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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 17 November 2025 Call for a simplification of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund - Information from Finland, supported by Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania and Spain

Call for a simplification of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

Finland together with Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Germany and Spain would like to take the opportunity at this Council to call for a simplification of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund.

The European Commission's priorities for 2028–2034, generational renewal, safety and energy transition, are vital for the future of EU fisheries. Yet, the current European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) regulation imposes overly rigid eligibility criteria that hinder the progress towards the objectives. Key actions like low-emission propulsion adoption, and support for new fishers remain largely unsupported.

Restrictions on vessel capacity and engine power upgrades are outdated, limiting investments on safety, working conditions and energy transition. Rules on business transfers and minimum activity requirements obstruct generational renewal, particularly in small-scale fisheries. Moreover, EMFAF's limitations on loan-based financing differs clearly from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which actively promotes financial instruments without strict eligibility criteria.

These regulatory barriers hinder innovation and investment, threatening the sector's sustainability and competitiveness.

Why change is needed now

EMFAF implementation continues until 2029. Amending the regulation now would allow Member States to:

- Accelerate energy transition and generational renewal using existing funds more effectively.
- Pilot future-oriented approaches aligned with Commission priorities.
- Enable financial instruments in fisheries, improving access to capital and long-term funding.
- Maximize the impact of current resources.

This is a strategic opportunity to unlock EMFAF's full potential, strengthen the sector's resilience, and ensure that EU funding delivers where it matters most.
