ensure conditions that strengthen the competitiveness and economic sustainability of the fisheries sector in the ORs. The CCRUP therefore considers it a matter of urgency to reintroduce the Programme of Options Specifically Relating to Remoteness and Insularity (POSEI) specifically targeted at fisheries, capable of offsetting the additional costs affecting fisheries and aquaculture products from our regions, taking into account the differentiated approaches and specific features of each territory.

Accordingly, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission, in the forthcoming post-2027 financial and regulatory framework, ensure the continuity of specific financial compensation instruments, in particular under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), and further promote the reintroduction of POSEI-Fisheries – in line with the recent Report on the role of ocean diplomacy for the competitiveness of EU fisheries and aquaculture<sup>2</sup>, by the European Parliament – with its own rules, a dedicated financial allocation and simplified management, operating along the same administrative lines as the current POSEI**, in the context of a future evaluation of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013), and that this instrument operate in a flexible, adaptable and permanent manner so as to respond to our specificities.

In the case of small-scale fisheries, decisions such as the acquisition or modernisation of vessels, the replacement of engines or adaptation to new environmental requirements entail significant financial burdens for operators.

It should be emphasised that the fleet of the ORs consists predominantly of small vessels and that our regions have a limited capacity for self-funded investment, particularly as regards the adoption of new technologies.

In addition, the acquisition of fuel, spare parts and mechanical components for vessel engines and navigation equipment entails higher costs, owing to the distance from mainland Europe.

Against this backdrop, when the regulatory framework undergoes frequent changes or there is uncertainty as to future management rules and financing conditions, it becomes more difficult for fishers and ship-owners to plan their investments.

Consequently, **it is recommended that the European Commission ensure a stable, predictable and coherent regulatory framework, together with financial instruments tailored to**

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2026-0043\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2026-0043_EN.html)

**the specificities of the ORs, guaranteeing that the energy transition does not jeopardise the economic viability of the sector or the safety of operations.**

**The CCRUP likewise recommends that the Member States (Spain, France and Portugal) encourage the development of research and innovation projects and foster partnerships between companies, associations, universities and technology centres, which may facilitate investment, stimulate innovation and promote the transfer of knowledge in the fisheries sector.**

## 2. Generational renewal and associated skills

Generational renewal constitutes a structural challenge for the fisheries sector in the ORs — a sector marked by the progressive ageing of its working population. To safeguard the continuity of fishing activity, it is crucial to make it more attractive to young people, in particular by improving working conditions, providing adequate training and ensuring stable incomes. In this context, it is important to attract young people who have completed compulsory schooling and received vocational training in fisheries, while strengthening the integration of technical and scientific skills within fishing communities.

To that end, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission:**

**1. draw up tailored and equitable regulation for the ORs**, enabling investment planning in the medium and long term;

**2. promote the modernisation of vessels**, together with the improvement of safety and living conditions on board;

**3. continue to support ocean literacy**, fostering ongoing professional development throughout the fisheries value chain.

## 3. Ecological, digital and social transition

Vision 2040 should continue to promote the modernisation of the small-scale fishing fleet and its port infrastructure, encouraging the use of more efficient, safer and environmentally sustainable vessels, as well as the adoption of renewable energy in the infrastructure supporting the sector.

In this area, **the CCRUP recommends that the Member States (Spain, France and Portugal) promote solutions such as the use of solar, wind and wave energy in fishing infrastructure and in fishing-related activities.**

Given that the ecological transition should include initiatives enabling the protection of the marine environment, **the CCRUP recommends that the Member States (Spain, France and Portugal) implement programmes for the collection of marine litter and abandoned fishing gear and establish networks of recycling points within fishing infrastructure.** These measures will contribute to reducing marine pollution and to promoting more sustainable practices in the sector.

Taken together, these measures will contribute to building a fisheries sector that is progressively carbon-neutral and environmentally responsible.

In the field of climate change, shifts have been observed in the geographical distribution of species, in their respective biological cycles and in the resulting changes in catches. These dynamics call for a more adaptive management approach, underpinned by up-to-date scientific evidence.

Accordingly, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission strengthen:**

- 1. the establishment of mechanisms based on independent environmental impact assessments,** with the effective participation of fishing communities;
- 2. the systematic integration of applicable climate indicators into the regulations for the ORs;**
- 3. investment in scientific research focused on the ORs.**

As regards the digital transition, it is likewise essential to ensure adequate connectivity at sea. Given that satellite internet access in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) typically entails a high cost, which varies according to the operator and the technology, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission encourage the adoption of other existing systems that are more affordable and have proven effective, and that may in the future provide better communications and support for operations at sea.**

At the social level, it is considered essential that the EU strategic orientation for the ORs include a robust system of monitoring and periodic reporting, with region-specific indicators, enabling the assessment of the actual impact of the measures to be applied. This system should guarantee transparency, the active participation of communities and the possibility of making adjustments whenever necessary.

#### 4. Development of fishing communities

The fisheries sector in the ORs is characterised by small-scale fisheries<sup>3</sup>, which are of particular importance for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of our Regions. This sector contributes to the maintenance of employment in coastal areas, to the strengthening of the ORs' food sovereignty and to the Union's food security, making a qualitative contribution to the sustainability and diversity of European food production.

In this context, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission promote:**

**1. the improvement of fishing infrastructure**, facilitating access to the sea and ensuring better conditions to support fishing activities;

**2. cooperation between the different stakeholders in the sector**, as a means of developing innovation projects, stimulating investment and strengthening the economic resilience of coastal regions, in particular through participation in the Advisory Councils.

#### 5. Food sovereignty of the ORs

It is considered essential that small-scale fisheries in the ORs be recognised as a priority activity, producing high-quality food that should be affordable for local communities, thereby consolidating their food sovereignty.

It is equally essential to address the growing difficulties in accessing marine resources, stemming from an international context marked by geopolitical instability.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission incorporate, within the framework of Vision 2040, a structured approach focused on the enhancement and consolidation of local production in the ORs**, promoting equitable access to fisheries products and contributing to regional food sovereignty and food security.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/PT\\_Conceito-Pesca-Artesanal-RUP\\_Rec72\\_17.11.25-1.pdf](https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/PT_Conceito-Pesca-Artesanal-RUP_Rec72_17.11.25-1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://industriaspesqueras.com/noticia-88719-sec-Pol%C3%ADtica>

## 6. Maritime spatial planning

The growing pressure arising from the use of maritime space may lead to significant conflicts between sea users in traditional fishing grounds.

Accordingly, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission and the Member States concerned ensure the maintenance of transparent planning processes, based on independent environmental impact assessments and on the effective participation of fishing communities.**

Furthermore, the strengthening of measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is of particular importance, both for protecting marine biodiversity and for safeguarding the economic sustainability of operators who comply with the applicable rules.

In summary, the CCRUP emphasises that ‘Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture’ should incorporate a differentiated approach for the ORs, recognising the contribution of small-scale fisheries to environmental sustainability, territorial cohesion and food security.

The consolidation of sustainable fisheries in the ORs is not only a matter of regional interest but also a significant contribution to the EU’s strategic objectives in terms of the sustainability and resilience of marine ecosystems.

Our marine biodiversity, of high value to the EU, includes marine ecosystems that are unique and of great ecological importance, such as coral reefs and mangroves, which must be protected and valued.