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European Union

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#### **'I/A' ITEM NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Draft REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 <b>(first reading)</b> - Adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons = Statements

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#### **Statement by Lithuania**

Lithuania supports the general aim of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund for 2021-2027 to provide support for the achievement of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, the development of local coastal communities, the promotion of a sustainable blue economy, the implementation of the European Union's maritime policy towards safe and sustainably managed seas and oceans, and for international ocean governance.

Lithuania considers European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund for 2021-2027 as the main tool for successful implementation of the goals of the EU Common Fisheries Policy.

In this regard, Lithuania regrets that certain provisions of the regulation do not reflect properly the continuous critical situation of the Baltic Sea Fisheries, fishing conditions and the needs of fleets concerned.

The political agreement reached between co-legislators on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020 has not addressed our concerns on the practical application of fleet support measures for vessels operating in the Baltic Sea and does not provide necessary tools to adjust the fishing capacity of our fleet to fishing opportunities and maintain the remaining Baltic fleet viable and active.

Therefore, Lithuania cannot endorse the adoption of the Council's position at first reading on the "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council" and abstains in the voting.

### **Statement by Sweden**

The proposal provides for support for enhanced fishing capacity as well as a substantial increase in the proportion of the Fund's budget that can be used for measures linked to fishing capacity. The proposal does not contain sufficient conditions to prevent overcapacity, which can lead to overfishing. The proposal therefore runs contrary to the objectives of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and the transition to sustainable fisheries as well as the EU's international commitments within the framework of Agenda 2030. Sweden therefore votes against the proposal.

### **Statement by the Commission**

The Commission has accepted the eligibility of investments on board related to fisheries control and enforcement, be they mandatory or not, and for all Union fishing vessels. The Commission considers that these investments will enable Member States to make full use of the financial resources available in the EMFAF for control and enforcement, to fulfil their obligations under the Control Regulation and other rules of the Common Fisheries Policy and to substantially improve the culture of compliance in the fishing sector. Moreover, the Commission expects that – in the context of the ongoing review of the Control Regulation – the European Parliament and the Council will support the modernisation of the existing control tools and the use of new technologies as proposed by the Commission. This means in particular introducing smart solutions for the tracking and catch reporting of small scale vessels, installing systems for the continuous monitoring of engine power, moving to fully digitised traceability systems covering all fishery products (fresh, frozen and processed), and introducing mandatory remote electronic monitoring systems on board fishing vessels and based on risk assessment, as the only effective means to control the application of the landing obligation and the bycatch and discard of sensitive species.

### **Statement by the Commission**

The Commission takes note of the difficulties encountered up to now to grant state aid for the renewal of the fleets in the outermost regions. With a view to the sustainable development of those regions, the Commission will endeavour to assist the Member States to improve the collection of scientific data necessary to comply with the eligibility condition set in the State aid guidelines with a view to facilitating the application of the guidelines for the examination of State aid to the fishery and aquaculture sector in the Outermost Regions.

## Statement by the Commission

The European Commission, in the context of the programming exercise for the EMFAF 2021-2027, will actively encourage Member States to maximise the use of measures included in their programmes, in particular under Article 25 (protection of biodiversity and ecosystems), to reach the overall ambition of providing an annual spending under the MFF to tackle biodiversity loss, protect and restore ecosystems and maintain ecosystems in good conditions as follows: 7,5% of annual spending under the MFF to biodiversity objectives in the year 2024 and 10% of annual spending under the MFF to biodiversity objectives in 2026 and 2027. The Commission will regularly monitor the level of this spending on the basis of the total eligible expenditure declared by the beneficiaries to the managing authority and on data submitted by the Member State. Where the monitoring shows insufficient progress towards reaching the overall ambition, the Commission will actively engage with Member States in the annual review meeting in order to adopt remedial measures, including a programme amendment.

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