



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2022)0135

A sustainable blue economy in the EU: the role of fisheries and aquaculture

European Parliament resolution of 3 May 2022 toward a sustainable blue economy in the EU: the role of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (2021/2188(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 May 2021 on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU – transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future (COM(2021)0240),
- having regard to Articles 3, 4, 13, 38, 43 and 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004² (EMFAF),
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)³,
- having regard to the seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP) and the concepts enshrined therein, such as planetary boundaries and ecological limits,
- having regard to Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning⁴,
- having regard to Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks⁵,

¹ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.

² OJ L 247, 13.7.2021, p. 1.

³ OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

⁴ OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135.

⁵ OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27.

- having regard to Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources¹,
- having regard to the political agreement between Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2021 on the 2021-2027 Connecting Europe Facility,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 entitled ‘The European Green Deal’ (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380), and to its resolution of 9 June 2021 thereon²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system’ (COM(2020)0381), and to its resolution of 20 October 2021 thereon³,
- having regard to the Commission report entitled ‘The EU Blue Economy Report 2021’⁴,
- having regard to the Commission report of March 2021 on ‘Sustainability criteria for the blue economy’⁵,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 12 May 2021 entitled ‘Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030’ (COM(2021)0236),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2020 entitled ‘A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy – Atlantic action plan 2.0: An updated action plan for a sustainable, resilient and competitive blue economy in the European Union Atlantic area’ (COM(2020)0329),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 9 December 2020 entitled ‘Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future’ (COM(2020)0789),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 19 November 2020 entitled ‘An EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future’ (COM(2020)0741),
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on untapping the potential of research and innovation in the blue economy to create jobs and growth⁶,

¹ OJ L 328 21.12.2018, p. 82.

² OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 25.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0425.

⁴ https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021_06_BlueEconomy_Report-2021.pdf

⁵ <https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-05/Sustainability%20criteria%20for%20the%20blue%20economy%20.pdf>

⁶ OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 64.

- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2018 entitled ‘International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context of the 2030 SDGs’¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 March 2021 on the impact on fisheries of marine litter²,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2021 on a new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy³,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2021 on the impact on the fishing sector of offshore wind farms and other renewable energy systems⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2021 entitled ‘Towards a stronger partnership with the EU outermost regions’⁵,
- having regard to the agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris on 12 December 2015 (the Paris Agreement),
- having regard to the global guidelines and international standards for fisheries and aquaculture as developed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in cooperation with the EU as a member,
- having regard to the FAO report entitled ‘The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020: Sustainability in Action’,
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- having regard to the Blue Fishing Ports Network initiative launched in July 2018 by the FAO,
- having regard to the Port of Vigo Blue Growth Strategies for 2016-2020 and 2021-2027⁶,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the Commission communication on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU – transforming the EU’s blue economy for a sustainable future (COM(2021)0240),
- having regard to the opinion by the Committee of the Regions of 2 December 2021 on the sustainable blue economy and aquaculture (NAT-VVI/020),
- having regard to the competence of its Committee on Transport and Tourism on maritime programming and an integrated maritime policy,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 9.

² OJ C 494, 8.12.2021, p. 14.

³ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 30.

⁴ OJ C 99, 1.3.2022, p. 88.

⁵ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 18.

⁶ <http://bluegrowthvigo.eu/>

- having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Development and the Committee on Transport and Tourism,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A9-0089/2022),
- A. whereas the EU's blue economy provides 4.5 million direct jobs and encompasses all industries and sectors related to oceans, seas and coasts, whether they are based in the marine environment (such as shipping, seagoing passenger transport, fisheries and energy generation) or on land (such as ports, shipyards, coastal tourism and land-based aquaculture); whereas it is a broad, fast-moving segment of our economy, which has taken significant steps to modernise and diversify over the past decade, and which will play an important role in improving environmental, social and economic development;
 - B. whereas if the global blue economy were compared to a national economy, it would be the seventh largest in the world, and the ocean as an economic entity would be a member of the G7; whereas it operates in the planet's largest ecosystem, as oceans hold 80 % of all life forms; whereas the ocean surrounds and sustains us and provides critical resources for human health, not to mention a web of economic interactions;
 - C. whereas developing the blue economy could greatly boost growth and economic development, as well as job creation, especially in coastal and island countries and regions and in the outermost regions;
 - D. whereas the fisheries sector, particularly small-scale, coastal and artisanal fisheries, have not been sufficiently taken into account in the EU's strategy for the blue economy;
 - E. whereas the blue economy will further provide new prospects and create jobs, particularly in areas such as renewable ocean energy, the blue bio-economy, biotechnology and desalination;
 - F. whereas the sectoral priorities for the development of the blue economy may differ from Member State to Member State, depending, on the one hand, on the development record of traditional or established sectors and, on the other hand, on current resources and the development potential of emerging sectors in each Member State;
 - G. whereas the harnessing the potential of the blue economy must not serve as a pretext for subjecting the seas and oceans to forms of resource exploitation and growth models which have already shown themselves to be unsustainable; whereas marine and ocean resources must be used strictly in accordance with the need for their sound management and conservation, without altering marine ecosystem balances;
 - H. whereas the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive states that Member States must take into account the interactions of activities and uses such as aquaculture, fishing and installations and infrastructures for the production of energy from renewable sources, as well as submarine cables, and promote the coexistence of relevant activities and apply an ecosystem-based approach;
 - I. whereas a blue economy that develops within ecological limits, and hence not only the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, but all marine sectors concerned, must equally respect the environmental, social and economic pillars across the board in order to be considered sustainable;

- J. whereas the common fisheries policy (CFP) seeks to guarantee the proper conservation and management of marine biological resources and that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and of contributing to the availability of food supplies;
- K. whereas the CFP should contribute to productivity growth and a decent standard of living in the fisheries sector, including the small-scale fisheries sector, as well as stable markets, and should ensure the availability of food;
- L. whereas, under SDG 14, it is imperative to conserve oceans, seas and marine resources and promote their sustainable use, while under SDG 2, it is imperative to guarantee food security; whereas sub-target 14.1 sets the objective of preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds by 2025, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution;
- M. whereas the ocean is crucial for life on earth, producing 50 % of the oxygen in the atmosphere, absorbing about 25% of human-produced carbon dioxide emissions and 90 % of excess heat in the climate system, and for regulating the global climate;
- N. whereas the restoration, preservation, conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity is fundamental to the health of the oceans, which contain millions of species, to protecting the health of the planet and providing the basis for marine and maritime economic activities;
- O. whereas the collection of data for scientific monitoring and assessment of stocks in the seas and oceans, including the evaluation of whether these stocks are within the safe biological limits, is fundamental to their sustainable management;
- P. whereas significant parts of the oceans and sea floor remain unexplored, in particular the deep sea, and whereas further research is needed to ensure that any activities under the blue economy will be fully sustainable;
- Q. whereas fisheries and aquaculture are key sectors in the blue economy and are an important source of protein and micronutrients that are essential for food security and human health;
- R. whereas marine biodiversity in Europe is under pressure, with a high proportion of assessed marine species and habitats as being in ‘unfavourable’ or ‘unknown’ conservation status; whereas the loss of marine biodiversity is having a major environmental, social and economic impact on the EU fisheries sector, on coastal and island territories and on the outermost regions, and must therefore be reversed; whereas biodiversity must be restored in cooperation with all stakeholders, and in particular with the fisheries sector and the scientific community;
- S. whereas coastal and island communities are key stakeholders in the debate on the potential of the blue economy and ways to harnessing it;
- T. whereas the EU’s fishers and fish farmers play an essential role throughout the EU in protecting and promoting territorial identity, cultural traditions, food security, employment and incomes;

