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Social Partners' Agreement becomes EU Directive and paves the way towards decent work in the fishing sector

- For immediate Press Release -

Today, the Council of the EU approved a Directive regulating working conditions in the fisheries sector, following a long-standing request from the EU Social Partners (the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), Europêche* and Cogeca).

In 2012, these European organisations reached a pivotal agreement within the Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries (SSDC-F) on a text which would transpose the ILO** Work in Fishing Convention 2007 (C188) into EU Law. Since then, the Social Partners have been urging the EU institutions to implement the agreement through a Directive whose aim is to ensure better working conditions for more than 150,000 fishermen in Europe regardless of the size of the vessel.

ETF's representative and SSDC-F Vice-chair Flemming Smidt, declared: *"The road that led to today's decision of the EPSCO Council was long and full of obstacles. We, the ETF and Europêche, have invested huge resources, first in negotiating the agreement and then in promoting it. We did it because we firmly believe that the EU and its Member States need to take the lead towards a more socially sustainable fishing sector at global level. Europe is one of the biggest markets for fish and seafood, and Europeans should not only eat fish that is caught in an environmentally sustainable way but also by fishermen that are offered decent working and living conditions"*.

Ment van der Zwan, Europêche's representative and SSDC-F spokesperson, added: *"Today's decision is a milestone on the path towards better working conditions in Fisheries. After having strongly criticised the delays for the presentation of our agreement to the Council, we wish to acknowledge the commitment and joint efforts made by DG Employment, as well as the Dutch and the Slovak Presidencies of the EU to make today's political agreement possible. We are aware this is a first step and we won't stop urging EU Member States to commit towards the ratification of C188"*.

Background information

- [Commission proposal to implement the agreement on the implementation of the work in fishing Convention](#)
- [Social partners agreement](#)
- [Impact assessment on the social partners' agreement](#)
- [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) Convention 188 on work in fishing of 2007](#)

The EU Directive will only come into force after the entry into force of ILO C188. At present, nine ILO Member States have ratified the Convention, two of which are EU countries. Following the recent ratification by Angola, only one more ratification is required for the Convention to enter into force.

The EU Directive will formally be adopted at a forthcoming Council session.

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* [Europêche](#) represents the catching sector in Europe. In the context of the Social Dialogue, the Association comprises 15 national organisations of fishing enterprises from Iceland and the following 10 EU Member States: DE, DK, ES, FR, IT, MT, NL, LV, PL and UK.

The [European Transport Workers' Federation](#) (ETF) represents more than 3.5 million transport workers from more than 230 transport unions and 41 European countries, in the following sectors: railways, road transport and logistics, maritime transport, inland waterways, civil aviation, ports & docks, tourism and fisheries.

** International Labour Organisation