

REPORT

Meeting: **Workshop on the implementation of Control Regulation**

Parties: **DG MARE, Advisory Councils (NWWAC, PELAC, BSAC, MEDAC, LDAC, NSAC, CCRUP, CCSUD)**

Date: **5 February 2025**

Location: **Brussels**

Chair: **Patrick Murphy, Chair of the NWWAC Control FG**

Rapporteur: **NSAC Secretariat**

1. Welcome and introduction

Emiel Brouckaert, Chair of the **NWWAC**, opened the Multi-AC Workshop on the Implementation of the Control Regulation (CR), welcoming participants and highlighting the presence of DG MARE representatives. Eight Advisory Councils (ACs) (Baltic Sea AC, Mediterranean AC, Long Distance AC, North Sea AC, Outermost Regions AC, Pelagic AC, South Western Waters AC, and North Western Waters AC) took part in the workshop, reflecting the broad interest in the CR's implementation.

Brouckaert thanked DG MARE, particularly **Marta Moren-Abat and Julia Rubeck**, for facilitating the in-person workshop, following the request made by NWWAC and PelAC (on behalf of several ACs) in May 2024. He emphasized the importance of direct engagement with the Commission due to the CR's significant impact. Brouckaert noted that when agreeing to have this meeting, DG MARE expressed the preference to first discuss bilaterally with the ACs and to look into involving Member States and EFCA at a later stage to facilitate interaction and organisation of exchanges.

Patrick Murphy, Chair of the meeting, took the floor emphasizing the complexity of the Control Regulation and its substantial impact on both the industry and enforcement bodies.

Jérôme Broche, Head of Unit D4, thanked the ACs for planning the timely workshop, highlighting the limited opportunities for direct exchanges with the sector on implementing the CR due to time constraints and workload on preparation of the implementation.

Adopted in late 2023, the new Control Regulation entered into force in January 2024 after a lengthy process of revision. The focus has now shifted to implementation. In particular on technical specifications being developed through implementing and delegated acts to meet the 2026, 2027 and 2028 deadlines. This phase is no longer a co-legislative process as it is implementation and falls under the comitology framework, involving technical discussions with Member State (MS) experts to finalize rules and norms. Thus, the focus of the workshop is to gather stakeholder input rather than revisit the regulation's revision.

The CR implementation revolves around three major deadlines: January 2026 and January 2028, with weighing provisions set for January 2027. The priority is finalizing technical specifications in implementing and delegated acts well in advance, allowing Member States and operators time to adapt. Considering the 2026 milestone, the Commission has held more than eight intensive and inclusive meetings with MS experts, discussing draft provisions and gathering feedback to narrow down outstanding issues, with an overall agreement with MS to be reached in the next months, allowing for adoption of measures by 2nd half of 2025.

A key priority is reducing administrative burden on MS and operators, while maintaining an effective control system. DG MARE aligns with the EU's "*competitiveness compass*", aiming to cut red tape and simplify processes. However, fisheries control remains inherently complex.

2 Presentation on the state of play of the implementation of the control regulation – Marta Moren-Abat, DG MARE

Marta Moren-Abat of DG MARE Unit D4 provided an update on the state of play of the implementation of the CR.

The revision of the fisheries CR introduced significant changes with specific deadlines for implementation. The regulation sets obligations for the Commission, Member States, and operators. While Member States and operators are responsible for implementation and enforcement, the Commission's role is to establish technical specifications within the mandate set by co-legislators.

Key changes concern:

- New mandatory control tools (including Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM))
- Weighing and catch registration: New rules to replace existing sampling and control plans, requiring early availability of updated templates.
- Rules on digitalization: A shift to electronic reporting (e.g., logbooks, VMS) to reduce administrative burden and improve communication and data transmission.
- Margin of Tolerance (MoT): While unchanged, new derogations for specific fisheries and conditions have been introduced, with a new regulation published in May 2024.
- Greater control of the external fleet
- Harmonization of sanctioning: Measures to ensure a level playing field across Member States.
- Improved rules on traceability

The Commission's obligation to define technical specifications is carried out through implementing and delegated acts, which differ in nature and approval processes. These acts not only clarify the revised CR but also aim to streamline regulations by removing obsolete elements and simplifying implementation for operators. While the Commission is not obligated to consult MS or stakeholders, it actively seeks input to enhance implementation. DG MARE Control Unit is also coordinating with colleagues working on data management and digitalization in DG MARE, ensuring an effective interface between stakeholders.

