

One year after EU Parliament vote, trilogue still yet to reach pulse fishing agreement

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 Credit: Pulsefishing.eu

Exactly one year has passed since the European Parliament [voted to ban the practice of pulse fishing](#), but no legislation has yet been formally passed to prohibit the controversial fishing method.

Despite being approved by the EU Parliament, an agreement is still yet to be formally realized with the other members of the EU trilogue. Failure to do so before the Parliament's final plenary session on April 15 will see the ban postponed indefinitely until the European elections and formation of a new Commission, according to French NGO Bloom.

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The practice, whose extreme efficiency is both lauded by its promoters and condemned by the NGOs which oppose it, uses a light electrical current to catch flatfish in the North Sea.

Utilized by much of the Dutch fleet for supposed research purposes, pulse fishing has a much-reduced benthic impact over more traditional methods such as beam trawling, as well as demonstrating a partially-improved selectivity. However, it has also been widely criticized by various

European organizations, who claim that its efficiency reduces whole areas of the seafloor to a desert, while the effect of the electrical current on juveniles and fish eggs is also poorly understood.

As a result, French artisanal fishermen have set a meeting together with representatives from Spain, Italy, Belgium, and England for a joint press conference, said Bloom. The aim is to call on EU institutions to adopt a compromise bill that was tabled last week, proposing a limited transitional period before effectively imposing an EU-wide ban on pulse fishing to come into effect on July 31.

The new compromise proposal, drafted by Italian MEP Rosa d'Amato, is in opposition to a similar compromise that was proposed by Spanish MEP Gabriel Mato on Dec. 5, 2018. Environmental NGO Bloom, which has spearheaded the anti-pulse fishing campaign, claims that the compromise offered by Mato was strongly favorable to Dutch pulse fishing interests.