



**Low Impact Fishers of Europe  
Rue Abbé Cuypers 3  
1040 Brussels  
Belgium**

**Brussels, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> of November**

**Please vote against lifting restrictions on electric pulse trawling**

On November 21, the PECH (Fisheries) Committee Members of the European Parliament are scheduled to vote on whether to lift current restrictions on pulse fishing. LIFE strongly urges you to vote against such a lifting of restrictions.

In LIFE's view, there should be a moratorium on licensing electric pulse trawling. We feel that electric pulse trawling should only be permitted under certain strict conditions, which include proper monitoring, control and evaluation. Current licenses for pulse trawling should be made subject to scientific (re-) assessment before being renewed or otherwise given a "non-prohibited" status.

Although innovation is to be welcomed as a major driver of economic progress, it is also a two-edged sword, often with unintended and undesirable consequences. Through adopting a precautionary approach, fisheries management should exercise prudent foresight to avoid unintended consequences that are undesirable, and any unacceptable or undesirable situations arising therefrom. The European Union has international obligations to apply a precautionary approach to fisheries management, and Articles 2.2. and 2.3. of the CFP commit the EU to apply a precautionary approach and to implement an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

To claim that "pulse is the most researched gear" is misleading. Experiments to assess the impact of electrical pulses on marine life and habitats have only just started, are of a rudimentary nature, and are set to conclude only in 2019. In the meantime, the rapid increase in number of pulse vessels makes effective research ever more difficult in terms of finding previously unfished areas for study.

The increased use of electric pulse fishing by increasing numbers of large vessels is undoubtedly having an adverse impact on stocks, especially on grounds and stocks previously unfished by trawls. The ability of pulse trawlers to access fishing grounds and fragile fishery habitats previously inaccessible to trawling, and to focus effort on a relatively small area is of concern, as is the unknown and possibly long-term effects on the wider marine ecosystem for which there is already mounting evidence of significant damage.

LIFE urges the European Parliament to act now to contain effort, spatially and numerically, until such time as there has been significantly more research into the potentially damaging aspects of this form of fishing and a proper management framework put in place. By voting to maintain restrictions on pulse fishing, MEPs will demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding fish stocks, marine ecosystems and fishing communities.

Yours truly

Brian O'Riordan  
Deputy Director, LIFE