

**LEGACY BOOKLET**  
**FarFish International conference**  
**The External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy:**  
**present challenges and future opportunities**

The EU has an enhanced responsibility to promote sustainable and responsible fisheries management in international waters, in its double role as a major player in the fishing value chain (catching, processing and trading) and as the largest single market for imported fisheries products in the world. The EU distant water fleet (representing near 15% of the landings of the EU in volume and value) operates within the legal framework of the External Dimension of the CFP, which includes conservation, management and control provisions on Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs), Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and management of the high seas. The international or “external” dimension of the CFP has also close links with the fight against IUU fishing and other EU sectoral policies other than trade such as cooperation for development, labour, human rights and health.

In order to deepen the knowledge on the External Dimension of the CFP and analyse its present challenges and future opportunities, the LDAC co-hosted with CETMAR an International Conference within the auspices of FarFish H2020 project which took place on 1 June 2021. The aim of this event was twofold: (a) analyse the implementation of the External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy in force (CFP); and (b) explore how the external dimension can be a driver for positive change in the field of sustainable fisheries and governance in international waters for the next CFP.

This online event gathered during 2 days a number of high-level experts and key stakeholders from the fishing, industry and NGO sectors, together with policy makers, scientists and academics. The mix of panel discussions, visual presentations and interactive plenary sessions helped to reflect on the role of the EU in the fields of international fisheries management and ocean governance.

A number of specific objectives were agreed for each day of the meeting, namely:

Day 1 – Perspectives of External Dimension and EU participation in RFMOs

- Discuss the achievements and shortcomings of each of the constituent elements of the external dimension of the CFP.
- Propose measures for enhancing Europe’s role in the International Ocean and Fisheries Governance (in line with the EU Communication on IOG, Green Deal and UN Lisbon Agenda for 2030).
- Recommend ways to strength contributions and influence of the European Union in the preparatory work (i.e. technical, control and scientific committees) as well as plenary annual meetings of the Commission and Council of those RFMOs where the EU is a contracting party.
- Reflect on mechanisms to achieve sustainable management and conservation measures in international waters without the existence of RFMOs. This can only be achieved through effective adoption and implementation of international legal instruments related to maritime safety at sea to ensure level playing field among EU and non-EU operators; and carry out comprehensive environmental assessments covering cumulative impacts from all human induced economic activities and pressures in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

## Day 2 – The value of SFPAs as an instrument for cooperation with third countries

- Discuss how to improve scientific assessments to determine surplus of main pelagic, demersal and benthic stocks in EEZs of third country waters and CECAF;
- Develop a refined methodology to ensure accurate “ex ante” and “ex post” evaluations of SFPA;
- Promote transparency and inclusiveness of stakeholders in identification and implementation of funding priorities to maximise the socio-economic benefits of sectoral support for coastal communities;
- Foster maximisation of socio-economic benefits for EU fishing operators derived from sustainable fishing practices (licensing and control);
- Promote development of local artisanal fishers through co-habitation and improve data collection from small scale fisheries;
- Enhance the visibility and role of women in fisheries in the beneficiary third countries.

The main outcome of the Conference was the formulation of a series of recommendations which served as basis for a policy briefing on this subject. This document (D1.4) was issued in July 2021 in the form of a written contribution from FarFish to the EU consultations on the CFP evaluation report which is expected to be launched in early 2022.

The video recordings from the conference are now available on the FarFish website, along with a summary paper and a report with the main conclusions from each day in EN-FR-ES - Access here:

<https://www.farfish.eu/2021/08/24/an-international-conference-on-the-external-dimension-of-the-common-fisheries-policy/>