Three major deadlines guide the preparation of implementing and delegated acts:

- 2026 milestone: Implementing and delegated acts by 2nd half of 2025. Elements to be covered are inter alia: frequency of transmission, electronic transmission of logbook, point system for masters of fishing vessels and digital catch reporting
- 2027 milestone: New implementing act on weighing, with rules to apply by January 2027 when current derogations on weighing expire.
- 2028 milestone: includes REM, continuous engine power, digitalisation of traceability for prepared and preserved fisheries and aquaculture products and provisions for small-scale fisheries (vessels under 12m), with ongoing work on IT tools to support enforcement of provisions.

As for the derogation on the MoT, the adopted and published (May 2024) **Regulation 2024/1474** specifies conditions for ports eligible for the derogation. Many MS have expressed interest in listing ports, both within and outside the EU. The Commission is currently reviewing these proposals to ensure compliance with set conditions before publication of the first approved list.

The **Chair** thanked Marta Moren-Abat for her presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Gonçalo Carvalho, PELAC welcomed engagement with the Commission and stressed the need for stakeholder consultation on drafting implementing and delegated acts, ensuring that implementation is practical, cost-efficient, and effective. On behalf of PELAC, he called for a structured, recurring consultative process to ensure enforceable and compliant measures.

Julia Rubeck, DG MARE relayed a question from the chat regarding the composition of the expert group of MS involved in the implementation process.

Anne France Mattlet, LDAC sought clarification on the Commission's **competence** regarding certain CR elements. She noted that the regulation distinguishes between three types of implementing acts:

- Acts the Commission *shall* take (e.g., vessel monitoring devices, MoT).
- Acts the Commission *may* take (e.g., end-of-life identification of fishing, weighing under Articles 36 and 60).
- No implementing acts required.

She noted that, while it was stated that the list of EU ports eligible for MoT derogation would be published soon, there has been no mention of a corresponding list for non-EU ports. Mattlet asked about the Commission's competence regarding forced labor provisions, demersal stock storage, and video access on board vessels for weighing, raising concerns about who could access onboard footage.

Daniel Voces, LDAC pointed to a debated provision (initially an article but later relegated to a footnote) regarding the exemption for demersal catches from separate storage requirements. He asked whether the Commission intends to elaborate this exemption via an implementing act to ease compliance for fishers.

In response, **DG MARE** clarified that engagement is ongoing with national experts, so stakeholders are encouraged to relay their positions through national authorities. The day's workshop provides an opportunity for feedback and additional input can also be submitted in

writing for consideration in discussions with Member States. The Commission is willing to continue exchange with the Advisory Councils in a format similar to the one organised involving all ACs.

On the Commission's competence and empowerment, DG MARE acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue but expressed confidence that all actions remain within the given mandates in the revised Fisheries Control Regulation. Internal checks and balances, including legal oversight, ensure compliance with given authority.

Concerning the storage of commercial demersal catches, while the regulation grants the Commission the power to act, it remains optional ("*may*"). No demand has been expressed by MS so far. DG MARE encouraged engagement with national authorities to inform on the need for implementing rules on this provision.

On forced labor, DG MARE explained that the revised CR includes two specific provisions: one on inspections (Article 74) and another on infringements. From 2026, Member States will be required to identify cases of forced labor and take immediate enforcement actions, as laid down in the legislation.

3 Topics for discussion

3.1 Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities: Who does what between Commission, Member States and operators?

Moren-Abat clarified that Article 3 (1) (d) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU establishes the exclusive competence of the EU in fisheries. Additionally, the CR defines the specific roles and responsibilities of each party with each provision determining the responsibilities assigned to each actor within the regulation.

3.2 Remote Electronic Monitoring

Moren-Abat informed that regarding REM, Article 13 of the revised Control Regulation outlines the requirement for specific fleet segments, particularly for vessels 18 meters (in length overall or more) to implement REM systems, including CCTV, for enhanced control. The goal is to monitor high-risk fleet segments that may not comply with the landing obligation.

For the purpose of monitoring, control, and control of the landing obligation, MS shall ensure that vessels which pose a high risk of non-compliance on the LO have installed on board an operating REM system. The assessment of the risk of non-compliance with the LO shall be carried out in accordance with the implementing act (IA) that the Commission will adopt in accordance with Article 13.3 of the CR. Additionally, the IA will also set out detailed rules on requirements and technical specifications, installation, maintenance and function of the REM system.

These obligations will take effect in 2028, allowing time for adaptation. Their objective is to ensure a level playing field rather than to monitor fishing operations or individuals.

Broche acknowledged that REM is one of the most sensitive aspects of the Control Regulation's implementation. Given the complexity of risk assessments, internal discussions are ongoing, including with EFCA, to determine the best approach. The aim is to finalize REM rules at least 18 months before enforcement to allow member states, operators, and system providers sufficient preparation time. Cooperation with all stakeholders will be crucial to avoid delays in implementation.

