



PRESS RELEASE
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Successful kick-off of the Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment in the European Parliament

MEP Niclas Herbst and Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius welcome constructive dialogue with the recreational fisheries sector during the relaunch event of the RecFishing Forum.

The official relaunch of the European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and the Aquatic Environment (Recfishing Forum) took place yesterday during the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Hosted by **MEP Niclas Herbst** (EPP Group, Germany), representatives from the European Anglers Alliance (EAA) and the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA) were joined by Members of the European Parliament from different EU countries and political groups to exchange on the role of recreational fishing in Europe and future areas of cooperation in the context of the Forum.

As Chair of the event, Niclas Herbst welcomed the participants and underlined the importance of the Recfishing Forum: “I am convinced that the discussions we have in the Forum matter a lot for us as MEPs, to regularly check with stakeholders and people that the policies we adopt are practicable and fit for purpose”.

Mr **Virginijus Sinkevičius**, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries gave opening remarks for this kick-off meeting of the Forum. Highlighting that anglers’ commitment to sustainable fisheries and conservation of the environment fit in some of his key priorities such as clean water and full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, he also underlined that “data is gold. We need more data on the recreational fisheries sector to make sure that our decisions are based on scientific evidence”.

Fred Bloot, EAA President and **Jean-Claude Bel**, former EFTTA CEO presented the Forum on Recreational Fisheries and its achievement over the past five years and recalled the economic and social benefits that the sector provides to Europe: more than 25 million Europeans are anglers and generate more than €20 billion of yearly economic value by practicing their hobby. “This is about a leisure activity that brings people together, contributes to the conservation of the environment and biodiversity, provides jobs in many SMEs and perspectives to communities in coastal and rural areas” said Mr Bel. “Recreational fishing also offers a positive contribution to health, social and cultural well-being of citizens and communities in Europe” added Fred Bloot. “Tonight, but also over the next five years, we would like to take you through this Forum into the beautiful and versatile world of recreational fishing. Together, we can make better policies in Europe in the area of fisheries and environment” he concluded, mentioning the Common Fisheries Policy and the Water Framework Directive as two key legislations to work on.

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Note to the editor:

About the Forum:

The Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment (Recfishing Forum) was created in 2014, at the beginning of the previous European Parliament legislature. **By providing a cross-party discussion platform**, the Forum has been an essential tool for the **Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to establish a direct connection with the recreational fishing community, its network of scientists, in-house experts and other representatives of the sector** in order to gather knowledge, information and data on the topics that were discussed in the European Parliament.

More information about the Forum: <https://www.eaa-europe.org/european-parliament-forum/>

About EAA and EFTTA

The **Secretariat of the Forum is provided by two associations working together**: the [European Anglers Alliance](#) (EAA) and the [European Fishing Tackle Trade Association](#) (EFTTA). The EAA and the EFTTA work at the EU level and beyond to improve the aquatic environment, to achieve sustainable management of the fish stocks and to protect and promote recreational angling [rod and line fishing] in Europe. They also advocate for recreational fisheries to be managed in a fair and equitable way with respect to the other fisheries sectors.

The **European Anglers Alliance (EAA)** is a pan-European organisation for recreational angling, which defends European recreational anglers' interests at the European level and beyond. EAA was launched in Brussels in 1994. There are about 3 mill. affiliated members to EAA's 16 member organisations and affiliates from 15 European countries.

The **European Fishing Tackle Trade Association** was established in London in 1981 with a clear purpose: to support the European sportfishing tackle sector – the manufacturers and wholesalers, the importers and exporters. Every year, EFTTA organises EFTTEX, the leading European Fishing Tackle Trade Exhibition.

Pictures below: *(for high quality pictures, please contact us by email)*



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