

Leading the Race To Zero In The Fisheries Sector: Towards a Carbon Neutral Aquatic Food Production



Wednesday 10 November 2021 -15.00-16.30 CEST
Online event

**Hosted by EBCD & the Regional Government
of Galicia**

Speakers:

- **Paula Uría Traba** – Director General, Energy Planning and Natural Resources, Regional Government of Galicia, Spain
- **Rosa Quintana Carballo** – Regional Minister for Maritime Affairs of the Regional Government of Galicia, Spain
- **Santiago Suarez de la Fuente** – Lecturer in Energy and Transport, University College London (UCL)
- **Elisabetta Balzi** – Head of Unit, European Commission, DG Research & Innovation (DG RTD) – Healthy Oceans and Seas
- **Jérôme Jourdain** – Deputy Secretary General - Union des Armateurs à la Peche de France (UAPF)
- **Iglika Yakova** - Deputy Head of Sea basin strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security Unit - European Commission, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)

Moderated by:

Ernesto Penas Lado - Member of the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group (IUCN-CEM-FEG)

Welcome Remarks

Paula Uría Traba Director General, Energy Planning and Natural Resources, Regional Government of Galicia, Spain

- Europe has accelerated the work on reducing the greenhouse gas effect with the development of the Fit for 55 Package;
- Galicia is on the path to reducing greenhouse gases;
- The fisheries sector plays a very important role in the path towards carbon neutrality;
- The competitiveness of the sector is affected by the rising prices on fuel. Hence, we need to provide a framework that protects the sector while ensuring a fair transition to low-carbon technologies;
- In the energy transition context, the Next Generation Fund will support this transition;
- Galicia wants to be a region of reference in the work of climate change.

Rosa Quintana Carballo – Regional Minister for Maritime Affairs of the Regional Government of Galicia, Spain

- Knowledge is part of the solution;
- Galicia needs to provide an answer to all the people working in the sector, while, at the same time, also being responsive to the needs of consumers;
- The future of the sector needs to move towards carbon neutrality;
- Ensuring a sustainable energy transition that is affordable for a competitive fisheries sector remains key – and support is needed in this regard;
- Galicia reiterates its commitment to the fight against climate change by also ensuring a level playing field for an economically-thriving, environmentally-sustainable fishing industry;
- Implementing a transition that is socially fair remains a priority.

Interventions

Santiago Suarez de la Fuente – Lecturer in Energy and Transport, University College London (UCL)

- Technology and economics do not predetermine the fuel pathway: Industry and policy choices matter;
- Fuel strategies must have the long-run goal of zero emissions in mind;
- There is more than enough first mover potential – about 2x – to put shipping on the right track by 2030;
- Strategies should target routes where complexity is most manageable and fuel supply most feasible;
- First mover routes can almost by definition be stimulated by individual governments alone or in collaboration;
- Individual countries can drive the early stages of the transition, using policy to push zero-emission fuels and influencing neighbours and trading partners;
- Multiple countries may act in parallel and in coordination to implement policies and solutions that have greater impact;
- Commitments on commercial fleet decarbonisation, ports and bunkering infrastructure and green finance can move faster than the IMO;
- Global action led by the IMO may prove challenging in the early phases, but will be highly impactful as the transition reaches scale;
- Hydrogen and/ or ammonia will be needed. At this moment, we are at a stage of learning by doing;

Elisabetta Balzi – Head of Unit, European Commission, DG Research & Innovation (DG RTD) – Healthy Oceans and Seas

- The objective is to restore the health of our ocean and waters by 2030. It is designed to deliver on the European Union's 2030 measurable targets for protecting and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, for zero pollution, and for decarbonisation and net greenhouse gas emissions reduction towards climate-neutrality, within the EU's ocean, seas and waters;
- Restoring the ocean and water means to: protect and restore marine and freshwater biodiversity and ecosystems, to reduce pollution, and to make the blue economy carbon-neutral;
- Restoring the hydrosphere requires a new systemic approach addressing the system as whole;

- This approach links fresh and marine waters and addresses the many connected and cumulative pressures to our ocean and waters in a coherent manner;
- Technological, social, business and governance innovation is needed to tackle the main interconnected drivers of the hydrosphere's degradation;
- The digital twin of the ocean will also help in better leverage the role of ocean-related knowledge systems in informing relevant policies.

