

Recommendation n.º 83

Sustainable Fisheries in the Outermost Regions of the European Union:

State of play and orientations for 2027

Having regard to European Commission Communication COM(2026) 271 final, *Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2027*, and the associated public consultation;¹

Having regard to the specific status of the ORs, recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the differences between the areas of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as the competences of the regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), namely the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC);²

Having regard to the scientific advice available for 2027, the European Commission (EC) staff working document and the social data of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF);^{3,4}

Whereas the ORs are not merely territories with specific needs but also represent a strategic asset for the European Union through their contribution to food security, the sustainable blue economy, the European maritime presence in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the conservation of biodiversity and the development of scientific knowledge on marine ecosystems of high environmental value;

Having regard to the fact that strengthening sustainable fishing in the ORs also means strengthening the European Union's strategic autonomy, improving the resilience of its food systems and contributing to the balanced development of its maritime territories;

The Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRUP) hereby issues the following recommendation:

¹ European Commission, Communication COM(2026) 271 final, "Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2027", Brussels, 5.6.2026; European Commission, Have Your Say, initiative No 18413, "Sustainable fishing in the EU - state of play and orientations for 2027", consultation open until 31.8.2026, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/18413-Sustainable-fishing-in-the-EU-state-of-play-and-orientations-for-2027_en (accessed 28.7.2026).

² Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 349, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu/2012/art_349/oj; Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11.12.2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>.

³ European Commission, SWD(2026) 145 final, staff working document accompanying Communication COM(2026) 271 final, in particular the sections on fleet capacity and the socio-economic performance of the ORs.

⁴ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), "Social Data in EU Fisheries: methodology, dissemination, analysis and evaluation (STECF 25-02 & 25-13)", Publications Office of the European Union, 2026, JRC145884, DOI: 10.2760/6411168.

1. Introduction

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) establishes a joint obligation: to manage fisheries under an ecosystem-based approach while at the same time delivering economic, social, employment and food supply benefits. For the CCRUP, these objectives cannot be ranked in such a way as to treat the social dimension as a possible consequence of biological sustainability, and should instead be regarded as interdependent pillars of a truly sustainable fisheries policy.

The recovery of stocks and the reduction of fishing mortality remain essential. However, the EC itself acknowledges that the recovery of biomass has been slower than expected, that the reduction in landings directly affects the profitability of the sector and that the volatility of fuel prices constrains the economic viability, the modernisation of the fleet and its process of decarbonisation. In the ORs, these risks are amplified by remoteness, insularity, market fragmentation, the small size of businesses and dependence on external logistics chains.

The ORs display biogeographical, socio-economic and operational characteristics that clearly distinguish them from the Union's other fishing regions. Consequently, the uniform application of management measures designed for other sea basins may produce disproportionate effects that are incompatible with the European Union's objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Decisions affecting the ORs must be based, wherever possible, on scientific information specific to each region and take account of their territorial characteristics.

The orientations for 2027 must therefore move from uniform application to territorialised governance, based on effective recognition of the specific features of each OR and with measurable targets.

Further to our [Recommendation n.º 68](#), we recommend that the European Commission include a stand-alone chapter for the ORs in its annual communication on sustainable fishing, addressing the following topics:

- (i) the state of stocks and assessment gaps;
- (ii) fishing opportunities by area and competent organisation;
- (iii) socio-economic and social indicators;
- (iv) fleet capacity and modernisation;
- (v) energy costs;

(vi) the impact of climate change on fisheries and the adaptation of the OR fleets.

Accordingly, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission and the Portuguese, Spanish and French Member States strengthen** data collection, the attractiveness of the fishing profession, safety on board vessels and generational renewal, ensuring that these actions are designed specifically to meet the needs of the ORs.

2. Progress towards achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY)

Increasing the number of stocks exploited at levels consistent with MSY is an objective that must continue to be consolidated. Nevertheless, the setting of the fishing opportunities for 2027 must also incorporate other essential factors, among them the evolution of biomass, changes in the distribution of species associated with ocean warming, bycatch, the protection of sensitive species and the cumulative effects arising from other human activities affecting the marine environment.

Given the high selectivity of the artisanal line-and-hook fisheries of the ORs, **we recommend that this characteristic be recognised expressly in impact assessments** and be valued as a differentiating element in the adoption of management and conservation measures.

Where MSY reference points do not exist, analyses based on scientifically robust alternative indicators must be funded, with defined timetables for the collection, review and updating of the information.