Alexandre Rodríguez, LDAC requested clarification on ensuring a level playing field for REM, specifically regarding monitoring approaches for vessels not subject to mandatory CCTV and third-country vessels fishing in EU waters. While all vessels above 18 meters must have CCTV, he inquired whether a voluntary approach would apply to vessels outside mandatory CCTV scope as well as third country vessels fishing in EU waters or if the same system would be used for all vessels.

Dominic Rihan, PelAC raised concerns about defining high-risk vessels, questioning what data would be used for risk assessment criteria. He also highlighted the urgent need for compatibility between REM systems in EU and UK waters, particularly as the EU pelagic fleet operating in Scottish waters will be subject to Scottish REM requirements from March 2026. He warned that without alignment between REM systems, EU pelagic vessels might not be permitted to fish in UK waters in 2026 due to a lack of an operational and verified system. He strongly urged the Commission to prioritize system interoperability.

Durk Van Tuinen, NSAC echoed Rihan's concern for the demersal fleet, which may also be required to have CCTV in Scottish waters before January 2028, stressing the need for EU-UK coordination.

Sean Parramore, LDAC asked whether gear types would be considered in the risk assessment, given the international context.

In response, **DG MARE** confirmed that system interoperability has been a key priority for DG MARE in discussions with the UK. Engagement with DEFRA and Scottish authorities has been ongoing for several months, with progress made in establishing a working platform. The next step is a technical discussion under the TCA framework.

On CCTV requirements, it was clarified that for the purpose of monitoring and control and control of the landing obligation, MS shall ensure that vessels which pose a high risk of non-compliance to the LO have installed on board an operating REM system. The assessment of the risk of non-compliance with the LO shall be carried out in accordance with the implementing act that the Commission will adopt in accordance with Article 13.3 of the CR. Additionally, the IA will also set out detailed rules on requirements that all vessels of 18 meters in length overall or more, regardless of flag, including third-country vessels fishing in EU waters, must comply. Regarding risk assessment, Article 13 says that the assessment of the risk of non-compliance with the landing obligation shall be carried out in accordance with the implementing acts adopted under Article 95 (1). The implementing act referred in Article 13(3) will determine the fleet segments of catching vessels to which the obligation to have installed on board the REM system shall apply, based on the assessment of the risk of non-compliance with the landing obligation.

For vessels of less than 18 meters, Member States may provide that certain fleet segments of catching vessels shall have on board an operating REM system, based on the risk of non-compliance with the LO.

3.3 Electronic logbook submission

The new CR mandates full electronic reporting, including e-logbooks, e-landing declarations, and e- notifications. By January 1, 2026, logbooks will be required for all catching vessels 12 metres in length overall or more. Prior notification and electronic transmission will be mandatory for all catching vessels and other vessels 12 meters in length overall or more. By 2028, electronic logbooks and their transmission will be required for all vessels, including those under 12 meters, and landing declarations will extend to all catching vessels and those landing fish from EU vessels.

Additional reporting requirements include details on sensitive species, fishing operations for vessels of 12 meters (in length overall or more) and lost gear notifications, specifying type, date, estimated time and location, and recovery measures, which must be reported to authorities. The Commission is working on an implementing regulation to refine electronic logbook submission, updating Annex 15 in close coordination with MS data management experts.

John Lynch, NWWAC raised concerns about the burden of logbook completion and submission per fishing operation (Articles 14 and 15), noting that vessels over 12 meters may conduct several daily fishing operations, making the process time-consuming and increasing the risk of errors. He called for a simplified, uniform logbook system across the EU to ease the burden on operators.

Jarek Zielinski, BSAC highlighted the importance of engaging with MS, whose absence from the meeting was noted. He urged the Commission to consider organizing follow-up workshops with ACs and MS. Regarding VMS, BSAC members, particularly those from the small-scale sector, expressed concerns over the cost and size of tracking devices. They suggested that vessel tracking requirements should consider gear type, fishery type, and fishing area rather than imposing uniform VMS regulations. Advances in modern technology could address network coverage issues while applying a risk-based approach to vessel tracking.

Vanya Vulperhorst, LDAC, highlighted provisions within the CR, such as those in Article 15a, which mandate the Commission to develop a tracking system for vessels under 12 meters, both for logbooks and VMS. She inquired whether this work was underway and whether MS had already requested it.

The **Chair** added that Irish fishers are concerned about weather conditions affecting transmission. If multiple required updates fail to transmit due to poor connectivity, fishers fear being penalized despite no fault of their own.

Broche acknowledged the concerns, emphasizing the importance of stakeholders raising practical, on-the-ground issues. While the aim is not to reopen the CR, the Commission is working within its framework to define implementation rules in the most practical and least

burdensome way. He welcomed recommendations to address these challenges, noting to forward written submissions.