- U. whereas small-scale artisanal fisheries have specific characteristics and needs;
- V. whereas the recreational fisheries sector can contribute to the diversification of coastal communities' income as a high-value and sustainable tourism activity;
- W. whereas women play an important role in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors; whereas there is a need to increase their visibility and ensure equal access to employment in the sector, as well as appropriate legal recognition;
- X. whereas the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 6, 9 and 12 underline the importance of animal health, good water quality, sustainable innovation and sustainable consumption and production in the blue economy;
- Y. whereas the health and wellbeing of aquatic animals is linked to the quality of food products; whereas poor animal welfare and husbandry can increase the risk of disease and illness;
- Z. whereas land agriculture has a significant impact on marine ecosystems and fisheries, in particular the use of nitrogen-based fertilisers and the eutrophication of aquatic environments;
- AA. whereas fishers play a very important role in the collection of abandoned marine litter in the sea, whether by carrying out targeted campaigns or by collecting litter accidentally during fishing operations;
- AB. whereas the 2020 objectives of achieving good environmental status for European seas and to end overfishing have not been achieved;
- AC. whereas, in 2018 the EU fisheries sector accounted for around 163 600 jobs, with fleets catching around 4.1 million tonnes of live fish in 2019; whereas, in the EU 27, 1.1 million tonnes of aquatic organisms valued at EUR 3.7 billion were produced in 2018¹;
- AD. whereas the EU is a net importer of fisheries and aquaculture products and remains dependent on imports for most of its aquatic food consumption, accounting for 34 % of the global value of imports in 2018; whereas EU fisheries imports must at least respect similar sustainability standards as those in the EU; whereas EU fisheries imports must be directly linked to sustainable jobs in the import, processing and retail sectors;
- AE. whereas EU fisheries, aquaculture and coastal communities have already been impacted by the effects of climate change; whereas the climate crisis has had a significant impact on the health of Europe's seas with detrimental effects on the resilience of the blue economy, in particular fisheries and aquaculture;
- AF. whereas several sectors in the blue economy have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular coastal and maritime tourism; whereas the blue economy could help repair the economic and social damage caused by the current crisis;

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Fishery_statistics#Fisheries:_the_factors_of_production

- AG. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact on those employed in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors owing to the combined effects of waning demand and lack of conditions on many vessels to enable health safety; whereas market disruptions caused by the pandemic have negatively affected fishers all over the EU; whereas the fishers still managed to provide a high-quality food supply and for that very reason, special attention must be paid to fishers due to their importance for the security of food supply in the EU;
- AH. whereas the pandemic situation has demonstrated the importance of a resilient environment, supported by sustainable practices in the management of its resources, for the global health and for the future of food systems;
- AI. whereas coastal communities need to diversify their sources of income in order to withstand economic and social shocks;
- AJ. whereas, when diversifying their sources of income, coastal and remote communities need to build resilience to shocks such as those caused by climate change;
- AK. whereas maritime and coastal tourism are a pillar of the blue economy, with over half of the EU's tourist accommodation located in coastal areas and 30 % of overnight stays occurring at beach resorts; whereas the Commission communication on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond (COM(2020)0550) underscores the importance of protecting and restoring Europe's land and marine natural capital;
- AL. whereas maritime and coastal tourism account for 60 % of employment in the blue economy; whereas a competitive, resilient and socially fair blue economy needs highly qualified and skilled professionals; whereas 'blue jobs' can promote growth and career opportunities;
- AM. whereas angling tourism as a sector has the potential to be a new source of income for coastal communities while ensuring the sustainability and good status of fish stocks and providing social and health benefits;
- AN. whereas recreational fisheries is already a sustainable and high-value tourism option and complementary activity for many communities across Europe; whereas there has been growing interest in recreational fishing in many countries, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic;
- AO. whereas developing sustainable infrastructure in coastal regions will help preserve biodiversity, coastal ecosystems and landscapes, which will strengthen the sustainable development of tourism and coastal economies;
- AP. whereas the blue economy plays a vital role in the prosperity of outermost regions, which, due to their isolation, are especially dependent on blue economy-based activities, such as maritime transport, shipping and tourism;
- AQ. whereas ports play an essential role in achieving the objectives of the sustainable blue economy, and whereas increasing the sustainability of ports will promote the sustainable development of coastal communities; whereas ports are an important hub for the transport of goods and passengers in outermost regions;

- AR. whereas ports are crucial to the connectivity and economy of regions and countries and play an important role in the promotion of sustainable development, which contributes to tackling biodiversity loss, as stated in the new EU biodiversity strategy for 2030; whereas the role of ports will also evolve as Europe's industrial landscape changes (for example, with the expansion of offshore renewable energy);
- AS. whereas EU shipyards could seize the opportunities arising from the fast-growing innovative market for energy-efficient service vessel;
- AT. whereas different blue economy-related activities in one space generate competition, pollution and sea space management conflicts that mainly affect fishing activities, in particular small-scale fisheries and coastal communities; whereas maritime spatial planning is crucial to avoid increasing competition and sea space management conflicts;
- AU. whereas, through their maritime spatial plans, Member States should aim to contribute to the sustainable development of energy sectors at sea, maritime transport, the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment, including resilience to climate change impacts; whereas, in this regard, fisheries and aquaculture interests should receive special attention and should not be marginalised as Member States continue their work and subsequent revisions of national maritime spatial plans;
- AV. whereas the Paris Agreement's goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels;
- AW. whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate provides evidence of the benefits of combining scientific knowledge with local and indigenous knowledge to improve resilience;
- AX. whereas the EU is aiming to become climate neutral by 2050 at the latest, in line with the Green Deal objectives; whereas the EU has proposed the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 % by 2030; whereas offshore renewable energy is one of the options that Member States can choose to achieve this target; whereas it should play a key role in achieving these objectives through an integrated approach taking into account the three pillars of sustainability;
- AY. whereas a proposal for legally binding nature restoration targets needs to be drawn up under the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 in line with the objective of protecting 30 % of the EU maritime area, of which 10 % should be subject to strict conservation measures;
- AZ. whereas there is a need for specific guidelines and sound planning for each of the EU's maritime regions on the objectives to be attained in marine conservation areas;
- BA. whereas the outermost regions are genuine natural laboratories, rich in biodiversity and are real natural sanctuaries that need urgent protection, especially because of their mostly archipelagic nature and with significant coastal areas;
- BB. whereas the management of ecosystems requires a holistic approach that takes into account all the causes of biodiversity loss, such as climate change, ocean acidification, appearance of alien species, coastal erosion, etc.; whereas it is necessary to have a

global vision, framework and an ecosystem-based approach for the management and conservation of marine resources;

