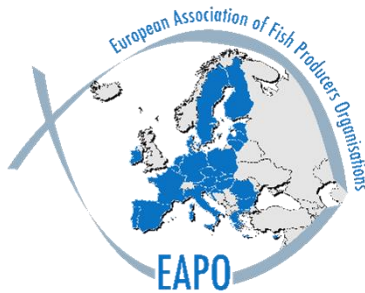


European Association of fish Producers Organisations
Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche



EAPO / AEOP
H. Baelskaai 20 – 8400 OOSTENDE (Belgium)
☎ +32 59 43 20 05
e-mail: info@eapo.com
website : www.eapo.com

Oostende, 15 November 2023

PRESS RELEASE

EU fishers call for extension of Brexit compensation scheme

“After massive quota losses, we now risk losing compensation worth millions due to EU red tape and administrative delays.”

Before the end of 2023 Member States must have allocated all funds in their Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) national envelopes to fishers and related industries who have been in financial turmoil as a consequence of Brexit. However, bureaucracy and EU red tape have impeded approval of national BAR plans and payouts, risking a situation where funds aimed at the EU fishing community will end up back in Brussels.

EAPO is deeply disappointed by the Commission's refusal to consider an extension of the reference period for the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) and its consequent effect on the full utilization of these funds. This decision further exacerbates the already significant Brexit toll borne by the fishing sector. More than 400 million Euros from the BAR were originally earmarked for the fishing sector.

In a letter sent in September 2023 to Commissioner Sinkevičius, EAPO members highlighted the grave underutilisation of BAR funds and requested an extension of the reference period beyond 31 December 2023. The Commission's response, received on 19 October 2023, dismissed the idea of extending the BAR reference period. Instead, unallocated funds will be transferred back to the general EU budget and spent outside the fishing sector, if at all. These funds will no longer alleviate the negative consequences of Brexit for the fishing sector.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, President of EAPO, expressed the urgency of the situation: *“The Brexit Adjustment Reserve was invented to mitigate the adverse effects of Brexit. Limiting its full use cannot be acceptable for a sector that bore the costs of the Brexit deal. Fishing quotas allocated from EU fishers to UK fishers is costing the industry 180 million Euros every year. Fishers are*

left out of the support they urgently require to sustain their livelihoods and their communities. Fishers are not asking for an increase in support; they only request more time to secure full uptake of the funds.”.

Brexit continues to cast a long shadow over the EU fishing sector, with substantial impacts resulting from the loss of fishing quotas and from increasing policy divergence between the EU and the UK. Moreover, the full extent of Brexit’s impact has not yet been reached, with the adjustment period scheduled to conclude on 30 June 2026.

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

Information not for publication

The European Association of fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) represents 29 Producers Organisations (POs) from 10 EU Member States with approximately 3,700 vessels, 2 million tonnes of landings and € 2.1 billion first sale value.

Contacts:

Esben Sverdrup Jensen (EAPO President) – E-mail: es@pelagisk.dk
Mobile: +45 61 66 09 78

EAPO Secretariat E-mail: info@eapo.com
Tel: +32 59 43 20 05

Paul Thomas (EAPO Policy Officer) – Email: paul.thomas@eapo.com
Mobile: +32 470 41 78 38