



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D3/JR

Dear Mr Marzoa Notlevsen,

I would like to thank the Mediterranean Advisory Council for the advice 59/2024 of 8 March 2024 on the new generation of fishers.

I fully concur with you that training is key to the future of our fishers, be it on their rights and safety, sustainable management of resources, use of new technologies, equal opportunities, or business development. This will enable them to face current and future challenges with the appropriate tools and knowledge. As President Von der Leyen said: “The best investment in our future is the investment in our people.”

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund⁽⁸⁾ and the EMFAF both refer to the importance of investing in training, as an “investment in human capital plays an essential role in the competitiveness and economic performance of the fishery, aquaculture and maritime sectors”⁽⁹⁾. The EMFAF contributes to professional training, lifelong learning and the dissemination of knowledge.

Under EMFF (2014-2021), EUR21 million was allocated to training through shared management for 1 176 operations and a EUR10.9 million contribution to blue careers/skills through direct management via blue careers calls. The EMFAF has EUR7.5 million allocated to blue careers/skills through direct management (Blue careers calls in 2023).

One of the projects, “Catching the Potential”, funded under the EMFAF “Blue Careers” calls proposed training standards for fishers. Its triple concept of three Ps (People, Planet, Profit) is in line with ecosystem-based management, which is at the heart of the CFP and seeks to address issues of safety, sustainable management of resources, use of new technologies and business development. The Commission particularly welcomes the project’s collaboration with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to

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incorporate some of the standards into the revised International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F).

Regarding the STCW-F Convention specifically, and as per the Commission's commitment in the Fisheries & Oceans Package in February 2023, we have started preparations for the potential implementation of the revised convention into EU Law. This preparatory work will feed into our reflections to set up harmonised standards for fishers' training and certification across the EU. This includes preliminary exchanges and scoping of the state of training requirements and certification procedures across the EU. We aim to ensure that we have evidence for future policy decisions after the revised convention is adopted in May 2024.

In your advice, you also point to other aspects that can be improved to increase the attractiveness of fishing as a career such as quality of life and support to fisheries communities: these are part and parcel of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Regulation, whose objectives include the contribution to "a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities, bearing in mind coastal fisheries".

Social data collection is important in this aspect: we want to be able to better understand in which conditions fishers are living across the different EU sea basins. It is one of the elements that the Scientific, Technological, Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) is looking into in its development of social indicators. The Commission has also launched the EU-wide participatory foresight project "Fishers of the Future" in November 2023. This project wants to look ahead and understand how fishers envisage their future up to 2050.

The MEDAC has been an active contributor on the latter two projects (consultation on social data and Fishers of the Future), as well as many other issues of relevance for the future of fishers. I wish to thank you for this continued engagement. Your contribution will be all the more important in the new phase that is opening with the evaluation of the CFP Regulation.

I look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

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