The precautionary principle is one of the pillars of the Common Fisheries Policy and must continue to guide management decisions where significant scientific uncertainty exists. However, the application of the precautionary principle must be proportionate and accompanied by a parallel effort to reduce that uncertainty through an effective improvement in scientific knowledge.

2.1. Fishing opportunities in 2026

The experience gained from the setting of the fishing opportunities for 2026 confirms that the total allowable catches (TACs), fishing effort limits and supplementary measures must be set on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge, without losing sight of the socio-economic stability of the communities dependent on fishing.

The CCRUP stresses that decisions adopted for other sea basins cannot be transposed automatically

to the fisheries of the ORs. The measures applicable in 2026 must serve as a basis for a transparent assessment of the biological, economic and social effects before the fishing opportunities for 2027 are set, including analysis of quota fluctuations, gear selectivity and the effective capacity of each fleet segment.

The assessment of the results of the measures adopted must incorporate indicators specific to the ORs making it possible to determine whether the conservation objectives are being met without disproportionately compromising the economic viability of fishing businesses or the maintenance of employment in coastal communities.

The CCRUP recommends that the European Commission give priority to producing scientific knowledge specific to the ORs where insufficient data may constrain fishing opportunities, establishing multiannual programmes to reduce scientific uncertainty progressively and to base decisions on sufficient scientific evidence. In this context, **we recommend that the European Commission and the Member States (Portugal, France and Spain) set the fishing opportunities on the basis of the best available scientific advice**, but always by the correct species, stock and geographical area, accompanied by a socio-economic and ecosystem assessment, avoiding the automatic transposition of conclusions from mainland areas or from stocks that do not occur or are not exploited in the ORs.

In addition, we consider it necessary for impact assessments to distinguish expressly between the effects expected for industrial fishing and those deriving from artisanal fishing, given the significant differences in selectivity, intensity of fishing effort, energy consumption and socio-economic impact.

2.2. Agreements with Norway, the United Kingdom and other coastal States

The European Union's (EU) agreements with Norway, the United Kingdom and other coastal States are relevant for shared and widely distributed stocks.

However, the external dimension of the ORs also requires the annual Communication to identify individually the decisions and negotiations conducted within ICCAT, IOTC and the other competent regional fisheries management organisations, clearly differentiating the ICES, CECAF and FAO areas applicable to each region.

We recommend that the European Commission and the Member States concerned involve the CCRUP in good time in these processes, making available the scientific advice, the socio-economic assessments and the technical rationale underpinning each proposal, expressly demonstrating its territorial relevance. No agreement designed for a different sea basin or species must produce automatic effects in the ORs merely because of similarity between common names or general biological characteristics. For the ORs, any reference to a fishing opportunity must expressly identify its

geographical scope and the competent scientific authority or RFMO.

The CCRUP also recommends that the European Commission explain transparently the relationship between the decisions adopted in the regional fisheries management organisations and their subsequent incorporation into Union law, thereby facilitating a better understanding of their effects on the ORs.

We also recommend that the European Commission and the Member States publish the criteria used for the allocation, use and possible redistribution of the delegated and national quotas affecting the ORs, fostering greater transparency and predictability for the fisheries sector.

We recommend that the European Commission carry out and forward to the CCRUP, for each draft agreement, socio-economic assessments and the technical justification underpinning each proposal, expressly demonstrating its territorial relevance.

3. Balance between the fishing capacity of Member States' fleets and their fishing opportunities

Between December 2023 and December 2024, the OR fleet decreased to 3,720 vessels, with a gross tonnage of 51,901 GT, while registered engine power increased marginally to 376,463 kW.⁵ These aggregate indicators, taken alone, do not make it possible to determine the existence of overcapacity or to assess adequately the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities in fleet segments with very different characteristics.

The current balance indicators were designed, to a large extent, for contexts in which consolidated biological assessments and sufficiently broad economic series exist. In the ORs, the limited availability of scientific assessments for numerous stocks may generate incomplete indicators or interpretations that do not adequately reflect the reality of these fisheries. At the same time, the ageing of part of the fleet and its technical limitations adversely affect safety, energy efficiency, working conditions and the attractiveness of the fishing profession.

The CCRUP rejects any interpretation whereby the modernisation of the fleet automatically entails an increase in fishing effort. Engine replacement, improved stability, refrigeration systems, living conditions on board, safety equipment and low-emission technologies must be eligible for funding provided that they do not increase effective catch capacity or are accompanied by objectively verifiable

⁵ European Commission, SWD(2026) 145 final, pp. 12-14: between December 2023 and December 2024, the OR fleet decreased to 3,720 vessels, 51,901 GT and 376,463 kW.

safeguards. They must therefore be understood as an investment intended to improve the overall sustainability of the sector and not merely as action on fishing capacity.

