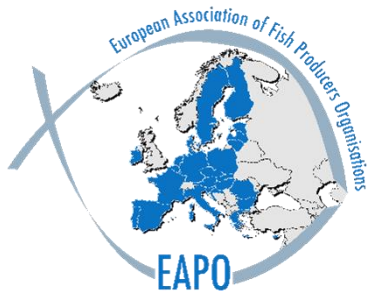


**European Association of fish Producers Organisations**  
**Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche**



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Oostende, 19 October 2023

### **PRESS RELEASE**

## ***EAPO meets Commissioner Sinkevičius to discuss the management of Central Baltic Herring***

**On 18 October 2023, ahead of the upcoming Agri Council, an EAPO delegation with members from Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania met with Commissioner Sinkevičius and his services to discuss issues relating to the management of Central Baltic Herring. EAPO members were given the opportunity to present their issues relating to the quality of ICES’s scientific advice, the estimated socio-economic impacts and the unique dynamics of fisheries in the Baltic.**

*“We trust science”, highlighted Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, EAPO President. “However, EAPO members are concerned with the quality of ICES’s advice on Central Baltic Herring issued after this year’s benchmark. How can a stock that has been stable for more than 30 years suddenly be under critical thresholds, without clear indications in scientific surveys or in what fishers have observed. EAPO members underlined the need for greater transparency around ICES and call for the European Commission to request that ICES revisits the recent benchmark and its benchmarking procedures in general. The new and untested approach to ICES advice on this stock is not only considered controversial within the scientific community, it also seems to be out of touch with the reality at sea.”, Esben Sverdrup-Jensen continued.*

Moreover, the Commission’s proposal to decrease sprat TACs to limit the impact of fishing activities on herring, is not in line with the proven expertise of fishers, capable of maintaining low bycatches of herring when targeting sprat.

The Commission highlighted the legal interpretation of Article 4.6 of the Baltic Sea Multi Annual Plan. EAPO challenged this legal assessment, as this reading of the article contradicts the long-

term goals of the Common Fisheries Policy. Setting management in the short term is against the purpose of having a Multi Annual Plan. According to ICES advice, setting a rollover TAC would ensure an increase in biomass of 20%. EAPO members push for this option to be considered. Setting a rollover TAC would also limit the impact on Baltic Sea fishers that has been estimated to be more than 60 million euros.

EAPO thanks the Commissioner for the opportunity to present its position and will stay involved in the discussions on Baltic Sea fishing opportunities up until the Council on 23 and 24 October 2023.

===== **Ends** =====

**Information not for publication**

*The European Association of fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) represents 29 Producers Organisations (POs) from 9 EU Member States with approximately 3,700 vessels, 2 million tonnes of landings and € 2.1 billion first sale value.*

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