

6. Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries, including in the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)

Union position

1. The EU and its Member States commend the Secretariat for the documents summarizing the achievements of FAO on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and the progress in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.
2. Artisanal fishers and fish farmers have been particularly challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to combat it. They need appropriate political and financial attention.
3. Within the EU, small-scale fisheries (approximately 63 000 vessels, representing 85% of the EU fleet) are especially important in the Mediterranean. The EU Common Fisheries Policy contains several provisions designed to address its specificities. The report on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy that the European Commission will present at the end of this year will look at its impact on small-scale fisheries.
4. The European aquaculture sector consists mainly of small businesses or micro-enterprises in coastal and rural areas. The development of the sector is now guided by the Strategic Guidelines for a more Sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030.
5. The EU has contributed to strengthening the regional commitment to support small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, particularly in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, notably through the implementation of the GFCM Regional Plan of Action and the new GFCM 2030 Strategy. Moreover, at ICCAT level, the EU promoted better access to fishing opportunities for small-scale fisheries, in eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea.
6. We encourage sustainable governance and support small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, through Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements, including in West Africa and the Indian ocean, as well as through our development cooperation instrument in coastal developing countries and SIDS. For instance, the FISH4ACP programme, a 48 Mio. euros five-year programme led by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, implemented by FAO with funding from the EU and Germany aims to tackle some of the underlying challenges to sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, such as low economic performance, limited market access and poor social and environmental sustainability.
7. On 18 July, back-to-back with the biannual conference on The International Institute of Fisheries Economics & Trade in Vigo, the FAO and the EU organized a Policy Day on the socioeconomics of the Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. The discussions focused on the socio-economic dimension of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, and on the challenges and opportunities.

8. At the June UN Ocean Conference, we noted the call from small-scale fishers' organizations for addressing key challenges to ensure that small-scale fisheries are protected and continue to contribute to economies, health, culture, and wellbeing.
 9. Among these challenges, securing access to fishing resources and reinforcing the sector in the face of competing sectors of the blue economy, strengthening women's participation, protecting the sector from the impact of climate change and other shocks, as well as ensuring its contribution to climate mitigation and to sustainable and resilient food systems were emphasized.
 10. As the representatives of small-scale fishers and fish farmers, we consider that these issues would deserve further and deeper exchanges. We believe that the proposal for a new fisheries management subcommittee that COFI will be asked to approve later could be useful for this purpose.
-