In this context, the **CCRUP recommends that the European Commission give priority to favouring investments aimed at: improving maritime safety; reducing fuel consumption; lowering emissions; increasing energy efficiency; improving working conditions; facilitating generational renewal; and increasing the health quality of the fish landed.**

Fishing capacity must not be automatically equated with the physical size of the fleet. Actual exploitation capacity also depends on factors such as the length of fishing trips, the selectivity of the gear used, the spatial distribution of the resources, oceanographic conditions, weather constraints and the business structure of the sector itself. The assessment of the balance between capacity and resources must therefore evolve into a multidimensional model capable of reflecting the reality of the ORs more accurately.

The CCRUP considers that the modernisation of the fleet must not be automatically equated with an increase in fishing capacity or effort. The current capacity indicators, based on gross tonnage (GT) and engine power (kW), do not adequately distinguish between the elements that determine effective catch capacity and those intended to improve safety, working and living conditions on board, energy efficiency or the decarbonisation of vessels.

The CCRUP therefore recommends a review of the definition and calculation methods for fishing capacity at EU level, so that the additional tonnage and, where applicable, engine power strictly necessary for improvements in safety, crew accommodation, working conditions, refrigeration and preservation, energy efficiency and low- or zero-emission technologies are not counted as an increase in fishing capacity where they do not increase effective catch capacity.

At the same time, recognising that certain technological innovations may lead to increases in fishing efficiency, investments likely to affect effective catch capacity must be subject to an assessment based on objective and verifiable criteria. Consequently, the modernisation of the fleet must be seen as an investment in the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the sector, while maintaining the safeguards necessary to prevent real increases in fishing pressure.

In addition, we recommend that the European Commission and the Member States concerned:

- **Adopt a specific methodology to assess the balance of the fleets of the ORs** that distinguishes, among other aspects, nominal capacity, effective catch capacity, fishing effort, gear selectivity, economic dependence, the seasonality of the fisheries, the multi-fishery nature of the fleet, the

existing scientific gaps and the operational needs relating to the safety and resilience of fishing activity. This entails reviewing the current capacity indicators based on gross tonnage (GT) and engine power (kW).

And accordingly authorise investments aimed at improving safety, habitability, energy efficiency, the preservation of fish on board and the reduction of emissions where they do not increase effective catch capacity or are accompanied by verifiable safeguards. In addition, these investments must contribute to improving working conditions, the quality of the product landed and the competitiveness of the fishing businesses of the ORs.

4. Socio-economic perspective

Economic sustainability is one of the fundamental pillars of the Common Fisheries Policy. An environmentally sustainable fishing activity can be maintained over time only if businesses have sufficient conditions to ensure their economic viability, attract new generations of professionals and continue to supply local populations with fresh fishery products.

The specific features of the ORs, recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, among them isolation, geographical remoteness, logistical dependence and the small size of their markets, considerably increase operating costs and limit the sector's capacity to adapt to external shocks, such as variations in fuel prices or changes in international supply chains.

In 2023, the OR fleet caught 31,597 tonnes of fish, worth EUR 149.4 million, generating a gross value added of EUR 103.4 million. The French ORs accounted for 44% of the value of the landings, *Açores* and *Madeira* 38% and *Canarias* 18%.⁶ Overall, the fleet was profitable, although *Canarias* fleet recorded a slight loss.

The European Commission estimates that, at the end of March 2026, the Union fleet was bearing a fuel cost of between EUR 1.00 and EUR 1.10 per litre, noting further that an increase of just EUR 0.10 per litre could reduce the annual gross profit of the fleet as a whole by around EUR 156 million. However, these average figures do not adequately reflect the additional costs arising from outermost status, logistical dependence and the small size of island markets.

Consequently, the profitability of the OR fleets cannot be assessed solely through average European-wide indicators; it must instead incorporate specific variables relating to insularity, transport,

⁶ European Commission, SWD(2026) 145 final, p. 24: in 2023, the OR fleet caught 31,597 t worth EUR 149.4 million and generated EUR 103.4 million of gross value added.

supply, business size and fuel dependence.