Regarding Article 15a, **Eckehard Reussner**, DG MARE Head of Unit of Data Management responded that nine MS have requested the Commission to develop an application for logbook recording. Work is actively underway, with workshops held to ensure a shared understanding of requirements. The goal is to have the application ready well in advance to allow time for member states and operators to test and provide feedback.

3.4 Harmonization of Control and Enforcement: standardized control activities, points system, and sanctions across Member States for consistent enforcement

The revised CR introduces two categories of serious infringements:

1. **Serious infringements per se:** objectively pre-identified as serious.
2. **Infringements requiring qualification:** determined based on harmonized criteria outlined in Annex 4 of the regulation.

The aim is to ensure uniform enforcement across member states and operators, preventing subjective interpretation. Additionally, the CR sets minimum sanction levels or standard rates for serious infringements of the CFP. New serious infringements include forced labour, and illegal disposal of fishing gear at sea.

Christian Tsangarides (BSAC/LIFE) asked how many infringement proceedings the Commission initiated under the previous regulation due to non-implementation by MS. He highlighted ongoing cases in the Baltic and Netherlands, particularly regarding weighing issues. He argued that while harmonization is discussed at the fleet level, real discrepancies exist in MS enforcement. He also criticized the implementing regulation on the MoT, stating that derogations based on landing sites create competitive disadvantages and undermine harmonization across the EU. Furthermore, he noted that the regulation focuses on total catch weight but lacks provisions for accurate species reporting, a key concern for ICES in stock assessment and quota recommendations.

The **Chair** raised concerns about penalty point system harmonization, noting its inconsistent application across MS. He questioned whether the Commission would address this or if it was up to stakeholders to discuss with national authorities.

Kenn Skau Fischer, NSAC noted that Tsangarides position represented the view of only one stakeholder group and were not broadly adopted in AC discussions. He also stressed that sanctions fall under national legislation, and that some MS remain cautious about interference in this area.

Broche clarified that infringement procedures fall outside the scope of the CR's implementation but acknowledged the concern. The Commission's Control Unit not only drafts implementing acts but also ensures compliance by MS through audits and verifications. Infringement procedures are reserved for systemic cases where a MS is unwilling to resolve identified problems. The primary tool is action plans, agreements with MS outlining corrective

actions and timelines following audits. Recent audits in Baltic MS are being finalized, with follow-up actions underway.

Regarding MoT derogations and the implementing act on port listing, the Commission has structured the system to include extra safeguards in designated ports, ensuring accurate reporting. These include species-specific weight reporting, sampling plans, and potential CCTV use in some MS. The goal is to improve reporting quality and accuracy in these ports. The final list of ports is pending, as it depends on MS proposals.

On sanction harmonization, DG MARE explained that this operates on two levels:

1. Functional harmonization: The new rules will make it easier to objectively define serious infringements, encouraging MS to align their priorities for the identification of serious infringements and apply the point system more consistently.
2. Legal harmonization: While the Commission has limited power under implementing and delegated acts, two key measures will help:
 - A new register of masters for tracking and assigning penalty points, aiding in harmonizing enforcement across MS.
 - Annex 3, which identifies the point system for serious infringements.

4 Remote electronic monitoring: Consider EU standards versus third-country requirements and in particular UK-Scotland

The UK and the European Union are implementing legislation for REM systems on fishing vessels. Scotland's legislation for pelagic vessels in the Scottish zone has been adopted, with technical specifications published recently with mandatory implementation set for March 2026, following a testing phase in September 2025. The English zone has also identified five priority fleets for a stepwise REM process.

The EU's CR requires REM for high-risk fleet segments by 2028, with fleet segments and technical specifications to be developed. Efforts are underway to align UK and EU systems in the Northeast Atlantic, starting with pelagic fleets, to ensure interoperability, cost efficiency and consistency. Ongoing discussions between UK and EU experts, including Member States, EFCA and the Commission, have been ongoing on developing common guidelines for interoperability of REM systems in the pelagic sector that would apply if a Party adopts REM requirements for the Pelagic fleet in the North-East Atlantic.

Dominic Rihan, PELAC, asked if Norway, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland, who also operate in EU waters, had been consulted regarding their CCTV obligations in 2026 or 2028.

DG MARE responded that while the third country vessels will be subject to EU rules in EU waters, discussions on the interoperability have so far been bilateral with the UK as these are the two with mandatory requirements.

Kenn Skau Fischer, NSAC, sought confirmation on whether Norwegian vessels in Skagerrak and Kattegat must follow the same CCTV rules.

DG MARE responded that EU rules would apply to Union and non-Union vessels in Union waters.