- BC. whereas climate change is increasingly changing the distribution and migratory patterns of various fish species and affects small-scale fisheries in developing countries, which are more vulnerable to its effects;
- BD. whereas illegal fishing is a major threat to marine resources, depleting fish stocks, destroying marine habitats creating unfair competition and putting the livelihoods of coastal communities and islands fisheries at risk;
- BE. whereas it is essential for Member States to implement an EU fisheries control regime that is simple, transparent and effective in order to ensure the sector's sustainability targets are met;
- BF. whereas, when diversifying consumption, improved traceability with access to information about nutritional values, provenance and place of production is fundamental to consumer behaviour;

Global approach to the EU blue economy

1. Welcomes the Commission's new sustainable EU blue economy strategy; regrets, however, the lack of specific objectives for different sectors, in particular fisheries and aquaculture as important sectors in the blue economy; points out that new legislative proposals and action plans must always be based on the best available scientific knowledge and on environmental, social and economic impact assessments;
2. Calls for a broad definition of the blue economy that encompasses all sectoral and intersectoral activities relating to oceans, seas and coastal areas, including direct and indirect support activities, and in which the fisheries sector is appropriately taken into account; draws attention to the cross-cutting importance of innovation for all these activities, whether traditional or emerging;
3. Draws attention to the need to promote an integrated approach to different sectors of the blue economy, recognising and respecting the priorities of the Member States and supporting them in developing these priorities;
4. Highlights the fact that the blue economy sector overall plays a crucial role, particularly in the outermost regions, and can contribute to attenuating the impacts of climate changes, promoting nature-based solutions and improving the use of maritime and aquatic resources;
5. Draws attention to the negative trends and clear decline in some more traditional sectors of the blue economy (such as fisheries, shipbuilding and ship repair, among others), especially in regions where they function as true anchor activities, driving economic activities both upstream and downstream, creating jobs and promoting growth; considers that any blue economy strategy should not omit these activities and regions, and should emphasise the potential for innovation to reverse the decline recorded;
6. Highlights that fostering the blue economy is key to reviving the economy as a whole and restoring the economic and social aspects of several sectors, such as transport and tourism, that have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;

7. Calls for an improved and more coordinated implementation of all available financial instruments, including the structural and investment funds, to better promote the blue economy strategy;
8. Calls on the Commission, in close coordination with Member States, to gauge the specific needs of the fisheries sector in the context of the financing of the blue economy (at sectoral, regional, national, and European level) with a view to realising its growth and job-creation potential;
9. Stresses that the development of the blue economy requires greater investment in knowledge and that in order to improve understanding of the marine environment the EU and the Member States must provide substantial funding under arrangements making for continuity and predictability over the long term;
10. Highlights the need for appropriate financial support for the blue economy to enable large-scale investments in research, technology and infrastructure at the EU and Member State level; calls on the Commission and industry, therefore, to evaluate the benefit of establishing EU partnerships for maritime transport, including with the private sector, at the EU and international level in order to address current international trade and supply chain challenges, foster innovation and competitiveness within the sector, contribute to decarbonisation, create infrastructure for shore-side electricity, loading and supplying alternative fuels in ports and cargo terminals, and develop waste management plans for Atlantic, Mediterranean and Baltic ports; welcomes therefore the establishment of the European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive blue economy, which aims to align national, regional and EU research and innovation priorities;
11. Urges the Commission and the Member States to put in place new projects and new instruments for all blue economy stakeholders to base their activities on the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources, decarbonisation and circular economy; emphasises that the sustainable blue economy must develop within ecological limits, be based on scientific advice and foster a healthy marine environment;
12. Stresses the need to implement an integrated ecosystem-based approach to all sectors of the blue economy;
13. Calls on the Commission to propose legislative and non-legislative initiatives, based on carrying out proper impact assessments of these initiatives on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and ensuring that the blue economy becomes the basic pillar for delivering the overall objectives of the European Green Deal and related subsequent EU strategies; stresses that the transformation the blue economy needs to undergo will drive innovation and stimulate job creation and economic opportunities;
14. Highlights that coastal and ocean-dependent communities can contribute to the development of a sustainable blue economy sector that considers their specific circumstances and needs; highlights that they can lead varied pilot projects, such as on offshore renewable energy technologies, the development of nature-based activities and the contribution of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to healthy, resilient and safe food systems;

15. Considers that coastal and island communities, particularly those involved in fisheries, should be fully involved at every stage in the development of the blue economy, this being a sine qua non for realising its potential in terms of innovation, jobs, prosperity, and sustainable development;
16. Underlines that a holistic approach to all sectors of the blue economy that takes into due account their interplays is required to ensure that the activities of one sector do not hamper or create conflicts with the activities of another; notes that this is also relevant for the protection of the marine environment; stresses the need for collaborative, inclusive and cross-sectoral maritime spatial planning; stresses in this regard the importance of effective ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning for achieving ecological, social and economic objectives, inter alia in the context of the transition to a climate neutral society; is of the view that maritime spatial planning will create synergies between sectors and safeguard the livelihoods of fishers; regrets that the majority of Member States have delayed the establishment of maritime spatial plans as required under Directive 2014/89/EU; invites the Commission to ensure that the review of the Directive in 2022 is presented in a timely manner and to accompany it with corrective initiatives, where needed;
17. Underlines that the initiatives that will deliver the new vision of the sustainable blue economy in the EU must take into account land-sea interactions;
18. Highlights the importance of establishing bilateral partnership arrangements with third countries, in particular agreements for sustainable fishing partnerships and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; stresses that bilateral partnership arrangements should seek to comply with the highest environmental, economic and social sustainability criteria and be based on the best available scientific advice;
19. Is concerned about cases of IUU fishing outside EU waters; recalls that IUU fishing, facilitated by the practice of flying a flag of convenience, damages food security and the livelihoods of people in coastal countries, while creating fertile ground for piracy; calls for a strong global system of deterrent sanctions and a multi-pronged approach to fighting IUU fishing; stresses the need to limit the use of flags of convenience and reflagging and to address trans-shipment at sea, as these are important tools for closing IUU loopholes; calls on the EU, more broadly, to strengthen anti-corruption capacity-building by fostering cooperation between national agencies, increasing international cooperation, improving oversight of fishery agents in developing countries with support from the EU, and supporting regional monitoring, control and surveillance centres and task forces;
20. Stresses the need to fight against IUU fishing in a way that is continuous, effective and comprehensive; invites the Commission to review its discussions with yellow-card states; highlights the importance of product traceability³³ and of banning the importation of sea products obtained from illegal fishing; calls on Member States to take a genuinely hard-line approach to landings of boats from suspect third countries;
21. Stresses the importance of enhancing dialogue with countries bordering the Mediterranean, particularly those on its southern shore, and of boosting funding for project lines that target international cooperation in blue economy sectors (Interreg Next Med, Interreg Euro-MED Programme 2021-2027, Switch Med, etc.);

