



For immediate release

Anglers support strong but fair measures to protect the European sea bass

On the 14th of April 2015, the **European Parliament Forum for Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment** welcomed more than 40 participants to an event entitled “**Long term management of the European Sea Bass recreational fisheries**”. The sustainable management of sea bass is of utmost importance for EU recreational anglers as well as for the industry relying on their activities.

After the welcoming remarks made by **MEP Norica Nicolai**, President of the RecFishing Forum, the conference was chaired by **MEP Alain Cadec**, Chair of the EP’s Committee on Fisheries, who presented ICES’ scientific overview and recommendations on the dramatic state of the sea bass stock in the North East Atlantic. Alain Cadec recalled that good management of the sea bass fisheries should be based on a dialogue between recreational fishermen and professionals.

Mr. **Jean Claude Bel**, CEO of the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (**EFTTA**), stressed that, in some countries, the employment and the economic output generated by the 25 % of sea bass retained by anglers is up to 75% higher than for commercial fisheries. “Recreational angling should be treated fairly and its socio-economic output must be acknowledged.”

Mr. **Jean Kiffer**, President of the **FNPPSF**, a French maritime anglers’ organisation member of the European Anglers Alliance (**EAA**), presented the case of France in which the dramatic situation includes a lot of poaching. He asked for control and enforcement measures to be strengthened. He declared that sea bass fisheries should be forbidden during the breeding season in all zones and for all fishermen.

Mr. **Jan Willem Wijnstroom** from the **EAA** explained that anglers have been asking for measures since the 2000’s. Now that sea bass stocks are in deep trouble, urgent actions are needed. EAA advises that a higher Minimum Landing Size (MSL) for all, commercial and recreational, bass should be adopted and that fishing mortality is promptly reduced.

Bernard Friess, Director at DG MARE, European Commission, said that the European Commission took the exceptional step of introducing emergency measures in January this year to face this alarming situation. The Commission will now propose to the EU Member States new catch limits for all commercial fisheries and an increase of the MLS to 42 cm. It is also preparing a proposal for a Long Term Management Plan for the North and the South Atlantic sea bass fisheries. The plan will have to be adopted by the EP and the Council. These announcements were warmly welcomed by the anglers’ representatives.

After a lively debate between the audience and the 10 MEPs present, the event was concluded by **MEP Richard Corbett**, who called for a "safety first approach" and fair management of sea bass and for measures in which commercials should play the main part for the preservation of this iconic species. “Anglers will accept the limitations, so long as they are not the only ones making sacrifices”.

For more information on the Forum and pictures of the event, click [here](#).

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