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Zeebrugge, 24 September 2013

PRESS RELEASE: EAPO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SEAN O'DONOGHUE TO CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT

COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON LANDING OBLIGATION ESTABLISHED

The European Association of Fish Producers Organisations held its Annual General Meeting in Binz on the Isle of Ruegen on 13 September hosted by the German membership. The meeting attendants discussed the future structure of the organisation and the consequences of the new fisheries policy changes. Stability was deemed very important particularly in light of the new agreed fisheries policy and thus the extension of Sean O'Donoghue's presidency and of the nominations to EAPO's executive body – the Extended Bureau – by one year was approved by the members.

The landing obligation (discard ban) now agreed by Council, Parliament and Commission in the draft European Regulation on a new Common Fisheries Policy triggered the most debate.

“Our members are very much aware that the implementation of the landing obligation is a very difficult task which has not been made any easier with the lack of clarity and detail in the new agreed CFP. Numerous questions arose during the meeting on the interpretation of the various articles and how to implement the new changes which could not be answered in a satisfactory manner” said the President. He added: “The ‘devil is the detail’ and unfortunately the agreed text falls far short on this detail so it was therefore decided to set up an EAPO Coordinating Committee to address the needs of the POs and their members in trying to devise mechanisms to implement the landing obligation in an effective and workable manner.”

The newly agreed CFP and the Common Market Organisation recognises and strengthens the key role the POs have to play in the implementation of the policy. A new feature of the CFP is the establishment of a Markets Advisory Council (MAC) which EAPO has welcomed and is actively engaged in trying to bring to fruition.

After the meeting Sean O'Donoghue said: “The meeting was very well attended by our members, and most importantly the key issues very actively discussed with a number of important decisions taken that I am confident will lead to EAPO fully engaging and embracing its new enhanced role under the CFP. During the last year EAPO has been involved in numerous meetings and produced seven position papers on issues of real importance to our membership.” He added: “Without the hard work of the Extended Bureau this would not be possible and I would like to thank them for their hard work and our German members for hosting an excellent meeting.”

===== Ends =====

The EAPO represents 34 Producers Organisations from 10 EU Member States, with approximately 10,000 vessels, 3.5 million tonnes of landings and a first sale value of € 3 billion.

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