

Ms Marina Argyrou
Director
Department of Fisheries
and Marine Research
P.O. Box 28548, 2080 Strovolos
Cyprus

Copy sent to: EU Member State fisheries Attachés

Friday, 24th April 2026

Subject: Informal meeting of Directors-General and Attachés for fisheries

Dear Director Argyrou,

As you convene over the next three days in Cyprus with your counterparts from across the EU Member States to [discuss and shape](#) the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), we, the undersigned leading environmental organisations across Europe, wish to express our deep concerns regarding the recent call by some Member States, under the guise of the EU's simplification agenda, to reopen core fisheries legislation through a so-called fisheries "Omnibus" package.

A regulatory overhaul of EU fisheries legislation, including the CFP, the Fisheries Control Regulation, and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), would increase uncertainty for the fishing sector at a time when stability and predictability are essential for competitiveness, investment and long-term profitability, fish populations recovery and trust that EU seafood is responsibly sourced.

The landing obligation, the margin of tolerance, multiannual management plans, capacity ceilings and EMFAF, as well as other key provisions, are not administrative details or "red tape". They form the backbone of EU fisheries governance. Simplification measures should not be used as a justification to weaken core objectives of the CFP. It would put at risk:

- The EU's long-term goals to ending overfishing and rebuilding abundant fish stocks, ensuring long-term viability of fisheries and restoring the health of our seas;
- The EU's achievements since the 2013 reform of the CFP, with fish populations and fleet performance having improved significantly thanks to stronger rules on fishing limits, control and accountability;
- The EU's credibility as a global leader in sustainable fisheries, which depends on maintaining strong, coherent and science-based policies that promote legal and sustainable fishing practices;
- The trust of retailers and consumers, who increasingly demand sustainable, legal and traceable seafood;

- The competitiveness of the EU fisheries sector, which depends on being able to show that its products are responsibly sourced, to reduce Europe's reliance on import;
- The EU's efforts to rebuild European fisheries through robust fisheries management, which contributes to increasing food autonomy and resilience to climate change.

While the CFP is undergoing an evaluation by the Commission, it must be emphasised that Member States already have the tools to act today to address the major threats to fishers and coastal communities. Thanks to the adoption of the revised Fisheries Control Regulation in 2023, Member States are equipped with tools to combat overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing - including the widespread undocumented discarding. We urge the EU and Member States to dedicate adequate resources to ensure the timely and comprehensive implementation of these tools as agreed, such as Remote Electronic Monitoring and the digital catch certification system. We also wish to emphasise that Article 17 of the CFP and other existing provisions enable Member States to prioritise the concerns of fleet segments that have minimal impacts on the environment and an immediate capacity to boost the social and environmental resilience and decarbonisation of the sector.

Therefore, we call on you, as the Director holding the presidency during this pivotal moment, to uphold the objectives of the CFP and related EU fisheries laws during the upcoming discussions. We urge you to prioritise the full and timely implementation of existing provisions and their enforcement as a prerequisite to achieving our common objective of sustainable EU fisheries.

Respectfully yours,

Environmental Justice Foundation, Steve Trent, CEO and Founder

Coalition Clean Baltic, Ida Carlen, Co-chair

ClientEarth, Anaïs Berthier, Head of Brussels and Associate Director for Europe

Oceana, Vera Coelho, Executive Director and Vice President in Europe

Seas At Risk, Dr Monica Verbeek, Executive Director

WWF EU, Ester Asin, Director