The calculations presented below are limited to diesel, as this is the only fuel for which sufficiently comparable official series are currently available. This shows the need to improve the availability of harmonised regional data for all the ORs, so as to allow comparable analyses and properly underpin future management decisions. The official 2021 average, the official 2022 average and the latest official figure published for 2026 are compared. In *Açores*, the series is specific to the coloured and marked diesel used in artisanal fishing; for *Madeira*, the official maximum price of the coloured and marked diesel used in fishing is used, before any specific support, with an annual average weighted by the number of days each price was in force. The absence of harmonised regional public series for the fuel actually used by fisheries in *Canarias* and in the French ORs prevents an equivalent comparison. This gap must be corrected, with data validated by the regional administrations.

Improving this information is particularly relevant for the ORs, since national or European averages may conceal significant differences in the costs actually borne by island and outermost fleets.

Table 1 - Availability and trend of the official prices of the fuels used by fisheries in the ORs analysed

OR	Fuel / series	2021 €/l	2022 €/l	2026 €/l	Δ 22/21	Δ 26/21
<i>Açores</i>	Coloured and marked diesel — artisanal and decked fishing (maximum retail price, VAT included) ⁷	0.608	0.955	1.232 (01/08/2026)	+57.1%	+102.7%
<i>Madeira</i>	Coloured and marked diesel used in fishing (maximum retail price, before support) ⁸	0.829	1.266	1.408 (27/07/2026)	+52.6%	+69.8%
<i>Canarias</i>	Fuel for fishing use: no comparable regional public series ⁹	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
French ORs	Fuels used in fishing: no harmonised public series by OR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

⁷ Government of the Azores, Regional Fund for the Support of Cohesion and Economic Development, "Fuel Prices": official series "Price Trends 2021" and "Price Trends 2022", <https://portal.azores.gov.pt/web/fracde/pre%C3%A7o-combust%C3%ADveis>; Official Journal of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, Series I, No 94, Regulatory Order No 21/2026 of 27.7.2026: maximum retail price of the coloured and marked diesel consumed in artisanal fishing set at EUR 1.232/l, VAT included, from 1.8.2026; for the decked coastal and offshore fleet, the same figure is VAT-exempt, <https://jo.azores.gov.pt/api/public/journal/pdfOriginal?ano=2026&numeroJornal=94&serieId=ec6ff6d5-7709-4517-8d3c-b9b92c443c8a&suplemento=0>.

⁸ Regional Government of Madeira, "Trend in the prices of fuels subject to the Maximum Prices Regime" (2019-2024 series), relating to the coloured and marked diesel also used by fishing activity; Official Journal of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, Series II, No 131, supplement, 24.7.2026. Joint Order No 64/2026 (maximum retail price of EUR 1.408/l from 27.7.2026, before any specific support), <https://joram.madeira.gov.pt/joram/2serie/Ano%20de%202026/IIISerie-131-2026-07-24Supl.pdf>.

⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), "Prices of agricultural and fisheries diesel, 2026" and the corresponding weekly reports: the methodology for diesel for fishing use relies on prices collected at maritime filling stations and distinguishes their tax base; no comparable public regional series making it possible to attribute a specific price to the Canary Islands was identified in the reports analysed. <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/ministerio/servicios/analisis-y-prospectiva/financiacion-fiscalidad-costes-energia/energiasectoresagrariotypesquero/gasoleo-precios-2026> (accessed 28.7.2026).

Reading: only series directly linked to fuels used in commercial fishing are quantified. Road fuel prices are not used. The figures published may differ from the shipowner's net cost after exemptions, support, rebates or commercial discounts; "n/a" means not available in a comparable regional public series.

The results show a continued upward trend in the price of fuel. In *Açores*, the price of diesel for artisanal fishing rose by 102.7% compared with the 2021 average, and remains 29.1% above the 2022 average. In *Madeira*, the increase reaches 69.8% above the 2021 average and 11.2% above the 2022 average.

For *Canarias*, no quantitative regional variation is presented. The reports of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) collect prices of diesel for fishing use sold at maritime filling stations, but the information published does not make it possible to attribute a comparable regional series to *Canarias*.

To complete this analysis, **we recommend that the Member States (Portugal, Spain and France) publish, in a harmonised, up-to-date and timely manner, information on average fuel consumption per trip, days of activity, distance travelled, fishing gear used, gross tonnage of the vessel, installed power, net price actually paid, support received and volume of landings**, thereby making it possible to assess more accurately the incidence of energy costs on each fleet segment. Without these data, European averages conceal the unequal exposure of the ORs and of their vessels.

