

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001621/25
to the Commission
Nicolás González Casares (S&D)
(23 April 2025)**

Subject: The socioeconomic impact of closing areas to bottom fishing

A recent report published by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) paints a clear picture of the socioeconomic impact of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1614 which, by closing 87 areas to bottom fishing, has reduced fishing days and fish landings by 16% and 20% respectively for Spanish fleets while also causing their turnover to drop by 11%.

The report indicates that, in 2022, Spanish fleets (including 67 longliners) had fished in 60 of the areas that were later closed by Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1614. Just over half of the longliners involved (52.9%) operate out of Burela and Celeiro, accounting for 94.7% and 90% of these two ports' respective fleets. In addition, 45.8% of all Spanish gill net (GNS) vessels that used to fish in these areas are based in Cedeira and Celeiro, while the bottom fishing ban could also have repercussions for 90% of the port of Ribeira's trawl (OTB) fleet.

According to the STECF, this state of affairs could lead to a loss of fishing areas, an uptick in operational costs and the displacement of fishing fleets while also having a detrimental impact on ports in the vicinity.

1. Given the colossal impact that Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1614 has had, will the Commission scrap or amend it?
2. How will the Commission implement STECF's recommendation that 'all long-term measures should protect both vulnerable ecosystems as well as the communities engaged in sustainable fishing in those waters'?
3. Will the Commission pledge to delay adopting decisions until it has analysed their socioeconomic impact?

Submitted: 23.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(1 July 2025)**

The report ⁽¹⁾ in question originates from a working group (WG) acting under the facilities of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), which gathers national experts and cannot be considered as endorsed by the STECF. A disclaimer states that '*this report does not necessarily reflect the view of the STECF and the European Commission and in no way anticipates the Commission's future policy in this area*'. Such a report has to undergo the scientific peer-review process conducted by STECF, which then leads to the actual STECF opinion ⁽²⁾.

STECF reviewed the WG report's conclusions and validated certain but not all figures provided by the national experts.

STECF presented figures on the loss of fishing days (-16%) and landings (-20%) as a total for the fleets of Germany, Ireland, Spain and France but stated that '*the reduction in effort and landings cannot be considered as a final outcome of the analysis*', as they can result from '*other effects that could have an effect on the socioeconomic impact of the closures (e.g. fleet size, costs, markets or fishing opportunities)*'.

The statement '*any long-term solution will need to safeguard vulnerable ecosystems and the communities that have sustainably fished these waters*' comes from the WG's report and has not been validated by STECF.

The STECF opinion remains inconclusive on the quantification of the socioeconomic impacts of the vulnerable marine ecosystem closures on the fleets at local level. More work is therefore necessary to quantify these impacts and the Commission is reflecting on the best way forward.

⁽¹⁾ VMEs socioeconomic impact assessment (EWG 24-09): https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/stecf/stecf_24-09.

⁽²⁾ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), 78th Plenary report (STECF-PLN-25-01): https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/stecf/stecf_plen_25-01.