

Gender equality in the EU fisheries industry: the case of Mediterranean Member States

Katia Frangoudes Université de Bretagne Occidentale, France
Facilitator of Aktea the European Network of women in Fisheries



Access to social protection and social security in fisheries industry the cases of **women in the catching sector and the assisting spouses or partners**)

- International conventions and European Union directives call for social protection and social security in the fisheries industry.
- Why? Social protection plays a key role in safeguarding and enhancing the lives of individuals and households in the fisheries and sustainability of resources (FAO).

C 188 Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, ILO

(in force in 11 EU MS and from MED: **FR, ES**)

STCW-F-95 -International convention on Standards of Training, certification and Watch keeping for fishing vessels, IMO (ratified by 10 EU MS from MED **FR, ES**)

Sustainable Development goals (1, 2, 5, 15), FAO

EU directives: Council Directive (EU) 2017/159, Directive is Directive (EU) 2022/993 of the European Parliament and of the Council and others...

Member State is responsible for social protection & social security systems

Type of protection offered can vary from country to country

- Health care
- Allowances in the event of sickness
- **Maternity benefits**
- Family Benefits
- Allowance in case of accident at work
- **Old Age benefits** (Retirement pension)
- Unemployment benefits

Big differences are observed between self-employment (usually SSF) and others systems as well between owners on board and between **women and men**

Gender stereotypes towards women work in catching sub-sector

« Physically demanding activities such as fishing are impossible for women to conduct, that women should work near their homes to look after their families, etc...” observed in all the MED MS (Study of the role of Women in Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, 2018).

Despite stereotypes some women are involving in fisheries

Employment by gender in the catching sector in 2017 & 2022 for French MED

National overview	Croatia	Cyprus	France MED	Greece	Italy	Malta	Slovenia	Spain MED
Employment	8,113	1,137	1,793	22,471	25,499	1,134	101	8,564
Men	7,626	1,119	1,725	20,571	25,099	1,116	99	6,428
Women	487	18	68	1,900	400	18	2	163

Obstacles preventing women from entering the catching sector

- Maternity leaves & Remuneration
- Maternity leaves & old age benefit (related to payment on share)
- Clothing is design for use only by men
- Old vessels which lack the facilities and amenities that are considered standard today such toilets, showers, tables of sorting fish... The enhancement of such commodities has the potential to stimulate the recruitment of younger demographics.

Opportunities: French case

France within the frame of ILO convention is fighting gender stereotypes in the fishing industry because women can be the labour needed by the catch sector.

Challenge gender stereotypes in fisheries schools to attract women (e.g. Concarneau's vocational school)

It is vital for women working in the catching sector to be visible and accepted by their peers

Establishment of **an observatory of all type of harassments** since 2024 host by the Institute of Maritime Prevention

Invisible work = unpaid labour realised by Assisting spouses & life partners

Which Tasks?

“Administration, marketing, sales, which are central for businesses” (Croatia)

“Women play a key role in, for example, administrative/accounting management of boats’ activities, direct selling of fisheries products¹⁵², land-based activities” (France)

“Tasks such as management and administration tasks (accounting, relations with banks and fisheries administration), post-harvest activities such as first processing, distribution and marketing, net maintenance....” (Greece)

“Women play a key role in performing land-based duties such as marketing of fish¹⁶⁶, repairing the nets, taking care of tax and social security obligations, carrying out bureaucratic procedures, maintaining relations with shipyards and service cooperatives, and interacting with the port authorities.” (Italy)

“Women are involved in selling the catches, cleaning the fish, weighing the catch, distributing the fish & administrative tasks” (Malta).

“include landing, classification, packaging and sale of fish, vessel supplies (including ice), paperwork, financial issues, and dealing with the public administrations (licenses, administrative procedures, etc”.

Source: Study of the role of Women in Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, 2018.

Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC

Payment of social security as assisting spouse (eg. France special regime)

Rights

- Replacement during Maternity leaves
- Health care according to the country
- Access to old age benefit

And access to professional training & to be elected in fisheries organisations

Directive transposed into national legislations however few MS applied

- No statistic available

France introduced this status in 1998/ Changed in 2022 for more visibility of women the status of collaborative spouse is limited to five years – then chose on of the following status employee or associate

Is the solution for the future ?