4.1. Social dimension

The social data available for the French ORs show that in 2023 there were 2,580 people employed in fishing, equivalent to 22% of French fisheries employment; 92% worked on small-scale coastal fishing vessels. The number of full-time equivalents was 1,158, 14% fewer than in 2020. In small-scale fishing in the French ORs, 62% of the professionals were between 40 and 64 years old, 8% were 65 or over and more than 70% of the owners worked on board.¹⁰

As regards *Canarias*, fishing activity takes place in FAO area 34.1.2. In 2023, the fleet consisted of 713 vessels (570 active, Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet, 2025) and supported a total workforce of 1,570 people¹¹, who depend directly on the viability of artisanal fishing in FAO area 34.1.2. **We recommend that financial support measures be put in place to bring young people into artisanal vessels and to provide training adapted to the local fishermen's guilds.**

As regards the Portuguese ORs, insufficient data were found to carry out an analysis of the social

¹⁰ STECF 25-13, JRC145884, chapter on France and the Outermost Regions category, pp. 220-248: employment, FTE, structure of small-scale fishing, age, ownership status and modernisation and renewal challenges.

¹¹ STECF 25-13, JRC145884, chapter on Spain and the Social Demographics in Fisheries category, p. 434.

dimension. It is known only that, in *Açores*, fishers must complete a vocational training programme in order to obtain a fishing licence and that, in Madeira, the Madeira Institute for Transport and Logistics (IPTL) offers training courses for various categories of seafarers.¹² **We recommend that the European Commission ask the STECF for a harmonised database by OR covering: segment, gender, age, employment status, income, accidents and training.**

The CCRUP further recommends that the European Commission and the Member States concerned:

- **Follow the opinions and recommendations of the SSDC-F to adopt indicators of income, age, gender, employment status, accidents, training and social protection by OR, and to support the entry of young people and women and maritime training**, thereby defending the social dimension and generational renewal.
- **Recognise the economic, cultural and food role of small-scale artisanal fishing** and guarantee it proportionate access to resources, markets, infrastructure, producer organisations and funding, promoting the food security of the fishing communities and residents of the ORs.

4.2. Energy crisis and transition

The 2026 energy crisis confirms that the response must combine immediate liquidity with structural change. The activation of the crisis mechanism of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) and the extraordinary support of EUR 0.10 per litre created in Madeira show the need for rapid, simple and territorialised instruments.¹³¹⁴

These measures must be capable of activation on objective criteria and through proportionate procedures, so that micro-enterprises and artisanal fishing businesses in the ORs can effectively access them in situations of exceptional disruption.

Temporary support does not replace the energy transition, and we therefore **recommend that the European Commission and the Member States create financial lines dedicated to the ORs for energy audits, more efficient engines and propulsion systems, hull improvements, on-board equipment, port electrification and lower-emission fuels where technically available.**

The transition must also be technologically neutral, based on the life cycle and adapted to

¹² STECF 25-13, JRC145884, chapter on Portugal and the Training category, p. 401.

¹³ Autonomous Region of Madeira, Order No 360/2026 of 24.7.2026, extraordinary support of EUR 0.10/l of coloured and marked diesel for eligible fishing vessel owners, applicable to consumption between 6.4 and 30.6.2026, JORAM Series I, No 132, 2nd supplement.

¹⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 establishing the EMFAF, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1139/oj>; Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2026/889 of 16.4.2026 recognising the situation in the Middle East from 28.2.2026 as an exceptional occurrence causing significant market disruption.

autonomy, safety, fuel availability and port capacity. It must not oblige small vessels to adopt solutions not yet tested under the ocean conditions of the ORs, nor transfer the full risk of innovation to fishers.

The decarbonisation of the OR fishing fleet must be approached as a gradual process adapted to the characteristics of each territory and fleet segment. The limitations of autonomy, infrastructure availability, energy supply and navigation conditions require transition solutions to be assessed taking account of the real operating conditions of the vessels.

In this context, investments in energy efficiency must favour solutions that reduce fuel consumption and emissions without compromising the safety, autonomy or economic viability of fishing units.

The energy transition must be based on a prior technological and economic assessment and on pilot projects adapted to the conditions of the ORs. European funding must cover not only the acquisition of new technologies but also the studies, trials, adaptation of vessels, infrastructure and training needed for their implementation.

The transition must not transfer to shipowners the entire technological and financial risk associated with solutions that have not yet demonstrated their viability under the specific conditions of the ORs. Funding instruments must provide for appropriate mechanisms to reduce this risk, especially for small businesses and artisanal fishing.

