

European Association of Fish Producers Organisations

Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche



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EAPO feedback on action plan to conserve marine resources & protect marine ecosystems

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EAPO welcomes the opportunity to give feedback on the Commission's roadmap for an action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems. It is important that for this deliverable of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the fisheries industry will be closely involved.

With reference to the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and specifically the Technical Measures Regulation (TMR), including the relevant reporting requirements, to EAPO it is clear that the participation of fishermen in the creation of this action plan is a requisite. We hope the Commission agrees that without the participation of the fishermen the success level for reaching the objectives of the CFP would not be at the same level as now. As such a huge experience has been built to address the challenges for linking the implementation of the CFP with environmental legislation and policy.

EAPO and its members stand ready to provide that experience when addressing an urgent necessity to initiate a scientific dialogue on how to create an action plan around the avoidance of unwanted catches, the sustainable use of bottom contacting fishing gear and the determination of adequate objectives for Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and Other Effective area based Conservation Measures (OECM). It is important to take all pillars of the sustainability objectives in the CFP into account, so that the contribution of fisheries to the food production and the socio-economic welfare of many (coastal) communities in the EU is adequately covered into this action plan.

The roadmap mentions a need for reconciling fisheries activities, specifically the use of bottom contacting fishing gear, with the biodiversity objectives. EAPO wishes to emphasise that the above mentioned experience is indispensable to achieve a balanced result of such reconciliation. The fishermen's involvement will contribute to avoiding that mitigation of the impact fisheries activities results in obstructing the CFP objectives. Fishermen can also assist in avoiding that measures lead to obstruction of the biodiversity strategy objectives, for instance due to unnecessary displacement.

EAPO looks forward to a response from the Commission on this feedback.

In addition please note a specific comment from one of our members:

In an ever changing world which we are inhabiting and sharing. It is most important that we include those with many generations of knowledge of our Marine Environment, Sea's and Ocean's, those who witness day to day through their work, the changes happening in our Marine Environment, are not just asked for feedback such as this but must be accepted by our policy makers are an integral part of present & future decision making.

In short we the fishermen be included in this process as a partner, for we ask who is there better qualified to fill this role.