

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000392/25
to the Commission
Ana Miranda Paz (Verts/ALE)
(29 January 2025)

Subject: Drop in the productivity of shellfish gathering on the Galician coast: the case of the Arousa Estuary

According to data from the shellfish gathering industry, the productivity of the Arousa Estuary in Galicia fell by almost 45% in 2024, which implies an economic loss of almost EUR 16 million. This has an effect not only on the hundreds of direct jobs that this industry creates, but on the whole industrial supply chain.

Abnormally high sea temperatures and heavy and irregular rainfall are killing commercial species. The lack of protection from water pollution is also a factor in shellfish mortality. However, according to data, only around 20% of funds from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) are aimed at environmentally sustainable small-scale fishing.

Considering this:

1. Will the Commission take action to alleviate the difficult situation of the shellfish sector in the Arousa Estuary and on the Galician coast in general?
2. Does the Commission plan on restructuring the funding criteria to increase the percentage of EMFAF resources that are allocated to small-scale and traditional fishing activities, in order to tackle problems derived from shellfish mortality and loss of productivity?

Submitted: 29.1.2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(18 March 2025)

The Commission is aware of the situation of the Galician shellfish sector and the impact of heavy rainfall on the Atlantic coast of Galicia during 2023-2024.

Spain can provide financial support to fishers affected through its European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture (EMFAF) programme.

Compensation for temporary cessation of fishing activities is provided under Art. 21(2)(e) of the EMFAF Regulation ⁽¹⁾ which covers natural disasters, environmental incidents or health crises, as formally recognised by the competent national authorities.

Thus, to mobilise this type of EU support, Spain has to formally recognise the occurrence of the event as natural disaster or environmental incident.

Furthermore, Spain can set up mutual insurance funds for the sector with EMFAF support, both for fisheries and aquaculture. Member States may equally grant state aid to undertakings in the fisheries sector in line with the Fisheries state aid guidelines ⁽²⁾.

Small-scale fisheries are a priority target group as set out in Article 8(4) of the EMFAF Regulation, which calls on the Member States to provide specific types of actions in their favour and to simplify their access to the fund. Apart from some fleet measures, Member States can support small-scale coastal fisheries with a public aid rate of 100%.

The EMFAF Regulation gives the liberty to Member States to decide the level and design of support to their small-scale fisheries. The Commission constantly encourages Member States to focus more targeted interventions for the improvement of socioeconomic conditions of small-scale operators.

For more information on the national/regional support measures implemented, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the competent authorities in Spain.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004, *OJ L 247*, 13.7.2021, p. 1-49, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1139/oj>

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission, Guidelines for state aid in the fishery and aquaculture sector, *OJ C 107*, 23.3.2023, p. 1. See in particular Section 3.5. Aid for temporary cessation of fishing activities.