# Macron forced to backtrack on fishing demands amid post-Brexit stalemate with UK



In a significant turning point in negotiations over post-Brexit fishing rights, French President Emmanuel Macron reportedly faced a moment of considerable embarrassment as he was compelled to retract his demands during the final stages of talks. Initially adamant that any fishing agreement must be linked to a broader defence pact with the UK, delays and a lack of compromise led to what insiders described as a bitter five-day stalemate with former Brexit minister Lord Frost. Ultimately, Macron conceded to a deal that allowed mutual access for UK and EU fishing vessels until June 2026, a compromise that fell short of his request for a more binding four-year agreement.

The backdrop to this negotiation was fraught with tensions, as fishing rights had become emblematic of broader disagreements between the UK and EU post-Brexit. Macron's insistence on leveraging fishing rights to secure a defence deal had been particularly contentious, drawing sharp criticism from various EU leaders and raising questions about the wisdom of intertwining such distinct policy issues. The negotiations revealed significant fractures within the EU's approach to Brexit, especially regarding national interests versus collective agreements.

After facing considerable pushback and being fact-checked on inaccuracies regarding fishing licence allocations—allegations that up to 40% of applications submitted by French fishermen were rejected were ultimately debunked, with the true figure being closer to 4%—Macron found himself with limited options. This collapse of narrative surrounding entitlement led to what some viewed as a necessary retreat for the French president. The UK's firm commitment to adhere to the principles laid out in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement further constrained Macron's position, making a meaningful end to the impasse increasingly elusive.

With the current fishing arrangements set to expire in June 2026, fresh concerns about the potential for renewed discord linger. Analysts suggest that as Sir Keir Starmer prepares for his upcoming 'Great EU Reset' summit, discussions over fishing rights could once again surface as vital leverage in future negotiations, particularly as the UK government contemplates involving its defence firms in the EU’s substantial €150 billion defence fund.

In the face of strained relations, the idea of using fishing negotiations as a bargaining chip has led some political analysts to ponder the long-term implications for both the UK and France. Macron's strategic decisions reflect a delicate balancing act between national pride and the practicalities of international negotiation. As he steps away from previous hardline stances, there is a growing acknowledgment that ongoing dialogue might ultimately offer the best pathway to resolving disputes and ensuring cooperation in critical sectors.

The complexity of this issue extends beyond a single negotiation cycle, unveiling the intricate ties between political rhetoric and legislative action in a post-Brexit Europe. Moving forward, both sides must navigate a path that reconciles individual national interests with broader cooperative efforts, a task that may prove increasingly challenging in the weeks and months ahead.

**Reference Map:**1. Paragraph 1: 1 2. Paragraph 2: 1 3. Paragraph 3: 1 4. Paragraph 4: 1 5. Paragraph 5: 1 6. Paragraph 6: 1, 2, 3, 4 7. Paragraph 7: 1, 6, 7

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2055797/humiliation-emmanuel-macron-eu-huge-surrender> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/11/01/emmanuel-macron-suspends-sanctions-deadline-talks-continue-brexit/> - On November 1, 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron suspended his threat of retaliatory measures against the UK over fishing rights, allowing discussions to continue. This decision came after the UK government indicated a willingness to engage in talks to resolve the fishing dispute. Macron's move was seen as a de-escalation in the tensions between the two nations regarding post-Brexit fishing arrangements. The French president emphasized the need for ongoing dialogue to address the issues at hand.
3. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/macron-steps-back-from-midnight-threat-against-uk-exports-in-fishing-row-1.4716492> - On November 1, 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron stepped back from his threat to impose punitive measures against the UK over fishing rights. He announced that discussions would continue, postponing the planned actions that were set to begin at midnight. This development marked a shift in the ongoing fishing dispute between France and the UK, highlighting the importance of continued negotiations to resolve the issues surrounding fishing licenses and access to British waters.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/emmanuel-macron-french-jersey-british-liz-truss-b963784.html> - On November 1, 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron appeared to back down from threats to take punitive action against the UK in a dispute over post-Brexit fishing licenses. Macron had previously warned of potential measures, including blocking British boats from landing their catches in French ports. However, he later indicated that negotiations should continue, suggesting a de-escalation in the tensions between the two nations over fishing rights.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/macron-steps-back-from-midnight-threat-against-uk-exports-in-fishing-row-1.4716492> - On November 1, 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron stepped back from his threat to impose punitive measures against the UK over fishing rights. He announced that discussions would continue, postponing the planned actions that were set to begin at midnight. This development marked a shift in the ongoing fishing dispute between France and the UK, highlighting the importance of continued negotiations to resolve the issues surrounding fishing licenses and access to British waters.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/10/25/brexit-talks-could-see-merkel-intervene-france-refused-fishing/> - In October 2020, Brexit negotiations faced a significant impasse due to France's refusal to compromise on fishing rights. The UK proposed adopting a similar arrangement to Norway, where fishing quotas would be agreed annually in shared fishing zones. However, France's firm stance led to deadlock, prompting hopes that German Chancellor Angela Merkel could intervene to break the impasse. The situation underscored the complexities of reaching a comprehensive Brexit agreement, particularly concerning fisheries.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/10/25/macron-vows-scupper-brexit-deal-sacrifices-french-fishermen/> - In October 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to block any Brexit deal that he believed would sacrifice French fishermen's interests. Facing pressure from Germany and other EU states to accept less access to British waters, Macron's hardline position on fishing rights became a significant obstacle in the Brexit negotiations. The French president's commitment to protecting the fishing industry highlighted the delicate balance between national interests and broader EU objectives during the Brexit process.