

BLOOM Association slams European Parliament over EMFAF vote

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French based BLOOM Association has slammed the European Parliament on EMFAF vote

Fisheries subsidies: the European Parliament chooses to finance the destruction of the ocean and of the fishing sector's jobs, writes the BLOOM Association.

On Tuesday 6th of July, the European Parliament adopted the next EMFAF (European Fund for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture), which will cover the 2021-2027 period.

When the future of the ocean and small-scale fishers is at stake, and against the advice of scientists and NGOs, this €6.1 billion fund will continue to finance overfishing.

EMFAF is a victory for industrial lobbies. Not only does it include harmful subsidies, but it also weakens the conditions for getting them. This is a historic step backwards, at a time when negotiations are underway at the WTO to ban these subsidies that finance overfishing, which is the primary cause of ocean destruction [1].

Furthermore, while the architects and advocates of EMFAF have never stopped talking about preserving marine biodiversity, no fund has been dedicated to the protection, restoration and knowledge of the marine environment: the entire EMFAF will therefore be used to finance the exploitation of the ocean.

This vote reflects the short-sightedness of an overwhelming majority of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) regarding the crucial importance of this fund. By looking at it solely from a financial perspective – its total amount is the smallest of all European structural funds – MEPs have made the fundamental mistake of ignoring its crucial role in the fight against climate breakdown and biodiversity collapse. The ocean plays a crucial role in regulating the climate.

By choosing to use public funds to finance an industrial model that destroys marine ecosystems, MEPs have therefore decided to perpetuate a model that is leading us to disaster and that goes against all of the EU's environmental objectives.

“With this vote, the European Parliament has chosen to ignore the demands of scientists, NGOs, and citizens to fight climate change, preferring to protect a model of industrial fishing that destroys both the ocean and jobs that depends on it. Industrial fishing is never directly mentioned in the EMFAF. As a result, it is this sector that will continue to receive massive public subsidies for the time being”, analyses Frédéric Le Manach, BLOOM's Scientific Director.

The European Commission, which is responsible for approving each country's plan for the allocation of the EMFAF at national level, is now the last defense against the destructive use of public subsidies and the only one able to ensure that the sustainability objectives defined in the Common Fisheries Policy are respected.

[1] IPBES (2019) The global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services – Summary for policymakers, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Bonn (Germany), p. 56.