

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001307/25
to the Commission**

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(28 March 2025)

Subject: Safeguarding fisheries activity in Italy: urgent need for a revision of EU legislation to protect fisheries businesses and the fisheries sector

The size of the Italian fishing fleet has fallen sharply since 2004, standing at 1 1685 vessels as at 31.12.2023 (-21%), as have the total fishing days: -33% in 2008-2023, -15% of which in 2019-2023.

Amid this alarming situation, the Commission ⁽¹⁾ proposed further cuts which, for the Italian fleet operating in the western Mediterranean, provided for a reduction of 38% for the bottom trawling effort, of 25% for the deep-water longline fishing effort, of 18% in the catch limit for blue shrimp and of 29% for red shrimp, and for the introduction of a catch limit for cod using gillnets and trammel nets.

In the light of the very keen competition from non-European countries and the need to safeguard the socioeconomic sustainability of Italian fleets, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Will it consider rethinking Regulation (EU) 2021/1139, and the so-called EMFAF, to allow the necessary funding for fleet renewal?
2. Will it assess whether to revise the action plan of February 2023 to protect bottom trawling?
3. Will it consider introducing instruments to protect European seas from the growing presence of invasive alien species, which are seriously damaging indigenous fish production?

Supporter ⁽²⁾

¹ Commission services non-paper, 27 November 2024, Updates to Commission proposal for a Council Regulation fixing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for 2025 (COM (2024) 408 final).

² This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Stefano Cavedagna (ECR)

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Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(27 May 2025)

1. The Commission is currently not considering a revision of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund ⁽¹⁾ (EMFAF). The EMFAF can already support the development and testing of new and innovative solutions for the fleet ⁽²⁾, as well as certain investments to modernise the fleet ⁽³⁾. Investments in the fleet are subject to strict conditionality, to ensure that there are no resulting harmful subsidies. Given its small budget, the EMFAF can achieve better collective benefits by incentivising, facilitating testing and development, and bringing technology to market, rather than investing in the renewal of a small number of privately owned vessels.
2. The Marine Action Plan ⁽⁴⁾ promotes sustainable fishing practices with less environmental impact, in accordance with current legislation ⁽⁵⁾ and policy objectives. It is a component of the European Green Deal and focuses on the implementation of existing legislation ⁽⁶⁾.
3. The Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation ⁽⁷⁾ establishes a coordinated EU-wide framework for action to address the adverse impacts of IAS. The marine dimension of IAS can be complemented with more specific EU laws ⁽⁸⁾. In the Mediterranean, the EU works closely with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), developing pilot projects and research programmes to address IAS. The GFCM is setting-up a non-indigenous species (NIS) observatory, aimed at data collection and information sharing. Member States can use their EMFAF programme to support monitoring, mitigation and surveillance of NIS.

⁽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.

⁽²⁾ E.g. prototype vessels and gears.

⁽³⁾ Improving gear selectivity, safety on board, energy efficiency.

⁽⁴⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries', COM(2023) 102 final.

⁽⁵⁾ Such as Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869; and Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy.

⁽⁶⁾ In this respect, work is expected to continue on implementing the marine action plan.

⁽⁷⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35-55.

⁽⁸⁾ Such as the regulation (EC) No 708/2007 of 11 June 2007 concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture; or the directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive).