SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR MARITIME FISHERIES

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Press Release

EU/FISHERIES: European Social Partners continue to push for a truly social Common Fisheries Policy aligned with International standards

At the Plenary meeting held on 26th November 2014 the employers' representatives of Europêche[1] and Cogeca[2] and the workers' organisation ETF[3] met with the key players from United Nations agencies such as FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) and IMO (International Maritime Organisation) with the aim of transposing into EU law basic social conditions for fishermen which, unlike other sectors, are not currently addressed in EU legislation.

During the meeting, the EU Social Partners together with UN representatives discussed possible ways to implement at EU level various pieces of legislation currently missing from EU law which is creating an unlevel playing field for EU fishermen. For the sector, the most pressing legislation to be adopted at EU level is the IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of Food-Security and Poverty Eradication and the ILO Work in Fishing Convention.

EU social partners insist on the hasty implementation of standards and guidelines contained in these International Conventions into EU law, which will lead to decent working and living conditions, job attractiveness, free movement of workers, development of professional training and will improve fisheries governance promote and contribute to global food security.

Mr Michel Claes, Chair of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries (SSDCSF) declared that: "*The safety of human life is of such paramount importance that this must be at the forefront of EU legislation. Therefore, we must bring the Union's fisheries policies in line with international social standards and guidelines. With this purpose, ETF, Europêche and COGECA are working tirelessly to put the implementation of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention on the EU agenda with the view to transpose the text into EU law'*.

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[1] **Europêche** represents the catching sector in Europe. Currently, the Association comprises 16 national organisations of fishing enterprises from the following 10 EU Member States: BE, DE, DK, ES, FR, IT, MT, NL, PL and UK.
[2] **Cogeca** is the united voice of agricultural cooperatives in the EU. It also represents the interests of fisheries cooperatives in Europe through its FISH Working Party which it shares with Copa. Currently, the fisheries representatives come from the following 5 countries: DE, IE, IT, MT, SI.
[3] 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.

"A fully-fledged responsible fisheries policy not only encompasses conservation measures, but also integrates measures complying with international standards on safety at sea, including those concerning training and certification of fishers and decent living and working conditions on board fishing vessels. Fishing activities must be transformed into a competitive, safe and attractive source of employment that enable a fair standard of living for those who depend on them and ensure the viability of fishing communities. Only then 'Social sustainability' will be at the core of the Common Fisheries Policy" added **Ment van der Zwan**, vice-Chair of the SSDCSF.

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