Vanya Vulperhorst, LDAC asked how the EU will assess risk of Norwegian vessels, questioning whether Norway would conduct its own evaluations or if the EU would review them independently.

DG MARE responded that risk assessment for identifying high risk fleets for the application of REM is still under development. However, it is the practice to include third country vessels in risk assessment, as is done, for example, in risk assessment conducted by the EFCA under the Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs). These already consider third-country fleets fishing in EU waters, focusing on fleet segments rather than individual vessels, with relevant inputs from coastal Member State assessments.

5 Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for Small-Scale Vessels

Article 9.3 of the CR establishes a derogation allowing vessels under 12m to carry a non-installed tracking device to record and transmit vessel location data at regular intervals, ensuring compliance with the regulations by 2026. Given the large number of small-scale vessels in some MS, simple and effective tools are needed. While some MS already have systems in place, others do not. To address this, the Commission is developing a simple, free tracking app to facilitate compliance without complex GPS systems. Collaboration with MS is ongoing, and a dedicated subgroup has already met three times in 2024, aiming for rollout by January 2028.

Jarek Zieliński, BSAC, noted that the ACs were unaware of the discussions and requested a meeting with member states, the Commission, and the ACs to consult on this matter.

Christian Tsangarides, LIFE, noted LIFE has been involved in the FishX project focused on integrating VMS and landing data with market access. This has been crucial in aligning the obligations under the CR while also using the data as a marketing tool. A similar system in Schleswig-Holstein, northern Germany, connects VMS data to catch logs, enabling more direct sales. If implemented correctly, this approach could significantly benefit the small-scale fleet's economy. He echoed concerns about the lack of consultation on affordable alternatives for this type of integration.

DG MARE responded that AC participation has not yet been considered as the application is still in its early stages, but may be included as the project develops.

On the topic of simplicity, the Commission is focused on streamlining the process to make it as user-friendly as possible, particularly through automation. The application will integrate position tracking and logbook functionalities, ensuring minimal user intervention. Logbook and VMS data will be managed within the same system to simplify the process. While the Commission will provide a basic version with all mandatory features, MS will have the flexibility

to incorporate custom features, such as market connectivity or integration with other onboard systems. MS can also decide to develop or use another app provided it fills all the legal requirements, and some MS have already decided to do so.

6 Weighing procedures

Weighing provisions and derogations for landings will be implemented ahead of January 2027. The key goal is to ensure all catches are weighed at landing, with exceptions for certain situations, such as on-board weighing which will require stringent conditions and clear safeguards to ensure accurate data. The Commission is working to harmonize rules across MS, addressing different practices and ensuring uniformity in sampling, control plans and common control programmes to ensure a level playing field. New definitions, such as for standardized boxes, and clear requirements for weighing records will improve transparency and reduce administrative burdens for operators. Safeguards will be put in place to mitigate the risks of inaccuracies in weighing data, aiming to balance risk and accuracy. The implementation process will prioritize transparency, consistency, and clear guidelines to assist operators across the EU.

Jarek Zieliński, BSAC, thanked the Commission for ensuring that landings and catch weighing will be standardized across the EU, particularly for the industrial pelagic fishery. BSAC members emphasize the importance of ensuring that all actors involved in landings and weighing—whether national authorities, designated persons, or certified inspectors—adhere to clear, consistent requirements for independence and impartiality. This will promote transparency and consistency across MS. Additionally, BSAC members stress the need for standardized sampling plans for all species, with uniform sample sizes based on best practices in factories, which apply to both industrial fisheries and fish landed for human consumption.

Gonçalo Carvalho, PELAC, echoed Zieliński's comments and queried whether weighing procedures are also being discussed with third countries.

Aodh O'Donnell, NWWAC, noted that in Ireland, particularly for unsorted mixed pelagics, the current sampling procedures and data extrapolation for species identification and weight are not accurate. He advocated shifting towards a more robust system based on census data for total final weights, rather than relying on increased sampling. Extrapolated data is not reliable or accurate from a control perspective.

Gonçalo Carvalho, PELAC, asked if there had been any analysis of the costs sampling and control plans.

DG MARE welcomed the attention placed on the importance of standardization. They noted that the plans will also apply to landings from third-country vessels when landing in EU ports. While the EU can't impose plans on third countries like Norway, discussions are ongoing within coastal states and working groups.

The **Chair** noted that in Ireland, control agencies operate independently from MS and departments, with full authority to implement regulations. The concern is that if operators

engage with MS, but they have no power to influence the interpretation of control laws, there's a gap in the process. Specifically, when they cannot communicate directly with enforcement agencies to clarify or adjust interpretations, it creates a disconnect in their ability resolve issues effectively.

DG MARE responded that control authorities are actively involved in negotiations and have made pragmatic contributions to the process.