22. Stresses that some fleets from outside the EU, fishing in the same areas and exporting fisheries products to the European market have lower sustainability standards, which negatively affects the competitiveness of European fishers;
23. Stresses the need to establish a level playing field with products imported from third countries, ensuring that all fisheries and aquaculture products consumed in the EU are produced by sustainable food systems and comply with the objectives of the Green Deal; Calls on the Commission to adopt all the necessary measures to guarantee a general fair competition environment within the framework of the World Trade Organization and specifically in EU trade agreements;
24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue strengthening the rights and working conditions of third country nationals working on EU vessels, as well as to ensure decent pay for all those working in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and all other sectors of the blue economy;
25. Underlines the need to strengthen collaboration and coordinate actions with ongoing multilateral forums, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other related international and multilateral processes, to promote the protection, conservation, sustainable management and restoration of marine and freshwater biodiversity, while contributing to other SDGs; stresses that COP15 in Kunming, China, offers a good opportunity to agree on global measures in this regard;
26. Takes note of the objective of protecting 30 % of the world's oceans by 2030, but warns that it should not be at the expense of food security, fishers and aquaculture producers, indigenous peoples and local communities;
27. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to the designation of three vast marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean; regrets that the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) once again failed to reach agreement on these protected areas in 2021;
28. Highlights the role of local and regional authorities as responsible for helping to identify and designate, with Member States, additional marine protected areas;
29. Recalls that a growing body of research, notably from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, shows that objectives on biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation are better achieved when fishers and local communities have direct control over the management of the resources on which they rely; stresses that ecosystems managed by coastal communities are among the richest and most productive, and also contribute to the adaptation of coastal areas to the consequences of climate change; highlights the risks of ocean-grabbing on maritime spatial planning; stresses, therefore, the need to secure small-scale fisheries, ensure the responsible governance of tenure, and hold the beneficiaries of EU undertakings operating in the blue economy sector to account if their activities violate human rights;
30. Calls on the EU and partner countries to rely on indigenous know-how in their climate mitigation strategies and to actively promote participatory management, which has proved to be effective in increasing the resilience of coastal communities;

31. Considers that international ocean governance should adopt an intersectoral approach to the blue economy, ensuring equal treatment for all maritime economic activities; supports the ocean being recognised as a shared asset of humanity, and calls for sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) to always be in line with the 2030 SDGs, with EU environmental obligations and objectives and with the CFP obligations and objectives;
32. Expresses concern that sectoral support provided by SFPAs often does not directly benefit local fisheries and coastal communities in third countries and, therefore calls on the Commission to link SFPAs closely with EU sustainable development programming;
33. Highlights that SFPAs must become a tool for the development of local blue economies; considers that insufficient data makes it difficult to evaluate the contributions of SFPAs towards the attainment of the SDGs in partner countries; urges the EU to increase the transparency, data collection (particularly on catches, vessel registrations and labour conditions) and reporting requirements in SFPAs and to establish a centralised socio-economic database for all EU vessels regardless of where they operate;
34. Stresses the need to include all stakeholders in SFPA negotiations and during their implementation period, and to ensure that the needs of the communities most affected by these partnerships are taken into account;
35. Deplores the lack of monitoring of the implementation and proper use of funding; is worried that sectoral support under SFPAs often does not directly benefit small-scale fishers; calls on the Commission to link SFPAs closely with EU development aid with the aim of improving added value for coastal communities; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to proactively publish annual reports on the ways sectoral support is utilised in order to better track the use of EU public money;
36. Welcomes the role of regional sea conventions and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs); calls on the Commission to come forward with ambitious mandates for RFMOs in order to protect fishery resources in developing countries and international waters, in particular by improving stock management for species such as tropical tuna, reducing discards, applying the precautionary approach to ensure the conservation of endangered species and vulnerable marine ecosystems, and improving the available data, compliance and the transparency of decision-making;
37. Calls, more broadly, for the improvement of fisheries management practices and monitoring and for the development of eco-labelling and new technologies such as blockchain, in order to improve product traceability;
38. Calls on the EU to provide technical assistance to developing country producers, especially small-scale producers;
39. Recalls that all states involved in fisheries in West Africa should establish an RFMO – particularly for the exploitation of shared stocks, such as small pelagic fish – as required under international law, relevant national laws, Pan-African and regional fisheries policies, and other instruments; believes that this management regime should comply with a precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, ensuring that total allowable catches are within safe biological limits;