Jérôme Jourdain – Deputy Secretary General - Union des Armateurs à la Pêche de France (UAPF)

- The Paris Agreement (2015) brings all nations to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects;
- Two options: Follow the IMO targets: 40% less emissions in 2030 compared to 2008; 50% less in 2050, or be subject to European or national measures that tend towards neutrality in 2050, with environmental taxation of fuels or fuel consumption reduction targets;
- Efforts to decarbonize or more drastically limit the CO₂/GHG emissions from activities are accelerating;
- The fisheries sector must therefore anticipate future legal or fiscal constraints, whether national, European or international;
- There is a lack of mature alternative technologies or appropriate ones suitable for the size of fishing vessels: what can be deployed on shipping vessels cannot necessarily be deployed on fishing vessels;
- Some solutions presented for fisheries are not fully viable such as reducing vessel's speed, ban and use unique fishing gear, fish closer to the coast. Taxing fuel cannot be an incentive without real alternatives and will only lead to the loss of profitability and the EU food autonomy;
- There is a lack of a real inventory of possible improvements, according to experts, and of the costs/benefits of these solutions, including for yachting and shipping;
- There is urgency to foster discussions at EU level between policymakers, engine manufacturers and representatives from the sector;
- An accurate investigation of the suitability and limitations of current technologies has to be carried out;
- One of the major difficulties is financing a vessel with new engine technology: the risks are high for shipowners who cannot be first to test and « pay the price » for a new technology;
- Public funds are mainly directed to research projects instead of covering the risks taken by shipowner;

- It is not possible to replace a vessel with a larger one with the same capacity, and this compromises any attempt to move intermediate to other fuels/propulsion engine.

Iglika Yakova Deputy Head of Sea basin strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security Unit, DG Mare

- Coastal communities are key actors for economic recovery and sustainable blue economy, which could be done through investment and innovation;
- The new approach for sustainable blue economy in the EU can be an excellent tool for economic recovery.
- Economic development and sustainability go hand in hand for the benefit of coastal communities. The sustainable blue economy can only be achieved through the protection of our biggest asset: the natural marine capital.
- Sustainable blue economy is at the intersection of economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- Talking about the fuel transition is particularly challenging for the industry in post-covid, post-brexite situation, with heavy climate related pressure.
- Recovery will be slow but we have started seeing good results. Economic transition could be achieved through innovation in order to improve the environmental performance;
- Fisheries and aquaculture can be analysed as complementary business activities instead of market rivals;
- The Commission's guidelines on sustainable aquaculture and the new policy initiative on algae are innovative ways of looking into carbon neutral aquatic food production.
- The message from the local government of Galicia and the stakeholders in this session are noted and will be given consideration by the Commission .

Q&A Session with the audience

Q1: Will the EU include a mechanism for protection to the local producers as one introduced for steel and other energy-intensive industry?

Response from **Iglika Yakova**

At this stage, there is no protection mechanism considered. However, the Europe Maritime, Fisheries & Aquaculture Fund aims to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture producers can transition easily to more sustainable practices. Hence, there is a financial mechanism to help the sector.

Q2: If the industry remains dependent on fossil fuels, what do you think will happen to the industry?

Response from **Jérôme Jourdain**

There is a need to get help from the European Union to create a clear link between the fisheries sector and new technologies. The fishing industry needs help to adapt to the new changes. So, finding ways to ensure so based on dialogue remains the priority, otherwise EU fisheries will fail.

Q3: The introduction of new technologies might require a higher volume in vessels, and this is at odds with the current size limitation of the EU.

Response from **Iglika Yakova**

There are examples of trawlers with advanced technologies. Hence, it is not needed to put into question fishing capacity.