



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU



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

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Europêche/EAPO: Fishing sector meet Commissioner Vella for encouraging discussion on fisheries policy

A delegation of Members from Europêche and EAPO had a positive meeting with Karmenu Vella, the new the Maltese Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, to discuss the many pressing issues facing the fishing sector today.

The representatives from across Europe spoke with a united voice outlining common areas of concern for all European nations in both the catch sector and producer organisations and presented the Commissioner with a synopsis of the current fishing panorama. There was a consensus that there must be engagement with all stakeholders including scientists, the fishing sector and decision makers, highlighting the need for proportionate and suitable legislation to be decided at the right level.

Speaking from the meeting, President of Europêche, Javier Garat, welcomed the positive attitude and constructive nature of the meeting; *'I am very pleased that Commissioner Vella is actively engaging with the fishing sector and has shown a great willingness to continue this open door policy into the future. We highlighted the good status of many stocks, especially in the Northeast Atlantic who have seen their biggest recovery in the last 10 years. We have come a long way and we need to continue this positive momentum. We are glad that the Commissioner agrees with Europêche's commitment to sustainable fishing and a viable sector.'*

Pim Visser, President of EAPO added: *"We now have a good relationship with the scientists and stocks are responding positively. We often struggle to deal with the rigidity of policies whose timetables can be challenging. However, Commissioner Vella's approach has been well received and I look forward to working with him and his cabinet to create a sustainable sector for the future"*.

Furthermore, the members of Europêche and EAPO, have sent several important messages to the Commissioner:

- The Commission needs to take into account *all* type of fleets and gears, both small and large. All of them play their role in providing healthy food to the consumers and creating employment and wealth in fishing dependent areas.
- European fishermen form part of a sustainable and viable activity. We want to see stocks at MSY levels but also want to see fishermen out at sea. That is why it is so important to have the integration of the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic.
- Avoid blanket bans such as deep sea trawling and gillnetting, a ban on driftnets and for the fins-attached policy for sharks. There are better alternatives with a smaller impact on fishing communities.
- The social dialogue agenda is about fishermen and women in Europe. Together with ecological discussions, the social aspect of fisheries is becoming equally important

Industry representatives expressed their dedication to working closely with the Commissioner to make sure that upcoming legislation such as the landing obligation and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive are workable and implemented in the right way. They also welcomed the Commissioner's tough stance on IUU fishing and to create a level playing field regarding the common market organisation.

Europêche and EAPO members also referred to the next Fisheries Council of Ministers deciding fishing opportunities, the need to review the Mediterranean Regulation with the consensus of the fishing sector, the importance of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, particularly the Fishing Partnership Agreements and the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, and the need of coherence between the different European policies such as trade, development, environment and health.

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Europêche represents the fisheries sector in Europe. Currently, the Association comprises 16 national organisations of fishing enterprises from the following 10 EU Member States: BE, DE, DK, ES, FR, IT, MT, NL, PL, UK.

EAPO represents 36 producer organisations in 10 Member States (BE, DE, DK, ES, FR, IR, NL, PL, SV, UK), with approximately 10,000 vessels, 3.5 million tonnes of landings and a first sale value of € 3 billion.

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