Regarding the cost analysis, the impact of different options is still being evaluated. MS have varying levels of experience in this area. Those with more experience are familiar with the expenses, such as the cost of installing cameras in ports, and have already integrated these into their processes. The Commission relies on the EFCA study for practical insights as a basis, though it didn't focus on costs specifically.

Jarek Zieliński, BSAC, noted that additional costs for low-cost species like herring, sprat and flounder in the Baltic Sea could affect local traders or lead to higher costs for buyers and consumers.

DG MARE responded that special cases may be considered if duly justified. However, "duly justified" still means EU legislation provisions must be met, and authorities are responsible for ensuring that provisions are implemented and enforced. While this is being explored, it is ultimately up to MS to flag and justify these exceptions. The exceptions must be well-justified to maintain the integrity of the system and avoid undermining the need for a uniform approach.

7 Review the practicality of the current Margin of Tolerance (MoT) requirements

The main MoT rule, outlined in Article 14.3, remains unchanged, calculated per species. However, several derogations have been introduced, including specific exceptions for certain fisheries. Additionally, there is a phase-out process for the current derogation in the Baltic.

In the Baltic, the MoT of 10% for total catch will be revoked by July 2024, transitioning to the basic rule of 20% per species from 2024 to 2028. Another derogation may be granted for specific fisheries like unsorted small pelagics, and tropical tuna, which operate under strict conditions defined in a regulation from July 2024 for landings in listed ports. Efforts are underway to identify ports that meet these conditions, allowing landings to benefit from a more lenient MoT.

Gonçalo Carvalho, PELAC, inquired about the timeline for publishing the first lists of designated ports.

Christian Tsangarides, LIFE, welcomed the closure of the loophole regarding total catch, especially with cases like Atlantic tuna being mislabeled as herring to fall under the 20% bycatch rule. It's a positive step that species will now be counted individually rather than as part of the total volume. However, concerns have been raised about the Commission's analysis regarding the MoT and species composition. As ICES pointed out, accurately evaluating species composition in unsorted mixed small pelagic fisheries remains a challenge.

He queried whether the Commission believes that the MoT in designated ports would improve species composition accuracy.

Aodh O'Donnell, NWWAC, queried whether major ports in Europe could realistically meet the requirements under the new MoT.

DG MARE responded that the Implementing Act that outlines the conditions for port listings was adopted in 2024 and MS must now submit proposals. The Commission's role is to assess these proposals and ensure they meet the required standards in the CR and Regulation 2024/2474. Regarding the timing for the first port list, a few MS have already sent proposals to the Commission, and the first list will be published soon. As for the concern about the MoT for listed ports and weight issues, MS are required to report catches per species in listed ports. The regulation for port listing (2024/1474, Article 2) requires ports inter alia to have a REM system with CCTV that allows authorities to monitor landings, transshipments, and weighing of all catches. Authorities must ensure proper weighing by species, with CCTV recordings of the process subject to regular monitoring and inspections based on clear benchmarks. The Commission's role is to control the enforcement of the control regulation strictly within its established framework.

Christian Tsangarides, LIFE, highlighted that regarding stock misreporting in the Baltic, CCTV cannot differentiate between different herring stocks (e.g., Baltic, West, or Central) or distinguish between sprat and herring. There's too much optimism regarding cameras being able to accurately identify specific catch compositions, especially when dealing several tons of fish.

DG MARE disagreed and noted this feeds into a theoretical discussion about whether sampling as a methodology works or not. However, sampling is central to these derogations and is not a new concept. Based on the audits and verifications, especially in the advanced member states, it is evident that sampling works when properly designed and implemented. Consulting the EFCA weighing study was recommended.

8 Monitoring Engine Power

By 2028, three key elements need to be addressed regarding engine power monitoring. The Commission aims to prepare well in advance for both operators and MS.

The three elements are:

1. Defining the technical specifications, equipment, maintenance needs, and associated costs.
2. Establishing criteria for identifying high-risk vessels with clear compliance and implementation guidelines.
3. Aligning with Article 39(a) of the revised CR, which mandates continuous monitoring of engine power from 2028.

A continuous monitoring device must be installed in the following cases:

1. Vessels identified as high-risk by MS through data verification or sampling plans (if physical verification is not performed).
2. Vessels operating in the place box with an engine power greater than 120 kW using bottom trawls or Danish seines.
3. Vessels using tower gear with engine power exceeding 221 kW, identified as high-risk through joint risk assessments by MS and EFCA.

Starting in 2028, a continuous monitoring device may be installed on vessels operating with tower gear and engine power under 221 kW, if identified as high-risk by member states. This installation would be voluntary, but MS are encouraged to incentivize its adoption.

