

## Unclear EU fishing deals compromise local food security and sustainable seafood

A lack of accountability and transparency around EU fishing activities outside EU waters is contributing to overfishing and endangering local food supply, two new WWF reports reveal. This, in turn, clouds the sustainability of the seafood products sold and consumed in the EU.

WWF's research shows that the EU's fishing agreements with non-EU countries - 'sustainable fisheries partnership agreements' (SFPAs) - do not always contribute to sustainable fishing. For example, EU fleets sometimes fail to accurately report catches, making it difficult to determine fair fishing quotas and furthering risks of overfishing. In addition, the current EU negotiation process for SFPAs doesn't require any assurance that partner countries have consulted those whose livelihoods or food supplies depend on the same fishery resources, nor does it require transparency on how EU funds tied to these Agreements will support local sustainable fisheries management systems.

In Central and West Africa alone, around 400 million people rely on marine fisheries for their food security and livelihoods; globally, West Africa is the area most vulnerable to illegal fishing activities with an estimated one in four fish caught illegally in its waters. The EU's extensive fishing activities in these regions mean that how it operates and manages these activities has an immense impact on ocean health. With SFPAs, the EU is also setting the bar for other fisheries agreements between coastal States and non-EU countries. Current and upcoming negotiations for renewed SFPAs are an opportunity to close the identified gaps.

Katrin Vilhelm Poulsen, Seafood Policy Officer at the WWF European Policy Office said:

"Continued overfishing has put our ocean in jeopardy and, with it, the communities who depend on healthy marine life. The EU has signed agreements which should guarantee sustainable fishing practises and

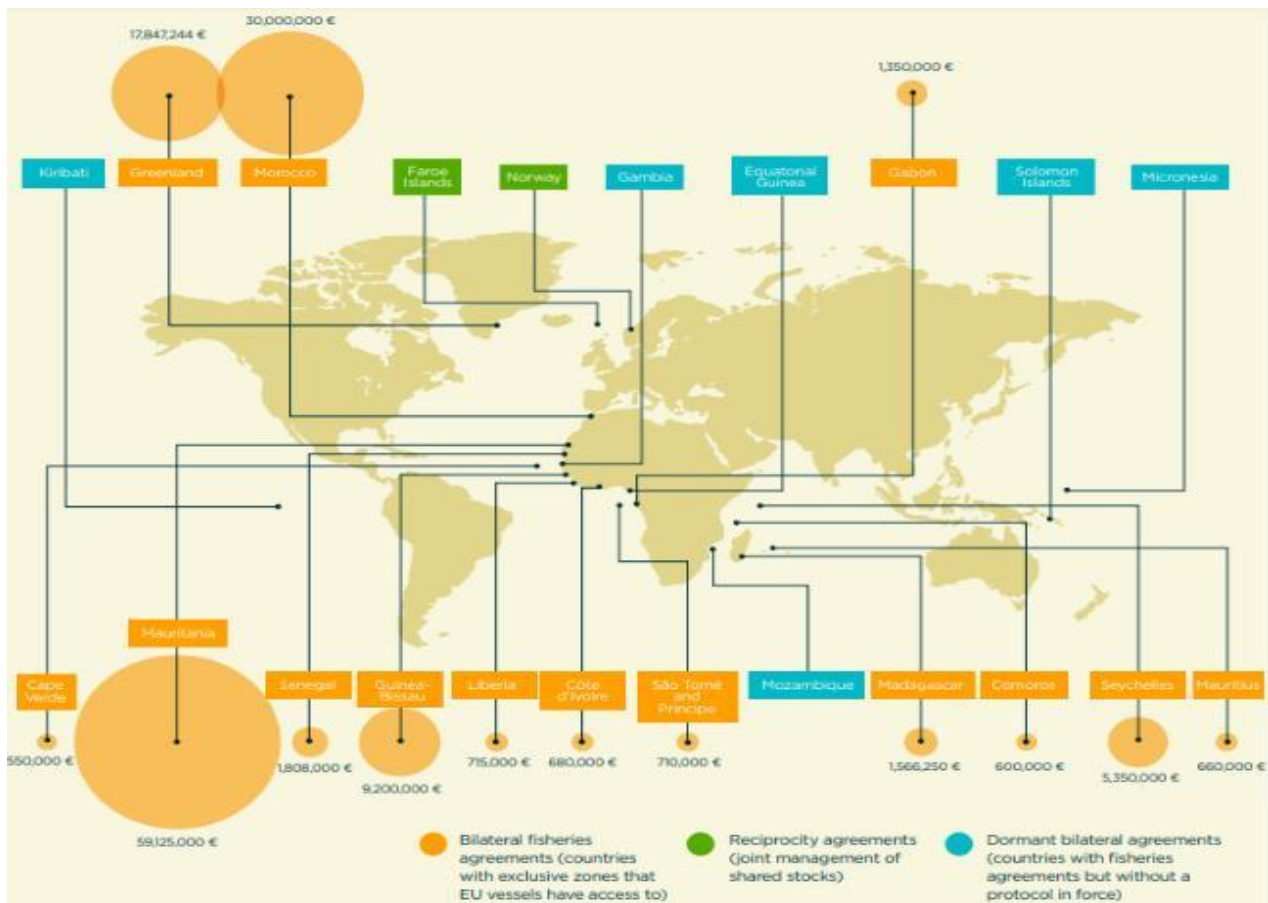


better fisheries management, yet this is not always happening. As it renegotiates its SFPAs, the EU must bring transparency to the system and ensure its fisheries are carrying out their activities sustainably, both in and outside of Europe's waters.”

The current practices highlighted by the reports signal that the EU is not meeting UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 14 (Life Below Water), 2 (Zero Hunger), or 8 (Decent Work and Growth). To achieve fair SFPAs, both WWF reports offer a series of recommendations. These include:

- For the EU to develop ways of measuring how the EU fleet's activities outside home waters contribute to the SDGs (and provide adequate resources to collect relevant data);
- Increasing cooperation between the EU and African countries to reinforce fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance systems to secure sustainable and transparent fishing practices;
- For the EU to support coastal States as they develop their sustainable fisheries policies and strategies;
- For the European Commission and EU Member States to work towards better monitoring and data collection to demonstrate compliance with SFPA policies and the economic, environmental and social impacts on local communities, as well as the links between them;
- Increasing transparency on all fisheries access agreements between coastal States and other countries beyond EU SFPAs, both public and private, to provide a more accurate understanding of the total fishery resource outtake of third country waters the EU enters into agreements with and prevent overfishing;
- Ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are consulted in SFPA negotiations, including those most reliant on the fisheries resources implicated by these Agreements for food security and livelihoods.





To move towards sustainability, resilience and institutional growth, the EU must work to promote transparency in its existing practices. By highlighting specific areas for improvement through changes to EU policy and SFPA negotiations, WWF calls for the EU's external fleet to become more sustainable, in line with the SDGs.

**Liens des rapports :**

[The Status And Future Of Fisheries Partnership Agreements In The South West Indian Ocean \(Summary\)](#)

[Out of Sight, Out of Mind: the EU's External Fishing Activity and the Sustainable Development Goals \(Summary\)](#)

[Out of Sight, Out of Mind: the EU's External Fishing Activity and the Sustainable Development Goals \(full report\)](#)

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