The energy transition must contribute to maintaining fishing activity and to generational renewal, preventing adaptation costs from reducing the economic capacity of businesses or accelerating the abandonment of the activity. Energy modernisation must therefore improve efficiency, safety and working conditions simultaneously.

Accordingly, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission and the Member States concerned:**

- **Recognise the structural impact of the increase in the prices of the fuels** used by the OR fishing fleet and **adopt a funded, realistic and fair energy transition;**
- **Establish objective activation thresholds and simplified procedures** to compensate for exceptional disruptions of the energy market, ensuring effective access for micro-enterprises and artisanal fishing;
- **Support specific decarbonisation and energy efficiency programmes for the OR fleets,** favouring solutions that are adapted and technically viable for each fleet segment **and ensuring funding from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) and from the next**

multiannual financial framework for studies, pilot projects, adaptation of vessels, port infrastructure and training, without compromising the safety, autonomy or economic viability of fishing activity;

- **Integrate adaptation to climate change into the investments and energy transition programmes of the ORs**, taking account of the foreseeable effects on operating conditions, maritime safety and the availability of fishery resources;

- **Integrate resilience indicators specific to the ORs into future socio-economic assessments**, including the evolution of energy costs, logistical dependence, food security, business profitability, employment, generational renewal and the capacity to adapt to future economic or climate crises;

- **Develop the energy transition in accordance with the just transition principle**, ensuring that the European Union's climate objectives are achieved without compromising the economic viability of fishing businesses, employment in coastal communities or the food supply of the ORs.

4.3. Resilience as a CFP objective

The CCRUP considers that economic resilience must be expressly incorporated as one of the criteria used to assess the success of the Common Fisheries Policy in the ORs. A resilient fleet is not merely one that makes a profit in a given financial year. It is one that retains its capacity to preserve employment, guarantee food supply, withstand energy crises, adapt to climate change, incorporate technological innovation and attract new professionals. Resilience must become an indicator complementary to traditional economic profitability.

5. Landing obligation

The landing obligation must be applied effectively and verifiably, but also proportionately. For mixed and small-scale fisheries, high-survival exemptions must be used, where scientifically justified, accompanied by improved data and administrative simplification.

Given the selectivity of the gear of the artisanal fishing fleet of the ORs, bycatch is low, protecting sensitive habitats and species. However, measures in marine protected areas, spatial restrictions and gear changes must be preceded by local assessment, effort mapping, analysis of alternatives and a just transition plan.¹⁵

ICES is not yet able to quantify discards of alfonsinos (*Beryx spp.*);

¹⁵ European Commission, COM(2023) 102 final, "EU action plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries"; Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, Article 11, on conservation measures necessary for compliance with Union environmental legislation.

Discards of blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) and black scabbardfish (*Aphanopus carbo*) are considered negligible by ICES.

The experience accumulated by these fleets can contribute positively to the development of future European policies aimed at minimising discards.

Given the relationship between the gross tonnage of the artisanal fishing fleet and the declining incomes of fishers, we consider the landing obligation to be ill-suited to the artisanal fishing fleet of the ORs.

In this context, **we recommend that the European Commission definitively exempt the small-scale artisanal segment from this obligation.**

6. Orientations for the 2027 fishing opportunities

We consider that the preparation of the 2027 fishing opportunities must be based on a verifiable sequence: unambiguous taxonomic identification, correspondence between species, stock and fishing area, use of the best available scientific knowledge, ecosystem and socio-economic assessment by OR, and consultation of stakeholders before the EC draws up its proposals.

This sequence must be applied systematically to all proposals affecting the ORs, so that the correspondence between the scientific information used and the management measure finally adopted can be verified.

6.1. Main steps in setting the next fishing opportunities

6.1.1. Quality of the information

The CCRUP shares the need to improve the quality, coverage and availability of the scientific data used in fisheries management.

Data gaps remain one of the main limitations of fisheries management in the ORs. **The CCRUP recommends promoting stable scientific programmes, with multiannual funding, coverage of ports and ORs, observers and electronic monitoring proportionate to risk, biological sampling, recreational fishing data and the integration of the professional knowledge of fishers.**¹⁶

The CCRUP considers it insufficient to address recreational fishing merely as a variable in

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17.5.2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/1004/oj>.

scientific data collection. In ORs such as the Canary Islands, the combined volume of recreational activity represents a pressure on resources that compromises the balanced exploitation of coastal stocks.

