

Top European chefs take electric pulse fishing off the menu

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Electric pulse fishing involves dragging electrically charged lines just above the seafloor that shock marine life up from low-lying positions into trawling nets

More than 200 top chefs across Europe have pledged to stop sourcing seafood obtained by electric pulse fishing, days before an EU vote that

could expand the use of the controversial technique, an ocean advocacy group said Thursday.

"We refuse to work with seafood coming from a fishing method that condemns our future and that of the ocean," said the text written by Christopher Coutanceau, whose restaurant on the Atlantic coast in La Rochelle, western France, has earned two Michelin stars.

The practice involves dragging electrically charged lines just above the seafloor that shock marine life up from low-lying positions into trawling nets.

EU rules allow member states to equip up to five percent of their fleets with electrodes, and the method has been adopted in particular by Dutch vessels fishing for sole.

On Tuesday, the EU is to vote on the practice, which critics say harms too many [fish](#) that are left on the seabed, as well as those that are harvested.

"Electric trawlers produce catches of poor quality, fish which underwent stress and are often marked by post-electrocution bruises," according to the text released by Bloom, a French NGO.

"It is impossible to work with such low-quality products."

The signatories included French chefs Helene Darroze, Yannick Alleno and Olivier Roellinger, who has longed worked to improve sustainability in the fishing industry.

Spanish chefs Elena Arzak and Quique Dacosta, Italy's Antonino Cannavacciuolo and Alfonso et Ernesto Iaccarino, and Thomas Buehner and Heinz Winkler of Germany also signed the text.

On Wednesday, several members of the European parliament asked for a delay to next week's vote on electric pulse fishing, in order to allow time for an "informed debate".

For Jerry Percy of the Low-Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), which claims to represent about 80 percent of Britain's independent fishermen, a main problem is the lack of solid data on the long-term consequences of the practice on fishing stocks.

The method is outlawed in many parts of the world, including China, but proponents say it is more environmentally friendly and results in lower fuel usage for boats.

Bloom had already filed in October a case against the Netherlands with the European Commission, accusing the country of illegally authorising its trawlers to use the technique.

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