Dominic Rihan, PELAC, queried how data large volume of data would be stored and monitored, and who would bear the costs for data storage, equipment, installation, and monitoring. He also asked why engine power monitoring is necessary for vessels already limited by quota.

Durk van Tuinen, NSAC, echoed Rihan's question on the purpose of measuring engine power and sought clarification on whether monitoring would distinguish between steaming and fishing activities and its relevance to enclosed areas.

The **Chair** asked whether the technology would be installed internally or externally, and if it fails, what impact will that have on the vessel. External placement would require taking the boat out of the water, incurring significant costs and time. Additionally, if this failure occurs across multiple vessels, it could create a backlog at the facilities. On the legal aspects of the regulations, he asked whether the measurement of engine power will be based on the engine's output or its actual capability.

DG MARE responded that an engine power expert leads an expert working group that has been working with MS for two years to define implementation guidelines. The Commission is confident in the progress and consensus on these guidelines.

9 Use and opportunities of EMFAF and other funding opportunities if any.

DG MARE emphasized opportunities within EMFAF, which offers significant funding. The current EMFAF program (2021-2027) has eligible expenditure up to December 31, 2029. This means for example that any purchase supported by EMFAF to help beneficiaries offset regulatory implementation costs. can have invoices dated up to that time. Unlike EMFF, EMFAF is more flexible, with general rules about ineligible costs, while specific eligibility criteria are outlined in each national EMFAF program. In principle, EMFAF covers the purchase, installation and management of tools and equipment, particularly under Article 22 of the regulations. However, operators should consult national EMFAF authorities to confirm eligibility. Indeed, under the principle of shared management of the EMFAF programmes MS authorities remain responsible in the planning and implementation of the EMFAF according to

their specific MS needs and national legislations. Programs can be proposed for amendment if necessary, and the EMFAF monitoring committees provide a platform to discuss those proposals. EMFAF can provide public support up to 100% for small-scale vessels and under specific conditions that depend by each national EMFAF programme. The details for the next EMFAF period are not set yet, but a proposal is expected by July 2025. Until then, resources are available through 2029.

Dominic Rihan, PELAC, noted that in Ireland, control authorities seem to have a different understanding, which needs to be clarified. He asked whether EMFAF covers only capital costs of the equipment/hardware or also operational expenses like data storage or uploads.

DG MARE clarified that, depending on national program design, operational costs may be eligible if they contribute to program objectives. The costs related to management may be covered, as long as they are part of the supported operation, which must also contribute to the program's objectives.

Jarek Zieliński, BSAC, proposed a meeting between the BSAC and the Commission to provide horizontal guidelines on how to use the Implementing Act for specific purposes, allowing BSAC members to advise national authorities effectively. ACs aren't in a position to directly discuss such issues with national authorities.

Aivaras Labanauskas, LDAC highlighted the complexity of applying for EMFAF funds, which come with significant obligations such as maintaining vessels, employees, and organizations running for five years. He stressed that national authorities cannot remove these conditions, as they are Commission-imposed. The responsibility lies with the Commission and EFCA to make European funds more accessible, without the burdensome regulations that currently accompany them. He also highlighted that the implementation of EMFAF funds varies across MS, something for the Commission to review. The challenge lies in where the funds are allocated, and ensuring they can be used effectively.

DG MARE responded that EMFAF funding rules were established during negotiation and must be followed. While eligibility criteria depend on different member states, managing authorities oversee the implementation and the Commission facilitates discussions.

Sean Parramore, LDAC asked whether MS are requesting EMFAF funding, particularly in relation to proposals for listing ports in the context of the MoT.

DG MARE noted that no member states have linked funding to port listings in discussions so far. Funding is a separate process, and it's up to member states to coordinate with national authorities to develop a plan. However, the implementing act adopted last year does not link funding directly to port listings. That said, some funding options offer up to 100% coverage, but these are contingent on national programs.

Kenn Skau Fischer, NSAC, emphasized the need to address traceability alongside CCTV implementation. A clear timeline is necessary for vessels to install equipment, report data, and integrate systems. Given the tight implementation schedule, traceability should be prioritized, even ahead of CCTV, as it has received little attention despite its importance to the sector.

Anne France Mattlet, LDAC, stressed the need for better engagement with member states to ensure alignment with implementing acts. The first implementing act of the control regulation—specifically the one on the MoT—was passed without formal approval from the Council. She asked whether this was an exception and if future non-urgent or non-compulsory acts would follow a more consultative process.

Daniel Voces, LDAC, expanded on the discussion around eligibility for funding, specifically raising concerns about the fairness of requiring vessels to return EMFAF funds if a serious infringement occurs. While losing future eligibility is understandable, repaying funds already used for compliance feels like an unfair double penalty. This issue, repeatedly flagged during the legislative process, remains unresolved.