For this reason, **we recommend that the European Commission and the Member States concerned make effective catch reporting mandatory for the whole of recreational fishing under the EU Control Regulation (and not only for protected areas or particular species).** In addition, **we recommend that provision be made for the possibility of restricting and limiting recreational effort** where it jeopardises the sustainability of stocks or gives rise to unfair and uncontrolled competition with professional artisanal fishing.

While the precautionary principle is an essential element of the Common Fisheries Policy, its application must be accompanied by an equivalent commitment to reduce scientific uncertainty progressively through specific data collection programmes, so as to avoid the prolonged application of precautionary measures.

The improvement of scientific knowledge must be regarded as a strategic investment for the ORs, allowing more accurate management decisions to be taken, uncertainties to be reduced and the acceptance of conservation measures by the fisheries sector itself to be increased.

The CCRUP considers it a priority to strengthen cooperation between scientific institutes, fisheries administrations and the professional sector, encouraging the collection of data from commercial fishing activity through harmonised methodologies fully compatible with the national data collection programmes.

We recommend that the European Commission and the Member States:

- **strengthen the national data collection programmes in the ORs;**
- **increase the scientific coverage of the main fisheries;**
- **improve coordination between scientific bodies;**
- **facilitate the participation of the fisheries sector in obtaining information;**
- **establish timetables for the periodic review of the local stocks with the largest information gaps, setting verifiable objectives for progressively reducing scientific uncertainty.**

6.1.2. Taxonomic identification and correspondence between species, stock and area

The quality of the decision also depends on taxonomy. Similar common names may designate different species across languages, regions and sea basins; conversely, the same species may have several common names. Simply giving a common name, without the scientific name, may lead to the assumption

that a species occurs or is caught in an OR when, biologically, it is a different taxon or a different stock. By way of example, although ICES considers that the greater forkbeard (*Phycis blennoides*) occurs in Subarea 10 (Açores), we are aware only of the occurrence of *Phycis phycis*. This obligation must cover the communications of the European Commission, public consultations, TAC and quota proposals and regulations, delegated and implementing acts, control sheets, data systems, STECF reports, the publications of the European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA) and the Union's digital interfaces. The requirement extends to governance and control a principle already recognised in Union law for consumer information: the joint presentation of the commercial designation and the scientific name.¹⁷

The CCRUP recommends that the European Commission and the Member States make mandatory the scientific name of the species, the FAO code of the stock and the management area in all communications and acts of the Union; the common name of the species must be merely complementary.

This identification must be maintained consistently throughout the entire chain of drafting, adoption, application and monitoring of management measures.

The quality of management decisions depends directly on the quality of the information used to adopt them. Consequently, the 2027 fishing opportunities must be capable of periodic review as new scientific information becomes available, allowing conservation measures to be adjusted in a proportionate and transparent manner.

Therefore, **the CCRUP recommends that the European Commission:**

- **Ensure that the fishing opportunities corresponding to the ORs are based on scientific advice specific to each stock and management area**, avoiding extrapolations from other regions where there is insufficient scientific evidence;
- **Promote permanent scientific programmes for the ORs** to improve knowledge of the stocks exploited progressively, strengthen cooperation between scientific institutions and the fisheries sector and facilitate the application of adaptive management models based on up-to-date scientific evidence;

¹⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11.12.2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, Article 35, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1379/oj>. CCRUP Recommendation No 68 already illustrates the need to link common names, scientific names and management areas.

- **Incorporate an economic and social impact assessment specific to the ORs**, including indicators of employment, profitability, territorial dependence and food security;
- **Publish systematically the technical rationale used for each decision adopted where it specifically affects the ORs**, indicating the scientific advice used, the precautionary criteria applied and the socio-economic assessment carried out;
- **Present periodically an assessment of the actual impact of the fishing opportunities adopted for the ORs**, making it possible to verify the degree of compliance with the environmental, economic and social objectives set.

6.2. Fishing opportunities for the different sea basins

The nine ORs - *Guadeloupe, Saint-Martin, Martinique, Guyane Française, Mayotte, La Réunion, Açores, Madeira and Canarias* - do not form a single sea basin. *Açores* fall within ICES area 10; *Madeira* and *Canarias* are part of CECAF area 34.1.2; *Guyane Française* falls within FAO area 31; and *Mayotte and La Réunion* fall within FAO area 51 and also depend on IOTC measures. Management must therefore clearly distinguish the scientific and legal bases applicable to each region.

To date, the *ICES Advice 2026* collection includes new advice for 2027 and maintains multiannual advice issued in 2025 that continues to cover 2027. ICES area 10 includes *Açores*; however, the attribution of that area in advice of broad geographical scope does not in itself prove the existence of an autonomous Azorean stock or the local commercial relevance of the species¹⁸, as illustrated above.

