



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D3/EMA

Subject: Recommendation of AAC, MEDAC, NSAC, NWWAC, MAC, and SWWAC concerning the ceiling for de minimis State Aid and Crises Mechanisms for Fisheries and Aquaculture

Dear Chairs,

Thank you for your letter which recommends raising the ceiling set by the fisheries de minimis Regulation¹, arguing that the current threshold is too low given the sector's challenges and compared with ceilings in other sectors². Your letter also acknowledges the dissenting position of several parties in the other interest groups category, which do not share the same view.

It should be noted that other de minimis regulations were amended in December 2024. The increase of those ceilings was decided on the basis of a public consultation and an internal assessment by the Commission services.

By contrast, the fisheries de minimis Regulation was revised lastly in October 2023, and it remains in force until 31 December 2029. By then, the Commission services will assess whether there is a need to revise the ceiling and, if so, to what extent. In carrying out that assessment, the Commission services may take into account the fact that a single undertaking may own more than one vessel, while recalling that State aid control is based on the distortion of competition and trade by undertakings, as required by the Treaty rules.

Not all new aid measures need to be notified before aid is granted. Member States may also rely on the sector's block exemption regulation, FIBER³, which enables support to be provided to fishers in a swift and efficient manner. For instance, in the event of a

¹ Commission Regulation (EU) No 717/2014 of 27 June 2014 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the fishery and aquaculture sector, OJ L 190, 28.6.2014, pp. 45–54.

² Reference is made to the general de minimis ceiling and the one applicable to the agriculture sector and road freight transport.

³ Commission Regulation (EU) 2022/2473 of 14 December 2022 declaring certain categories of aid to undertakings active in the production, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ L 327, 21.12.2022, pp. 82–139.

To the Chairs of the AAC, MEDAC, NSAC, NWWAC, MAC, SWWAC

natural disaster, FIBER allows for compensatory aid of up to 100% of the damage suffered.

The Commission did its utmost to activate support for businesses affected by the situation in the Middle East and acted as soon as it was legally possible to do so, based on the constant and close monitoring of the markets. Both the crisis mechanism of the EMFAF and the METSAF⁴ were activated as a response, both of which provide the possibility to Member States to grant operating aid to the sector.

The Commission is continuously monitoring market developments, including prices, on the basis of a selection of key indicators relevant for the fishery and aquaculture sector and market. The objective is to describe and objectify the impact of the consequences of the crises hitting the sector. EUMOFA is the main tool to achieve this objective.

The energy transition of the sector remains urgent, as the recent fuel price volatility continues to expose the sector's vulnerability to energy shocks. The ambition remains to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and move away from fossil fuel dependency towards energy solutions that preserve ecosystems, protect the sector from future energy shocks, and support the blue economy and coastal communities. Energy transition is central to the long-term competitiveness of the sector.

Good progress has been made through the Energy Transition Partnership, which now brings together more than 600 stakeholders. Its work has been contributing to shape the forthcoming Commission Roadmap for Energy Transition, with the shared objective of achieving climate neutrality. It will be presented as part of *the Vision 2040 for EU fisheries and aquaculture*, which is to be adopted by the Commission in the coming months. It will build on the European Ocean Pact and be informed by the results of the recent evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation.

I am looking 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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⁴ Communication from the Commission – Middle East Crisis Temporary State Aid Framework. OJ C, C/2026/2593, 5.5.2026.