

Call on the European Parliament to support transparency of the EU external fishing fleet



global witness



23 January 2017

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

We, the undersigned European and global organisations, are writing to you to request your support in advancing legal and sustainable fishing of the European fishing fleet, as well as contributing to financial transparency, and the fight against corruption and illegal fishing, by supporting full transparency in relation to EU vessels granted authorisations to fish outside EU waters.

Specifically, we urge you on Thursday 2 February 2017 to **support the provisions in the [PECH report on the Regulation on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets](#)**, which will establish **an EU-managed public database of fishing vessels registered in the EU that** receive such authorisations and their owners (amendment 69).

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Such transparency of European fishing fleet activities is essential because the EU fleet operates in the waters of developing coastal States in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans and off the coast of West and Central Africa, aided by EU funds of EUR 145 million annually. The scale of the EU's fishing activities abroad is such that its operations can have a significant impact on the long-term conservation and management of global fish stocks.

On 5 December 2016, the PECH Committee supported the creation of the **first public register of authorisations** for vessels fishing outside EU waters. This proposed public database will include several key pieces of information such as vessel name, flag, type of authorisation and period, unique vessel identifiers (IMO numbers), as well as the beneficial ownership details.

The vote in favour is in line with current positions of the European Parliament on the [revision](#) of the 4th anti-money laundering directive. In autumn 2016 the [ECON/LIBE draft report](#) and [DEVE](#) opinion both supported full public disclosure of beneficial ownership information. It is also in line with the Parliament position on the previous [revision in 2014](#) that required every Member State to establish ownership registers that were fully in the public domain. Creating this sectoral obligation does not, of course, replace the need for a cross-sectoral register of beneficial ownership for companies and trusts.

Moreover, it is also coherent with the growing momentum on EU and international beneficial ownership transparency:

- The UK, Slovenia, Denmark, France, Bulgaria and the Netherlands have set up or are currently setting up public databases.
- **2013: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**¹ recognized that a lack of transparency and access to beneficial ownership information is a major indicator that tax crime and related offences may be present.
- **2013: G8 Members** committed to compiling comprehensive data on beneficial ownership of their companies²;
- **2014: G20 Members**³ adopted a 10 point policy on how they will increase transparency of beneficial ownership of companies and trusts, including the commitment to establishing central registries. This is a G20 high priority.
- **2016: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** recommended that financial investigations should be developed to uncover broader criminal networks and reveal beneficial ownership structures in the fisheries sector (25th Session of the CCPCJ)⁴.
- **2016: At the 4th Open Government Partnership Global Summit**⁵, partners committed to ending abuse of anonymous companies by reducing the opacity around corporate ownership.

As an economic leader Europe has an obligation to ensure its fishing fleets comply with global transparency standards. We therefore call on you to support the PECH proposal and thereby promote sustainability and global financial transparency and tax governance.

Sincerely,

Lasse Gustavsson, Executive Director, **Oceana in Europe**
Helen Darbishire, Executive Director, **Access Info Europe**

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International

Carole Excell, Acting Director, Environmental Democracy Practice, **The Access Initiative**
Claire Nouvian, Founder and Chair, **BLOOM**
Alexandra Dunn, Executive Director and Co-Founder, **The Engine Room**
Steve Trent, Executive Director, **Environmental Justice Foundation**
Porter McConnell, Director, **Financial Transparency Coalition**
Christine Clough, Program Manager, **Global Financial Integrity**
Shauna Leven, Campaign Director – Corruption, **Global Witness**
Saskia Richartz, Deputy Director, **Greenpeace European Unit**
Edwin Huizing, Director, **Hivos**
Samuel Stone, Head of Fisheries & Aquaculture, **Marine Conservation Society**
Chris Taggart, Co-Founder & CEO, **OpenCorporates**
Zosia Szytkowski, Project Lead, **OpenOwnership**
Arjan El Fassed, Director, **Open State Foundation**
Alex Howard, Deputy Director, **Sunlight Foundation**
Carl Dolan, Director, **Transparency International EU**
Gillian Dell, Transparency International Berlin, for the **UNCAC Coalition**