40. Urges the EU to effectively promote and protect small-scale fisheries in Africa, which are the main providers of ocean livelihoods, as a cornerstone of the future EU-Africa blue task force, such as by funding the implementation of FAO international guidelines on sustainable small-scale fisheries;
41. Stresses that the production of fishmeal and fish oil, among other factors, can contribute to overfishing in developing countries, in particular in West Africa; calls for mandatory due diligence measures to ensure that the whole seafood industry supply chain is fair, fully traceable, does not use products from IUU fishing and is not linked to human rights violations, including human trafficking and slavery;
42. Welcomes the role of regional sea conventions and RFMOs in strengthening governance based on the best available scientific knowledge, which should be easily available to all operators;
43. Calls on the Commission to come forward with ambitious mandates in RFMOs in order to protect fisheries resources in developing countries and international waters, in particular by in relation to improving stock management for species such as tropical tuna, for reducing discards, in applying the precautionary approach to protect the conservation of endangered species, vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) as well as improving data availability, compliance and transparent decision-making;
44. Calls on the Commission to actively pursue and promote the integration of climate adaptation and mitigation goals in its SFPAs and in RFMO decision-making;
45. Calls for EU and Member State measures to step up efforts to improve global fisheries governance, notably through mechanisms such as the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI);
46. Recalls that the sustainable management of resources based on the best available scientific advice and best socio-economic impact assessments must be a key priority for attaining EU strategic agenda goals and must also be included in bilateral partnership arrangements;
47. Emphasises that the blue economy comprises multiple activities over and above the traditional activities, that the development of new activities should always be accompanied by impact studies, and that a transparent scientific approach, as well as effective consultations and equal participation from all the affected sectors, must be adopted to facilitate the sustainable organisation of these activities within the blue economy;
48. Highlights that the maritime sector is a key link for international connectivity, the global trading system, the EU economy, its competitiveness and for EU regions; stresses the importance of enhancing the role of ports, the need for investments in smart infrastructure and the development and management of ports, which should further increase their capacity to accommodate trade growth;
49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to invest in ports located on EU coasts so as to focus on missing connections with the hinterland, with the overall objectives of making transport more resilient and turning ports into logistic platforms and strategic clusters for multimodal transport, energy generation, storage and distribution, and

tourism; stresses the importance of including a market-based measure as a goal of the International Maritime Organization for the reduction of greenhouse gases from maritime transport in order to implement a carbon offsetting scheme in international shipping and ensure a realistic path to emissions reductions;

50. Highlights that the Commission's communication on a sustainable and smart mobility strategy aims to bring the first zero-emission vessels to market by 2030, and that the EU has already financed substantial research into the hybridisation and electrification of vessels through Horizon 2020; calls on the Commission to further boost its support for electric vessels for short routes;
51. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to complete priority projects included in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) for the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Baltic Sea areas, especially in cross border areas and as part of future TEN-T guidelines and the 2021-2027 Connecting Europe Facility, in order to promote, simplify and invest adequate funding in the full development of the TEN-T motorways of the sea to better integrate short sea shipping to distribute goods more widely via ports connecting islands to the mainland and a comprehensive multimodal transport system; stresses that it is essential to create seamless and sustainable transport chains for passengers and cargo in all transport modes, and in particular rail, maritime and inland waterways transport; believes that projects should pay particular attention to the connectivity and accessibility needs of peripheral, island and outermost regions in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Baltic Sea areas;
52. Highlights that ports can be used to boost the blue economy, as they have a key role in the economic activities of this sector, and ensure its transition towards sustainable and smart mobility in line with the principles of the European Green Deal; calls on the Commission to reallocate more EU funding for the improvement of transport efficiency, TEN-T core port accessibility and for the reduction of costs, including investment in continuous dredging, channel deepening and other capacity-building measures in selected ports; reminds the Commission and the Member States that further investment in sustainable and intelligent port infrastructure is needed to enable ports to become multimodal mobility and transport hubs, as well as energy hubs for integrated electricity systems, hydrogen and other alternative fuels, and test sites for waste reuse and the circular economy;
53. Congratulates the Port of Vigo on being the pioneering EU port that first implemented the European Blue Growth Strategy;
54. Welcomes the FAO Blue Fishing Ports Network initiative, which aims to draw up guidelines on best international practice for fishing ports that are in the process of transitioning to blue economy models, in order to improve their sustainability by protecting the environment and promoting the social and economic benefits; supports the FAO establishing a permanent office in the Port of Vigo to develop and manage a Global Blue Ports Network;

Resilience, competitiveness and jobs

55. Recognises that the EU's recovery efforts must be centred on sustainability, competitiveness and growth objectives; stresses the need for sustainable financing

instruments to drive this transition, including through strengthening public and private investment;

56. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the sustainable development of small-scale fishing and aquaculture value chains, from fisher to consumer, by promoting the harmonisation of selective, non-destructive and energy-efficient fishing and aquaculture methods, by facilitating the exchange of knowledge with the EU research community and by promoting sustainable commercialisation methods for fishery products, while decreasing administrative burdens;
57. Emphasises the need to recognise the socio-economic value of recreational fishing and its contribution to a sustainable blue economy in the EU; highlights the need for more and better data about recreational fisheries, including its contribution to the tourism sector, its interactions with small-scale fishers, its environmental impacts, as well as its socio-economic importance;
58. Highlights the importance of small-scale coastal fishing for the blue economy and for the cultural identity of communities in coastal regions and islands;
59. Calls on Member States to fully implement transparent and objective criteria as laid out in Article 17 of the CFP when allocating fishing opportunities;
60. Urges the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary measures to improve the collection of data on recreational fishing in the sea and in inland freshwater and brackish waterways, bearing in mind the environmental impact and socio-economic value of this activity, in order to ensure fair and balanced management of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and to encourage greater investment in the development of coastal community activities;
61. Stresses the importance of inclusive maritime spatial planning in minimising competition for space at the expense of other activities, such as fishing when developing new blue economy activities; highlights that fisheries and aquaculture play a central role and that these sectors must be given proper visibility in the blue economy, and therefore calls for a strategy to promote interaction between the different maritime and terrestrial blue economy activities in a way that will benefit them all;
62. Urges the Commission to support the development of community-led energy production schemes, which allow coastal communities, including fishers, to participate fully in the planning and development of renewable energy production while reinvesting profits back into the local community;
63. Calls on Member States, in line with maritime spatial planning provisions, to designate specific historical and traditional fishing grounds of fishers as areas that are to remain free of offshore renewables;
64. Stresses that offshore wind farms should only be built if it can be guaranteed that there will be no negative environmental and ecological impacts, or economic, socio-economic and socio-cultural consequences on fishers and aquaculture producers, in line with the objectives of the blue economy and the European Green Deal;
65. Welcomes initiatives such as the Marine Wind Power Observatory, a forum launched by the Regional Government of Galicia to identify opportunities and balance uses of the

sea that might compete with each other, incorporating the industrial sector, the maritime fisheries sector and associated entities and organisations;

