



Press Statement

Brussels, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016

## **Social Partners' Agreement to improve the working conditions in the fishing sector finally presented to the Council**

Almost three years after submitting the Social Partners' Agreement (SPA) on implementing the ILO\* Work in Fishing Convention C188, the European Commission (EC) presented today, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the agreement before the Council of the EU. The European Social Partners for Fisheries, Europêche and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)\*\*, have warmly welcomed this step but regret the considerable delay with implementing the SPA that ensures a high level of protection for fishermen in all aspects of their work. The Social Partners call upon all EU Member States to support the proposal for a Council Directive and urge them to ratify ILO Convention 188.

Vice-chair of the SSDC and ETF spokesperson **Flemming Smidt** said *"SPAs are a crucial tool for an EU with the ambition to take the lead in setting social standards on a global level; ignoring them should never be an option. We call for a swift adoption of a Council Directive implementing the agreement and eradicating unfair competition from those fleets that do not apply decent working conditions."*

Europêche representative **Ment van der Zwan, spokesperson of the employers in de SSDC-F** stated: *"We hope that the Dutch Presidency of the EU will be able to live up to the commitment expressed earlier this month to start working on the SPA as soon as possible. The transposition of our SPA into EU law will create a safer working environment and better working conditions for one of the most hazardous professions; reducing likewise the incentive for illegal fishing operations. Our agreement will set an example to improve the situation of more than 30 million men and women working in the industry worldwide."*

The European Social Partners recently signed a joint declaration to mobilise national and European decision makers and urge them to engage in a meaningful dialogue with employers and trade unions to lay the ground work for a meaningful social dimension within the EU fisheries policies. The social partners will now continue raising awareness among EU Member States about the importance of ratifying the ILO C188 and of supporting the adoption of the SPA so that it becomes an EU Directive.

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\* International Labour Organisation

\*\* [Europêche](#) represents the catching sector in Europe. In the context of the Social Dialogue, the Association comprises 14 national organisations of fishing enterprises from Iceland and the following 9 EU Member States: DE, DK, ES, FR, IT, MT, NL, 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.