European Organisations

Gergana Jouleva, Executive Director and Co-Founder, **Access to Information Programme Foundation**, Bulgaria
Corina Dragomirescu, **Advocacy Academy Association**, Romania
Guido Romero, Executive Director, **Diritto di Sapere**, Italy
Mathias Huter, Secretary General, **Forum Informationsfreiheit**, Austria.
Christien Absil, Chair, **Good Fish Foundation**, Netherlands
Jelena Berkovic, Executive Director, **GONG**, Croatia
Bronwyn Cahill, Research Scientist, **Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research**
Aniol Esteban, Programme Director, **New Economics Foundation**, UK
Arne Semsrott, Project Lead, **Open Knowledge Foundation Germany**
Francesco Saija, Co-Founder and President, **Parliament Watch Italy**

Global

Gilbert Sendugwa, Coordinator & Head of Secretariat, **Africa Freedom of Information Centre**, Uganda
David Ugolor, Executive Director, **Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice**, Nigeria
Jean-Pierre Alumba Lukamba, Deputy Chairperson, **African Diaspora Forum**, South Africa
Amane Guerfi, Founder, **Agence Open Gov Algeria Lab**, Algeria
Carmit Lubanov, Executive Director, **The Association of Environmental Justice in Israel**
Dr Chima Amadi, Executive Director, **Centre for Transparency Advocacy**, Nigeria
Henri Christin Longendja, Secrétaire Exécutif, **Collectif 24**, Democratic Republic of Congo
Douglas White, President, **Foundation State and Society / Network of Open Government**, Dominican Republic
Simon Nguye, Executive Director, **Future for Marginalized Community**, Tanzania
Grazielle David, Policy Advisor, **INESC**, Portugal
Ibrahim Al-Sragey, Director, **Iraqi Journalists Rights Defense Association**, Iraq

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Hilda Ajeilat, President, **Jordan Transparency Center**, Jordan

Marileide Sousa Silva Luna, **Movimento Popular de Saúde**, Portugal

Jean-Francois Mombia Atuku, **PCA du RIAO**, RDC

Tijah Bolton-Akpan, Head of Programmes, **Policy Alert**, Nigeria

Adetokunbo Mumuni, Executive Director, **Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project**, Nigeria

Bazira Henry Mugisha, Executive Director, **Water Governance Institute**, Uganda

Marina Amara, **Transparency International Russia**

Individuals

Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, Secretary to the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Climate Change

President Aigbokhan, Esq., FOI lawyer, Nigeria

Alagie Barrow, Regional Supervisor/Manager at Supersonicz the Micro-finance, and also the CEO & Co-founder of the Youth Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture in Africa

Shaazka Beyerle, Author of *Curtailling Corruption: People Power for Accountability and Justice*

Petru Botnaru, Freelance Journalist, Republic of Moldova/Romania

Ken Coghill, Department of Management, Monash Business School, Australia

Pinar Dağ, Data Journalism Instructor, Turkey

Erwin de Grave, International Relations Director, Dyntra

Nirmalan Dhas, The Foundation for Civilisational Transformation and Conscious Evolution, Sri Lanka

Francesca Fanucci, Lawyer – Consultant on Freedom of Expression, Italy

Eoin Sweeney, Director, ITO Consult Ltd.

¹ OECD *Evading the Net: Tax Crime in the Fisheries Sector*, 2013

² 2013 Lough Erne G8 Leaders' Communiqué

³ G20 Leaders' Communiqué Brisbane Summit, 15-16 November 2014

⁴ November 2016 UNODC http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2016/May/fisheries-crime_-bringing-to-light-the-perfect-storm-of-illegal-activities-in-the-fishing-sector.html?ref=fs4

⁵ <https://paris-declaration.ogpsummit.org/topic/5810a95bfade72c82462b343>