66. Takes note of the fact that the extractive industry is a growing sector in the blue ocean economy; emphasises the duty of states to refrain from taking measures, including large-scale development projects, that may adversely affect the livelihoods of inland and marine small-scale fishers, their territories or access rights, and their duty to conduct *ex ante* assessments of extractive industry projects operated by private entities in order to evaluate their possible negative human rights impacts on local fishing communities;
67. Calls for the creation of an EU forum for dialogue that is transparent and ensures participation of all stakeholders and a balance of power between them in order to foster intersectoral cooperation, experience-sharing and conflict resolution;
68. Urges the Commission and the Member States to take specific actions to boost, facilitate access to and fully use available investment possibilities for sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices under the new European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), together with other EU programmes such as the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism or Horizon Europe, for sustainable fishing practices and for sustainable aquaculture activities, as well as to ensure that coastal, remote and overseas communities can diversify their economies;
69. Calls on the Commission to build on EMFAF best practices to develop recreational fisheries tourism projects and continue funding these projects through the EMFAF;
70. Stresses the need to develop more comprehensive strategies to adapt the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and coastal territories to the consequences of climate change and its impact on communities and their livelihoods; stresses the need for all sectors to contribute to climate change mitigation in line with the European Green Deal and the seventh and eighth Environmental Action Programme;
71. Believes that the CFP should include a social conditionality, similar to the one created in the new common agriculture policy, that may provide for sanctions on owners of fishing vessels, aquaculture producers and other EMFAF beneficiaries, if they do not ensure adequate working conditions for all their workers, seasonal and migrant workers included; highlights that this social conditionality is fundamental for the protection of the dignity in the workplace and social rights of fishery and aquaculture workers, contributing to the achievement of social justice for all;
72. Considers that greater job security, occupational safety, healthy oceans providing better earnings and social security in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are essential to attracting women and younger generations, thereby ensuring its rejuvenation and continued survival;
73. Welcomes the role of women in sustainable fishing and aquaculture value chains and therefore calls for them to be guaranteed decent working conditions, equal salaries, social security, as well as visibility and representation in decision-making structures and processes;

74. Stresses that fishing and aquaculture play a key role in creating jobs and sustaining the economy in many parts of the EU, accounting for over half of local jobs in many coastal and island communities, particularly in the outermost regions;
75. Stresses that, in order to improve the sustainability, competitiveness and economic performance of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, it is necessary to guarantee a level playing field for EU operators in a global economy, and to focus on vocational training, lifelong learning, European-level recognition of this training, counselling services and the dissemination of technical and scientific knowledge and innovative practices, recognising the contribution that the trade associations make in this regard;
76. Stresses the need to add value to fisheries products at first sale, especially those from small-scale artisanal fishing in order to increase the income and wages of fishers;
77. Calls on the Commission to develop new forms of sustainable maritime and coastal tourism, boost new forms of tourism activities, provide additional income streams and increase year-round employment to enhance the value of maritime and coastal areas, while protecting the environment and blue cultural heritage and preserving marine and coastal habitats; highlights the importance of the circular economy in the tourism sector in developing more sustainable practices that benefit local development; recognises that the tourism sector should engage with coastal communities and needs support to boost the efficiency and sustainability of infrastructure and the competitiveness of marine and tourism resorts;
78. Recognises that coastal tourism can have positive impacts on developing countries, but can be detrimental when mass tourism strategies are developed, leading to reduced food access and consumption for local consumers and to the destruction of the marine environment and cultural identities; calls for the EU to promote fair and low-impact models of tourism;
79. Stresses the necessity of preserving our natural capital and heritage in order to encourage sustainable tourism (such as ecotourism), and calls on the Member States to protect biodiversity by urgently carrying out marine conservation actions, including cross-border actions, to protect, restore and promote marine and coastal ecosystems, including through the marine Natura 2000 networks;
80. Calls on the Commission to include sustainable maritime, island and coastal tourism in related actions and programmes, to support initiatives that encourage the diversification of coastal, maritime and marine tourism, and to make tourist activities and employment less seasonal; highlights the need to collect better data on the contribution of recreational angling tourism to the coastal and island economy;
81. Stresses the importance of the blue economy in the outermost regions, specifically for their the tourism sectors; calls on the Commission, therefore, to create a transport programme with options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity (POSEI Transport) in order to address the needs of the islands and outermost regions more directly and to support the operation of some commercial routes to them;
82. Supports sustainable practices in coastal and maritime tourism, since they are essential for the competitiveness of the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Baltic Sea areas and the creation of high-value jobs in blue education and vocational training; stresses that specific

training on blue economy activities would contribute to raising awareness of marine ecosystems and the need to protect them;

83. Calls on the Commission to conduct broad consultation with regional and local authorities and all related stakeholders in order to identify tailor-made solutions for local and regional communities;
84. Asks the Commission to assess possible solutions to promote the resilience of the tourism sector against the impacts of future pandemics or other disruptive events that pose a risk to tourism activities, and to come up with appropriate initiatives to improve the working and employment conditions of workers in the sector so as to increase its attractiveness and help realise the full potential of the blue economy;
85. Underlines the importance of yachting and sailing for maritime tourism; underlines the role of local culture and gastronomy in the development of European coastal tourism and the importance of beach and underwater tourism, angling tourism, ecotourism, water sports and the cruise industry;
86. Stresses the importance of marine protected areas as an instrument for protecting the oceans; believes that these areas constitute an opportunity for the development of scientific tourism;
87. Welcomes the Commission's focus on sustainable and 'slow' tourism and the aim to develop support packages (Blueprint for Local Green Deals) to support a green transition for cities and regions; notes the potential for remote islands and coastal communities to play a leading role in this transition;
88. Calls on the Commission and Member States to recognise the contribution made by marine recreational fishing and the tourism it generates to the blue economy, as well as this sector's potential to provide further economic opportunities in coastal communities;
89. Regrets the fact that the potential of the blue economy has not been sufficiently taken into account when drawing up and evaluating national recovery and resilience plans funded by NextGenerationEU;
90. Calls for the creation of an appropriate financial framework to stimulate the development of the blue economy and job creation, which integrates and coordinates the various financial instruments available – the structural and investment funds (EMFAF, ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund), Horizon Europe 2021-2027 and others; draws attention to the need to promote better matching of these instruments to the needs of stakeholders and wide dissemination of current opportunities;
91. Calls for an in-depth EU-level discussion with the sector, taking into account the serious socio-economic effects of the rules on measuring fishing capacity, on the impact of these rules on fisheries and fishers' life, while maintaining at the same time a strict control on fishing capacity;
92. Stresses the strategic importance of shipbuilding and ship repair activities and their interrelation with other sectors, such as the maritime tourism sector; considers that a commitment to technological innovation and a high degree of specialisation, which could lead to gains in added value, could create contexts less exposed to international competition and might help to reverse the downturn that the sector has been undergoing;

maintains that specific support should be provided to revitalise and modernise the shipbuilding industry in the Member States in its different forms;