Jarek Zieliński, BSAC, sought clarity on Article 55(7) regarding recreational fisheries activities, including those organized by commercial entities, such as small-scale fisheries in tourism and sports competition sectors. BSAC members want confirmation that pesca tourism, as a commercial activity, falls outside the scope of Article 55(7) unless all passengers are registered as recreational fishers. If fish are handed over to the vessel, they should be counted as commercial catches. This distinction is crucial for the angling sector, which plays a large role across the EU.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, PELAC, commended the Commission's commitment to reducing administrative burdens and bureaucracy, but noted that the current CR and implementing acts, particularly CCTV and REM seem to add extra layers of control on top of existing measures. Globally, successful implementation of the landing obligation and CCTV have designed systems that allowed to remove unnecessary regulations. In contrast, EU regulations, like the technical measures and CR, add unnecessary bureaucracy and even encourage discarding, undermining the landing obligation. He urged the Commission to work with ACs to develop a catalogue of regulations that could be simplified or removed once REM and CCTV are in place, making control processes more efficient and cost-effective.

DG MARE noted that the implementation timeline for onboard cameras and engine power aims to have rules adopted at least a year and a half before their entry into force, allowing enough time for implementation. However, implementation also depends on timely cooperation from Member States.

On traceability, the revised CR includes enhanced digital transmission of information across the supply chain. By 2026, this will cover both fresh and frozen products, with further obligations coming in 2028 for all products. A study will identify the minimum traceability information required and explore efficient digital solutions, leveraging best practices from some MS. The goal is EU-wide harmonization, ensuring smooth implementation and fair competitiveness, including imported products. Targeted consultations will be held, with stakeholder input welcomed.

The Chair revisited John Lynch's concerns regarding the owner's reporting requirements under CR. Since traceability data already exists in logbooks, he asked how it will be accessed and if vessels will need to report it separately. Reporting once a day may no longer suffice—it will need to reflect individual fishing activities in real time.

10 Conclusion

The **Chair** concluded that a follow-up meeting, possibly with MS and EFCA present, was deemed necessary to address unresolved issues. The workshop, though short, allowed an exchange of a significant amount of information. The **Chair** thanked everyone, especially DG MARE and AC Secretariats for their efforts in hosting and conducting the workshop.

11 Participants

First name	Last name	Organisation	Represented AC
Aivaras	Labanauskas	Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association / Atlantic High Seas Fishing	LDAC
Alexander	Ben Embarek	BSAC	
Alexandra	Philippe	EBCD	NWWAC
Alexandre	Rodriguez	LDAC	
Anne	Chausse	CNPMEM	NSAC
Anne-France	Mattlet	Europêche Tuna Group	LDAC
Annelie	Rosell	Swedish Pelagic Federation Producer Organisation	PelAC
Aodh	O'Domhnaill	IFPO	PelAC
Artur	Yon	From Nord	NWWAC
Christian	Tsangarides	LIFE	BSAC
Claes Anton Danile	Paulrud	Swedish Pelagic Federation Producer Organisation	PelAC
Daniel	Voces de Onaindi	EUROPECH	LDAC
Dominic	Rihan	KFO	PelAC
Durk	Van Tuinen	Nederlandse Visserbond	NSAC
Eckehard	Reussner	DG MARE	
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale	NWWAC
Emil	Remisz	High Seas Fish Producers Organization	LDAC

Esben	Sverdrup Jensen	DPPO	PelAC
Falke	De Sager	Rederscentrale	NSAC
Gonçalo	Carvalho	Sciaena	PelAC
Irene	Prieto	OPPF4	NWWAC
Jacob	Handrup	DFPO	NSAC
Jarek	Zielinski	BSAC	
Jerome	Broche	DG MARE	
John	Lynch	ISEFPO	NWWAC
Julia	Rubeck	DG MARE	
Julian Jean Roger	Daudu	EJF	LDAC
Kateryna	Urbanovych	NSAC	
Kenn Skau	Fischer	NSAC	
Lise	Laustsen	DPPO	BSAC
Louis	Montperrus	CNPMEM	NWWAC
Marta	Moren-Abat	DG MARE	
Meike	Strauss Mathies	NWWAC	NWWAC
Patrick	Murphy	IFPO	NWWAC
Paul	Thomas	PelAC	PelAC
Sander	Meyns	Rederscentrale	NWWAC
Sean	Parramore	EJF	LDAC
Semi	Kilic	EFFOP	PelAC
Solene	Prevalet	From Nord	NSAC
Tamara	Talevska	NSAC	NSAC
Vanya	Vulperhorst	Oceana	LDAC
Viesturs	Ulis	Latvian Fisheries Association	BSAC