

**European Association of fish Producers Organisations
Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche**



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PRESS RELEASE

EAPO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**In memoriam of EAPO Secretary Puri Fernández, opening address by
European Commissioner Sinkevičius and new President and
management team elected.**

The European Association of fish Producers Organisations held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2021 on 28 October in Brussels. The members enjoyed the fact that taking into account the COVID-19 safety measures a live meeting after such a long time was possible again.

At the start of his last meeting as President – as he was not a candidate for the next two year term – Pim Visser welcomed the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius. After listening to the key aspects of the EAPO work program, the Commissioner elaborated on his policy around (1) EU fisheries contributing to addressing the climate change, (2) fishing opportunities for 2022, (3) the blue dimension in the EU Green Deal and (4) fisheries as part of the Farm to Fork Strategy. After this he went into a brief debate with EAPO members who raised questions about the speed to reach common goals, about the difficulties for EU fisheries after brexit and the TCA – also with other coastal states – and about the space at sea threats to the sector represented by EAPO. Also the upcoming report on the CFP and the requirement for sustainable, protein-rich seafood provided by fisheries came into the picture.

After thanking the Commissioner for his attendance, outgoing President Pim Visser turned to the statutory part of the AGM. An emotionally impressive moment of silence was held in honour of the highly respected member and secretary of EAPO, Purificación del Carmen Fernández Alvarez, who recently and unexpectedly passed away.

Pim Visser reported on the numerous topics and activities addressed by EAPO since the virtual AGM in 2020. Treasurer Thomas Wenzel Kruse reported on the accounts and the budget, and obtained approval from the members. Then the meeting turned to the discussion on the future of the association, for which the members determined that a live meeting was required. This

was followed by the presentation by the candidate for the next term of the presidency. Votes on the future were passed and the Bureau election resulted in the nomination of Esben Sverdrup Jensen (Danish Pelagic PO) as President, Yves Foëzon (OP Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne) as Treasurer and Jesús A. Lourido García (OPP-77 Puerto de Celeiro) as Secretary. The Belgian PO Rederscentrale continues as secretariat, with Emiel Brouckaert as Secretary-General and fourth member of the Bureau. The Executive Committee consists of the Bureau members, the Working Group Chairs and other members annually elected by the General Assmby.

After thanking and praising his predecessor for seven challenging years in the role, the new President declared to focus on the chosen future for EAPO. *“Producers Organisations are the link between EU and national managers and those who catch the fish,”* Esben Sverdrup Jensen said, *“and it is the POs’ challenging task to make the EU legislation workable on the fishing grounds and continuously help develop and improve the legal framework for sustainable fishing. Coming from a pelagic PO, in my new role within EAPO, I plan to visit all member countries in order to get to know their fisheries and respective challenges and priorities. EAPO will continue to work closely and build alliances with everyone who supports its objective to achieve sustainable EU fisheries; socially, economically and environmentally”.*

The new President then hosted a further discussion on the work program between EAPO members and representatives of the European Commission’s DG MARE. The first physical meeting of EAPO members in one and a half year was closed after a representative of a Swedish member PO invited the 2022 EAPO AGM to be held in Gothenburg.

===== Ends =====

Information not for publication

The European Association of fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) represents 27 Producers Organisations (POs) from 9 EU Member States with approximately 10,000 vessels, 3.5 million tonnes of landings and € 3 billion first sale value.

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