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PRESS RELEASE

Stakeholder event on the Common Fisheries Policy

“The lack of flexibility and the complexity of the CFP prevent the fishing sector from adapting to the challenges to come.”

On Friday June 10th, the European Commission held a stakeholder event to take stock of the current EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Two EAPO members were invited to share the Producers Organizations’ (POs) point of view. The POs play a key role in assisting the fishermen in meeting the objectives of the CFP. However, the lack of flexibility and the complexity of the CFP prevent the fishing sector from adapting to the challenges to come: Spatial Planning, Renewable Energies and Decarbonisation.

Jérémie Souben, General Secretary of the French Association of Fish Producers Organizations (FEDOPA), presented The Common Market Organisation: its tools and Producers Organizations’ involvement in responding to the objectives of the CFP. He highlighted the essential role POs play in supporting the European fishermen during the recent crisis (Covid-19, Brexit, High-fuel prices etc.) with measures such as the storage mechanisms or the Production and Marketing Plans.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, President of EAPO, spoke at a panel on Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability regarding the ongoing crisis while strengthening fishing operators’ resilience for the years to come. He drew attention to the complexity and the need for today’s fishermen to have a degree in law to understand the CFP. The EAPO President pointed out the issues the CFP poses to the stability which fishing businesses need to thrive:

- Article 15 (Landing Obligation) and the choke species;
- Understanding the hierarchy behind the different CFP objectives;

- The capacity constraint limiting the adaptation of the fleet to the new fuels and the improvement of the onboard working conditions.

The recent crisis and the lack of flexibility of the CFP restricts the generational renewal, even limiting the retention of the existing crews, for the benefit of more attractive emerging sectors such as the windfarm sector.

To make sure the future recovery of fish stocks across Europe is due to better management rather than because of the disappearance of European fisherman, it is essential to thoroughly review the CFP, fix the elements that are not in line with the objectives and remove structural barriers for decarbonisation of the European fishing fleets.

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

The European Association of fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) represents 28 Producers Organisations (POs) from 9 EU Member States with approximately 10,000 vessels, 3.5 million tonnes of landings and € 3 billion first sale value.

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