

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003830/25
to the Commission
Jorge Buxadé Villalba (P/E)
(1 October 2025)

Subject: Impact of the current quota allocation system on generational renewal and survival of the fishing sector

The fishing quota allocation system in the European Union has changed significantly since 2014, moving from a model of 'regulated Olympic fishing' (under which vessels 'race' one another to take as much of the quota as possible) to the current system of 'historic rights', which allocates fixed quotas to vessels based on past catches.

This model has been criticised from all corners in the fishing sector owing to the inequalities it creates, because it hinders generational renewal, increases the price of new licences (as quotas are linked to vessels) and makes it harder for countries to manage their fishing opportunities with any degree of fairness.

Possible imbalances have also been detected in the distribution of species shared with other countries as well as a lack of transparency in quota swaps.

In light of this situation:

1. Why did the Commission make this change to the allocation system?
2. Is the Commission aware of effects of this new model on Europe's fishing fleet, and as such, has the Commission carried out any studies on the impact on the sector?
3. Under what conditions would the Commission consider returning to the previous model?

Submitted: 1.10.2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(8 December 2025)

The European Parliament and the Council decided during the last Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform in 2013 that Member States should keep the prerogative of distributing or allocating fishing opportunities available to them and leave Member States certain discretion in choosing and designing systems and allocation methods and to adapt them to their specific needs.

At the same time, the co-legislators decided to require Member States to include criteria of environmental, social and economic nature (Article 17 of the CFP Regulation).

The Commission recently published a vade mecum ⁽¹⁾, which addresses certain challenges related to the systems and methods Member States are currently using for allocating fishing opportunities and the need to better align those systems with the requirements.

The Commission is currently evaluating the CFP Regulation, looking at its functioning and impact and providing answers to the five key evaluation criteria: efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, coherence and EU added value.

The evaluation will provide a good basis to make informed decisions on how best to continue implementing the policy and to develop the EU's long-term vision for a resilient, competitive and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sector with a 2040 perspective.

Based on the 'evaluation first principle', the Commission is committed to always evaluate an existing legal basis before deciding on a possible revision.

¹ Communication from the Commission for enhanced transparency and good governance in the allocation of fishing opportunities by Member States: A vade mecum on the application of Articles 16 and 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/6227/oj>.