93. Notes that EU artisanal and small-scale fleets are very old, particularly in the outermost regions, that their vessels have a very high average age and that they are unsafe both for the people working on them and for the catches themselves, reiterating the need for EMFAF support for the purchase of new vessels, without this resulting in an increase in catches, respecting maximum sustainable yields, and thus improving their environmental performance;
94. Recalls that fishing fleets in the outermost regions are, in certain cases, in very poor condition and constitute a danger for fishers' safety and for the environment; considers it necessary, in this context, to find solutions to improve safety and working conditions for fishers, to reduce CO₂ emissions and to improve range and conservation conditions of catches; highlights the need to ensure that there is continuity in the provision of healthy and high-quality proteins, in conditions that are completely safe and secure, with less environmental impact and without increasing the fishing capacity;
95. Calls on the Commission and the Council to create a support instrument similar to POSEI for fisheries in order to mitigate the effects of insularity on the outermost regions;
96. Highlights the potential for sustainable use of the EU's maritime dimension in the Atlantic, which requires more balanced investment in its islands, outermost regions and coastal ports, as well as the expansion of many of their berths and an increase in their storage capacity and cargo-handling equipment, which are very important for fisheries and aquaculture products;

Blue transition

97. Calls for the development of instruments to utilise maritime resources in a sustainable way and diversify the ocean economy, including through support for new products connected to and derived from fishing activities, which can add value to our cultural and natural heritage, specifically by providing high-quality tourism options;
98. Stresses the need to achieve an integrated EU maritime policy framework that ensures consistency between EU biodiversity strategy, the Farm to Fork strategy, climate policy and the CFP;
99. Considers that the aquaculture sector should continue to monitor and improve several parameters based on evidence-based actions, including fish welfare and fish stocking densities; considers, further, that environmental impact assessment studies should be carried out to improve fish welfare, including but not limited to enriching their environment, maintaining water quality within welfare-relevant limits as a way of reducing diseases and their spread, diminishing the need for antibiotics, and to continue reducing pollution, achieving better climate and environmental results, and increasing climate change resilience;
100. Notes that diversification of fish species in EU aquaculture, including low trophic and non-carnivorous species, is necessary to improve the sustainability of the sector;

101. Highlights the potential role of aquaculture, particularly for job creation and security of the food supply, as well as in easing the transition to sustainable food systems; considers it fundamental to reduce the pressure on marine resources through the development and increasing use of alternatives and sustainably managed feed sources other than wild caught fish, reversing the loss of biodiversity in the oceans and seas; stresses that the use of marine space for aquaculture purposes must be properly regulated; underlines, in this regard, the importance of a clear and reliable legal framework that promotes access to water with all the necessary guarantees;
102. Notes that the increased use of fishmeal and fish oil in EU aquaculture can threaten the sustainability of wild fish stocks in EU and third country waters;
103. Stresses the need to implement all measures to ensure the competitive development of fisheries and aquaculture due to their importance for the security of food supply;
104. Stresses the importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the supply of protein, which is essential for food security, as well as the socio-economic development of local communities and job creation worldwide; recalls, in particular, that nearly one billion people, mostly in developing countries, rely on fish and seafood for their primary source of animal protein; notes that more than 90 % of the world's capture fishers and fisheries workers rely on small-scale fisheries; regrets that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people employed in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
105. Stresses that sustainable food from the oceans, seas and freshwater sources must be produced by responsible fishing and sustainable aquaculture alone, and that all fisheries and aquaculture products consumed in the EU must come from sustainable food systems, with full respect for the planetary boundaries; calls on the Commission to draw up sustainability indicators for fisheries and aquaculture products from the EU based on scientific advice, and to require similar sustainable standards for products imported into the EU market;
106. Highlights that the EU is responsible for 1 % of global algae production, and therefore considers that sea algae production should be encouraged by Member States and the EMFAF; stresses that algae is one of the future solutions for achieving the objectives of the Green Deal, such as either using algae for carbon dioxide capture, substituting other materials in various economic sectors, or using it as a nutritional product for human consumption, as it could be a major source of protein and quality micronutrients;
107. Invites the Commission to consider all solutions for developing possibilities for algae production and use, and also to consider the financing options for accelerating algae production; calls on the Commission to act quickly to enable the authorisation of algae as a new foodstuff by reducing the associated application costs and allowing easier access to the market, while ensuring product quality and safety;
108. Believes it necessary to promote sustainable aquaculture models that could contribute to the conservation of ecosystems affording protection against the effects of climate change; underlines the importance of differentiating between production and protein-processing aquaculture, particularly when the latter involves practices that put pressure on the sustainability of marine resources; considers that feedstuffs intended for fisheries and aquaculture should be produced by sustainable agriculture and fishing, and should therefore exclude any product obtained from IUU fishing or overfishing;

109. Considers that the production of microalgae can reduce the use of non-sustainable fishmeal in fisheries; underlines the need to further develop and promote organic aquaculture, as it has a great growth potential, and EU tools and finance can be harnessed for this purpose; calls for improved collection, processing and dissemination of statistics on organic aquaculture production;
110. Calls for the CFP to be applied across the board to all EU fishing fleets in order to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture activities are managed in a way that can generate socioeconomic benefits, contributing to the availability of food products, as well as minimising the impact of their particular activities on habitats and marine ecosystems, while restoring and maintaining populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield; considers that it must be applied taking into account the specific characteristics of the various sea basins;
111. Highlights the role of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and their professionals in the energy transition and mitigating climate change through decarbonisation and the promotion of activities such as marine litter collection that are conducive to a circular economy;
112. Warns that the dumping at sea of waste and all types of pollutants, especially from all types of plastics, is harmful to the environment, results in serious economic losses to the fisheries sector and other activities, and affects human health through the entire food chain; welcomes the EMFAF decision to provide funding for fishers to recover and collect, reuse and recycle lost fishing gear, as well as other marine litter; regrets, however, the delay in achieving the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and stresses, in this regard, that further awareness campaigns and training for fishers should be promoted;
113. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide more active support to the modernisation and sustainable development of the fisheries sector, in particular small-scale fisheries, seeking to make fishing gear more selective, and to reduce the environmental impact of fishing;
114. Highlights the role of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures¹, which sets out the conservation measures governing on how, where and when fishing may take place, in order to protect sensitive species and habitats at both the national and regional levels, increasing fishing yield, while reducing impacts on marine ecosystems, especially through increased selectivity;
115. Considers it important to continuously collect data in order to better assess sustainability criteria and to prevent the establishment of fishing areas where VMEs have been identified;
116. Calls for the EU to urgently tackle the detrimental impacts on the climate, seabed integrity, fish populations and sensitive species (as bycatch) of fishing techniques such

¹ OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105.

as bottom-contacting gear, drift nets, demersal seines or fish aggregating devices, including by limiting their use;

