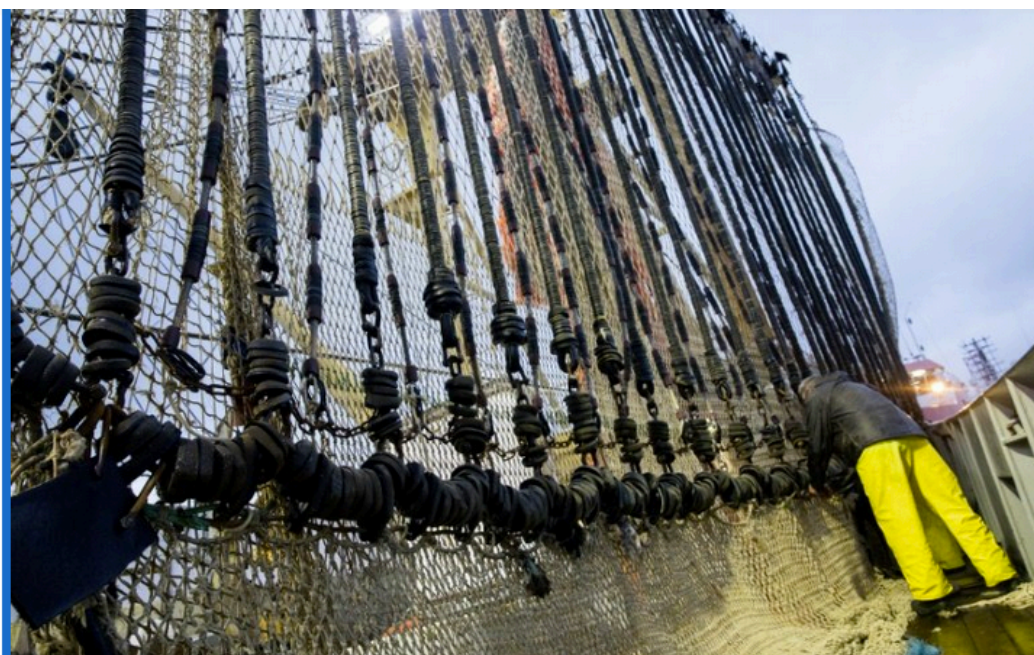


## Germany accused of violating EU regulations in granting of fishing licence

by editor | Jul 22, 2020 | Europe Fishing Industry, Latest News



*Germany has been accused of violating EU regulations after a Dutch owned beam trawler was granted a licence for electric-pulse fishing*

Germany has been accused of violating EU regulations by granting a new beam trawler from the Netherlands a licence to use electric-pulse fishing.

The BLOOM Association claims that Germany has disregarded the regulation which banned electric-pulse fishing which came into force in August 2019. The regulation prohibits the granting of further derogations for electric pulse fishing and that this regulation has been clearly breached.

BLOOM also claims that the European Commission “continues to ignore the undeniably illegal number of Dutch vessels engaged in electric fishing.”

The NGO has now filed a further complaint with the European Commission and this time the complaint is being made against Germany and has, in parallel, obtained an inquiry from the European Ombudsman into the failure of the European Commission to fulfill its role as Guardian of the Treaties.

BLOOM says that far from being resolved, the electric fishing case continues to reflect the European Union's serious dysfunctions.

Germany has come under scrutiny recently, and especially through its actions during the COVID-19 crisis. At the start of July, it took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union with the promise to level the playing field in taxes across the Member States, which has been met with derision.

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### **BLOOM has accused Germany of being "the Falsely Exemplary Country".**

They claim that this is because the new Regulation that came into force in August 2019 provides for a ban on electric fishing in two stages: first a drastic reduction in the number of vessels practicing this destructive fishing method – with no possibility to equip new vessels – and then a total and definitive ban on the remaining vessels in June 2021.

They say that at the beginning of April 2020, Germany breached one of these fundamental principles by granting a derogation to a new vessel, the BRA-2 BUTENDIEK.

*"Germany assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union since July 2020. It is more than problematic that this country is in such a clear breach of the regulation, while its behaviour should be absolutely exemplary",* explains Frédéric Le Manach, Scientific Director of BLOOM.

### **'German Flags, Dutch Capital' claims BLOOM**

BLOOM asserts that this is not the first attempt of collusion by Germany between industrial interests and political decision-makers.

"This was recently revealed, for example, by the NGO *Corporate Europe Observatory* in a [biting report](#), which points to the colossal weight of Dutch fishing giant Parlevliet van der Plas in the German fishing industry, states the French NGO.

"The BRA-2 BUTENDIEK is no exception to this rule, given that it too is owned by Dutch capital, just like the other electric trawlers under German flag. This strategy of investing in foreign vessels – German but also British – was used on several occasions by Dutch companies to exceed even further the regulatory limit on the number of electric trawlers, already blatantly violated, which was supposed to be imposed on them. BLOOM had already filed two complaints against the Netherlands with the European Commission. These remained unsatisfactorily answered."

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## **An Inquiry by the European Ombudsman**

BLOOM continued, that on 18 September 2019, they made their [last complaint to the European Commission against the Netherlands](#), who they see as the sole instigators and promoters of electric fishing. The complaint was in regard to the number of Dutch electric trawlers they believed were still fishing using the illegal method.

They say the European Commission's inaction on this matter is unacceptable, as it had acknowledged on 1 February 2019 that the Netherlands was in breach. A formal infringement procedure was supposed to be opened against the Netherlands, but no news has been received since then.

*"How can the Commission, as Guardian of the Treaties, continue to turn a blind eye to these repeated infringements? It is as if it were incapable of calculating a simple percentage. In reality, instead of acknowledging its shortcomings, it is continuing its headlong rush to protect a fraudulent industry that is endangering marine ecosystems and small-scale coastal fishing",* says Laetitia Bisiaux, in charge of the 'electric fishing' dossier at BLOOM.

Given the perceived deliberate inaction of the Commission, BLOOM referred the matter to the European Ombudsman on 5 June 2020, asking her to demand that the Commission enforce the law. On 14 July, the Ombudsman announced that she had decided [to open an inquiry](#) and asked the European Commission *"for an explanation of the measures taken after her letter of 1 February 2019, namely whether the Commission has taken the decision to open infringement proceedings in this case [...] and, if not, why not."* She also invited *"the Commission to provide an update on the status of the infringement complaint of 18 September 2019."*

BLOOM states that they hope the pressure exerted by the Ombudsman will finally shed some light on the European Commission's either blatant incompetence or [proven moral corruption](#) in this case.

BLOOM concluded by saying *"This charade must stop and the Commission must no longer be an accomplice in the ongoing Dutch abuses."*

Source: BLOOM Association