Table 2 - ICES advice with a geographical scope that includes area 10 and a period covering 2027

Species / taxon	ICES code	Area of the advice	Guidance for 2027
Blackspot seabream <i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	sbr.27.10	Subarea 10 (<i>Açores</i>)	Catches ≤ 426 t in 2027. ¹⁹
Alfonsinos <i>Beryx spp.</i>	alf.27.nea	Subareas 1-10, 12 and 14	Landings ≤ 194 t/year in 2027-2028. ²⁰
Black scabbardfish <i>Aphanopus carbo</i>	bsf.27.nea	Subareas 1, 2, 4-8, 10 and 14; divisions 3.a, 9.a and 12.b	Catches ≤ 1,889 t in 2027. ²¹

¹⁸ ICES, "ICES Advice 2026", collection, version 47, published on 8.7.2026, DOI: 10.17895/ices.pub.c.8317945.v47, https://ices-library.figshare.com/collections/ICES_Advice_2026/8317945.

¹⁹ ICES, 2025, "Blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) in Subarea 10 (Azores grounds). Replacing advice provided in June 2025", ICES Advice 2025, sbr.27.10, DOI: 10.17895/ices.advice.29542103.

²⁰ ICES, 2026, "Alfonsinos (*Beryx spp.*) in subareas 1-10, 12, and 14", ICES Advice 2026, alf.27.nea, DOI: 10.17895/ices.advice.30931931.

²¹ ICES, 2025, "Black scabbardfish (*Aphanopus carbo*) in subareas 1, 2, 4-8, 10, and 14 and in divisions 3.a, 9.a, and 12.b", ICES Advice 2025, bsf.27.nea, DOI:

Note: the limits indicated reproduce the scientific advice, not a proposed quota allocation. The management decision must confirm the species, the stock, the area and the local catches.

Blackspot seabream

For blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*), the ICES advice recommends, for 2027 and 2028, a maximum catch limit of 426 tonnes, applying the MSY approach. In this context, it is considered important that the definition and implementation of the management measures be accompanied by strengthened scientific data collection, so as to improve knowledge of the state of the resource and underpin future assessments.

In any event, the application of this advice must maintain the correspondence between the stock assessed, the management area and the reality of the catches taken by the Azorean fleet.

Alfonsinos

In the case of alfonsinos (*Beryx spp.*), the CCRUP supports the ICES advice, applying the MSY approach, to increase the quota for 2027 and 2028 to 194 tonnes.

Black scabbardfish

As regards black scabbardfish (*Aphanopus carbo*), ICES recommends that, applying the MSY approach, catches should not exceed 1,889 tonnes in each of the years 2026 and 2027.

As regards Madeira, we recommend that Portugal allocate fishing opportunities for black scabbardfish that are balanced and take account of environmental and socio-economic factors.

We recommend that the European Commission base this allocation on up-to-date information on the fleet's dependence, the trend in landings and the socio-economic conditions of the segment concerned.

7. Conclusion

Fishing is one of the main determinants of the state of stocks and is an important part of the economy of the EU's coastal communities. Fishing in the ORs will be sustainable only if it conserves resources, provides a decent income to those who fish and allows investment, safety and generational renewal. The orientation for 2027 must therefore translate outermost specificity into concrete decisions: better science, unambiguous taxonomy, regulatory differentiation, transparency, social protection and energy resilience.

Having regard to Article 11 of the CFP Regulation, which recommends the use of market-ready selective fishing gear and modern fishing gear technologies, as well as measures to limit fishing pressure on *habitats* and sensitive species, including in marine protected areas, we recall that artisanal fishing in the ORs puts this rule into practice. This specificity must be taken into account in the application of management measures.

The application of uniform measures designed for other sea basins does not always make it possible to respond adequately to the biological, economic and social reality of the ORs. The principle of proportionality and the recognition of outermost specificity must therefore guide future management measures, ensuring that decisions are based on adequate scientific information and take account of their environmental, economic and social repercussions.

Opinion of *Europêche*, of *Organización de Productores Asociados de Grandes Atuneros Congeladores* (OPAGAC), of *Organisation des Producteurs de Thon Congelé et Surgelé* (ORTHONGEL) and of *Union des Armateurs à la Pêche de France* (UAPF)

Europêche, OPAGAC, ORTHONGEL and UAPF are entirely opposed to this recommendation.