117. Calls, in particular, for the EU to prohibit the use of detrimental techniques in its strictly protected marine areas, following the best available scientific advice; calls for the EMFAF to be used to provide effective support for the transition to more selective and less damaging fishing techniques for EU fishing fleets;
118. Calls for the EU to launch and fund scientific research programmes to map carbon-rich marine habitats in EU waters to serve as a basis for designating such areas as strictly protected marine protected areas, in order to protect and restore marine carbon sinks in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to protect and restore ecosystems, in particular those on the seabed, in line with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, protecting them from human activities that could disturb and release carbon into the water column, such as bottom-contacting fishing operations;
119. Calls for the EU to prohibit all environmentally damaging extractive industrial activities such as mining and fossil fuel extraction in marine protected areas;
120. Stresses that the deep sea is home to the greatest diversity of species and ecosystems on earth, providing critical environmental goods and services, including long-term carbon sequestration, and that it is characterised by environmental conditions that make it highly vulnerable to human disturbance; calls on the Commission and Member States, therefore, to support an international moratorium on deep seabed mining;
121. Calls for legislative and non-legislative tools for the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy, and for the reinforcement of the actions aimed at meeting the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, in order to conserve marine biodiversity and restore degraded ecosystems and promote competitiveness in fisheries, aquaculture and other related sectors;
122. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to reviewing the Maritime Strategy Framework Directive; calls on the Commission, when revising the Directive, to align it with the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and the eighth Environment Action Programme;
123. Calls for urgent measures to combat IUU fishing, which is still one of the most serious threats to the health of ecosystems and the economic competitiveness of the fisheries sector itself; calls for greater consistency between EU trade and fisheries policies in order to ensure that IUU fishing is tackled effectively;

Cooperation, knowledge and innovation

124. Calls for greater cooperation between academia, research and innovation centres, public authorities and industry to promote the use of equipment, methods, techniques and practices based on the best available scientific knowledge, capable of improving efficiency and safety at work, economic growth and competitiveness, as well as environmental sustainability; recalls the importance of ocean literacy to alerting society and to encouraging all citizens and stakeholders to adopt informed and responsible attitudes about the ocean and its resources;

125. Notes that reliable, high-quality and harmonised ocean data is an important factor in the sustainable transformation of the blue economy;
126. Highlights that the potential of a blue economy strategy can only be achieved through the cooperation of all stakeholders; notes the increasing use of data and artificial intelligence in maritime transport; calls on the Commission to assess the socioeconomic impact of the automation and digitalisation of the sector;
127. Calls on the Commission to further develop and enhance scientific knowledge hubs such as the Copernicus Marine Service and the European Marine Observation and Data Network, which offer invaluable knowledge on Europe's seas and oceans; points out that recreational fishing increases knowledge about the aquatic environment as well as the commitment to protect such environment;
128. Welcomes the establishment of the ocean mission as part of the Horizon 2030 programme; calls for more clarity and communication on the schedule for calls for tender associated with this mission;
129. Stresses the need to harmonise data collection on socio-economic monitoring and environmental monitoring, as well as the monitoring of living ecosystems and fish stocks; stresses that the data collected should also be factored in so as to regulate the impact of other maritime activities;
130. Believes that the gross tonnage limitation, as a criterion for measuring fishing capacity, needs to be adapted to reflect the reality of the sector and to the necessity of using more modern, less polluting and more energy-efficient engines; urges the Commission, in this context, to review these criteria with the goal of improving safety and working and living conditions, as well as allowing the changes needed to improve environmental sustainability, attract more young workers to the sector and ensure less environmental impact and that fishing capacity does not increase;
131. Calls on the Commission to collect consistent data that would enable the smart management of coastal tourism and avoid pressure on ecosystems and local communities, as well as competition with traditional activities, such as artisanal and coastal fishing;
132. Highlights the importance of the management and adaptation measures necessary to protect coastal communities, habitats and biodiversity, and which would mean funds are well spent given the enormous impacts of climate change and their resulting costs; calls on the Commission to set up an alert and observation system on more frequent storms and floods, provide adequate environmental and health monitoring and conduct research into early warnings; calls on the Commission to assess different scenarios and measures to address possible sea level rises and the intensification of severe weather events;
133. Recalls the existence of tools such as the European CleanSeaNet programme, which aims to monitor oil pollution; emphasises that regional cooperation, including with non-EU countries, is essential, especially in the Mediterranean Sea; calls on the Commission, therefore, to improve the exchange of information and cooperation between countries; underlines the importance of collaborative, inclusive and cross-sectoral maritime spatial planning that takes socioeconomic, environmental and biodiversity concerns into account; stresses the importance of the energy transition, in

which the blue economy sector can promote renewable offshore power generation technologies, such as tidal, wave, solar and wind energy; underlines the importance of supporting the decarbonisation of the shipping and maritime transport industries, developing sustainable technologies and increasing the use of low-emission and renewable energy sources;

134. Supports the principle of sustainable development within the blue economy as a driver of economic growth in the EU, in particular in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Baltic Sea areas as a way to support all sectoral and intersectoral activities related to oceans, seas and coastal areas, including maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship repair, biotechnology, sustainable tourism, offshore wind, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture and wave and tidal energy; calls on the Commission to promote research, development and innovation that contribute to sustainable tourism, resource efficiency and renewable energy; stresses in particular that offshore renewable energy has the potential to become an important component of Europe's energy system by 2050; and calls for the creation of incentives and funding for investments in port infrastructure in order to facilitate the servicing of the offshore renewable energy industry;
135. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the EU is achieving and maintaining its role as a technological leader, retaining talent and producing energy, while reducing any potential impacts on the marine environment;
136. Stresses the importance of innovation in fishing to improve both its environmental and economic performance, and calls for a new approach to innovation whereby innovation and modernisation do not mean increasing fishing capacities;
137. Urges the Commission, Member States and regions to work together in order to promote and support local initiatives to preserve livelihoods and traditions and cultural heritage associated with fisheries and aquaculture;
138. Calls on the Commission, in view of the fragile position of the outermost regions, to provide robust support for innovation and research, with the aiming of developing innovative, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable practices and techniques in fisheries and aquaculture in these regions, thus giving these regions a leading role in ocean governance;
139. Highlights that marine litter has a great environmental and socioeconomic impact in these regions, and therefore calls on the Commission to set up a centre for combating marine plastic pollution, preferably in an outermost region, with expertise in innovation, development and cooperation with fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders and associations, tasked with the adoption of sustainability strategies and policies which could be replicated in other regions;
140. Considers it important to raise positive consumer awareness on the nutritional value of fisheries and aquaculture products; points out that it is essential to give consumers appropriate information in order to effect changes in consumption habits and promote the consumption of lesser known sea products from European waters;
141. Highlights the necessity to raise consumer awareness about algae-based products, increase their acceptance by consumers, and raise consumer awareness about food

waste; reiterates that consumer information must be enhanced through effective labelling, including sustainability labelling;

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142. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee.