



## The countdown is on to prohibit electric fishing

Boulogne-sur-Mer, 21 January 2019

For immediate release

**Exactly one year after the European Parliament voted on 16 January 2018, negotiations on electric fishing have still not resulted in a European ban on this destructive fishing method.** Less than three months before the European Parliament's last Plenary session (week of April 15, 2019), **the countdown has begun to find a political agreement that will need to be approved by the Parliament before it is dissolved.** If the Parliament does not win its case in the trilogue negotiation with the Council and the Commission, discussions on prohibiting electric fishing will be postponed indefinitely (at least until after the European elections and the formation of a new Commission). This would lead to the economic death of artisanal fishers in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Great Britain surrounding the already depleted southern North Sea, and a series of bankruptcies in coastal areas due to dramatically decreased catches.

The social and ecological urgency is such that French artisanal fishermen are rallying together with their counterparts from Spain, Italy, Belgium, and England **today at 1:30 p.m. in Boulogne-sur-Mer for a joint press conference organized by BLOOM. Fishermen will call on European institutions to adopt with no further delay a compromise proposal tabled last week**, which takes into consideration the difficulties they are facing. **The compromise text of Italian MEP and shadow rapporteur Rosa d'Amato proposes a very limited 'transitional' period before effectively banning electric fishing on 31 July 2019.**

On 5 December 2018, Spanish MEP Gabriel Mato (EPP), the Rapporteur of the "Technical Measures" regulation, which includes electric fishing, proposed a compromise which was clearly favorable to Dutch industrial lobbies. Even though electric fishing is currently limited to the North Sea, Atlantic and Mediterranean fishermen are worried that this fishing method will extend to their waters. Electric fishing is so radically efficient that it destroys biological resources as well as small family fishing businesses.

In this last stretch before the European election, mobilizing fishermen and citizens will be crucial to secure the successful prohibition of electric fishing. **BLOOM is therefore calling on citizens to exercise their power of supervision over policy-makers, especially the European Commission, through a new tool, #iPolitics, which petitions for accountability from negotiators on a daily basis.**

> #iPolitics: A citizen eye on European institutions. A new platform by BLOOM  
<https://stopelectricfishing.org/action>

One elected official that British citizens can call upon every day is the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, George Eustice. He previously stated in December 2018, that electric trawlers would no



longer have access to British waters following Brexit. However, it seems that there has not yet been any concrete action in this direction. But just like for European institutions, British officials have only a few weeks left to come together and make the only decision that would defend low-impact, small-scale fishing practices: a permanent ban on electric fishing.

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**To go further:**

→ Read our revelations about the multi-faceted scandal of electric fishing in Europe

<https://www.bloomassociation.org/en/electric-fishing-new-revelations-on-a-european-scandal/>

→ Read our briefing: "**ELECTRIC 'PULSE' FISHING: WHY IT SHOULD BE BANNED**"

<https://www.bloomassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/plaidoyer-peche-electrique-v3.pdf>

→ As a reminder, without news from the European Commission since our complaint of 2 October 2017 about the 70 illegal licenses granted to the Netherlands to practice electric fishing, BLOOM has turned to the European Ombudsman for maladministration. The Ombudsman summoned the European Commission to respond to BLOOM before 31 January.

<https://www.bloomassociation.org/en/electric-fishing-european-ombudsman/>