

PRESS RELEASE

European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment

13.11.2024 – Brussels



Recreational Fisheries voice will be heard in the European Parliament for the next 5 years

The European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment (“EP RecFishing Forum”) has officially been relaunched with a toast to “reel” sustainable fisheries, organised by its new co-Chairs Members of the European Parliament Sofie Eriksson (S&D, Sweden) and Michal Wiezik (Renew Europe, Slovakia) on 13 November 2024.

Many laws affecting the aquatic environment, fish stocks, and the quality of angling are decided by the European Parliament. This is why, since 2014 the EP RecFishing Forum:

- Acts as a link between the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their 25 million EU angling constituents;
- Serves as a forum of discussion on issues related to the European Parliament (EP) agenda, such as the Common Fisheries Policy and the Nature Directives implementation, fishing tourism and other relevant issues; and
- Brings expert information to the MEPs from the European Anglers Alliance (EAA) and the European Fish Tackle and Trade Association (EFTTA) and their broad network of scientists.



New RecFishing Forum co-Chairs MEP Michal Wiezik and MEP Sofie Eriksson will respectively be supporting its activities on freshwaters and sea matters. The recreational fisheries sector is indeed one of the few stakeholders having a holistic vision of the aquatic environment.

Approximately 25 million Europeans engage in recreational angling each year, contributing around 25 billion Euros annually to the economy. This low-impact activity supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, especially in rural and remote areas. But more importantly, it creates strong links among individuals in our fragmented societies.

The RecFishing Forum Secretariat is provided by [EAA](#) and [EFTTA](#)

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The anglers are conservation-minded and actively participate in protecting and conserving fish stocks, waters, and the surrounding environment. Volunteers from the angling community dedicate numerous hours each year to conservation and restoration projects for our rivers and lakes.

Mark Owen, President of the European Anglers Alliance (EAA), mentioned the defence of the aquatic environment and biodiversity as the main challenge on which the RecFishing Forum will engage during this new EP mandate. From an industry viewpoint, Gerard Bakkenes, Chair of the European Fishing Tackle and Trade Association (EFTTA), insisted on the need to collect data at the EU level about the socio-economic impact of this leisure activity at the EU level both in marine and freshwaters.

A 2017 European Parliament report informed that Angling activities in the EU support over 100,000 full-time equivalent jobs and generate an annual economic revenue for the recreational fisheries exceeding €10.5 billion. *“Despite that, decisions affecting the angling experience, the quality of water bodies and fish stocks continue to be taken without taking us into consideration – as if we didn’t exist. This is, we are not recognised as a full stakeholder of the Common Fisheries Policy.”* said Bakkenes.

The RecFishing Forum and its supportive MEPs will continue to relay these messages and contribute to policy change in the European Parliament for the next five years.



From left to right: MEP Mr. Michal Wiezik, Gerard Bakkenes (EFTTA Chair), MEP Ms. Sofie Eriksson, Mark Owen (EAA President)



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Note to the editor

About the event:

You can read more about the event on [this page](#). The agenda of the event can be downloaded [here](#). The report of the event will be published on that page.

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About the RecFishing Forum:

The Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment (RecFishing Forum) was created in 2014, at the beginning of the 8th parliamentary term of the European Parliament. **By providing a cross-party discussion platform**, the Forum has been an essential tool for the **Members of the European Parliament to establish a direct connection with the recreational fishing community, its network of scientists, in-house experts, and other representatives of the sector** to gather knowledge, information and data on the topics that were discussed in the European Parliament.

More information about the Forum [here](#).

The **Secretariat of the Forum is provided by two associations working together**: the [European Anglers Alliance \(EAA\)](#) and the [European Fishing Tackle Trade Association \(EFTTA\)](#). Both associations 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.

About EAA and EFTTA:

The **European Anglers Alliance (EAA)** is a pan-European organisation for recreational angling, gathering 10 angling associations from 10 European countries, which defends European recreational anglers' interests at the European level and beyond. EAA was launched in Brussels in 1994.

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. EFTTA is the voice of more than 3000 European manufacturing and wholesale companies.

Up to 25 million Europeans go fishing recreationally every year in both fresh and marine waters, generating at least an annual [total economic impact](#) of **10.5 billion euro** and supporting **100,000 jobs in Europe only by marine recreational angling**¹. Angling provides many also **social and health benefits** and **income diversification** for Europe's coastal and remote communities.

¹ Scientific data on the socio-economic importance of angling in Freshwater ecosystems at EU level are not available at the moment due to the non-consideration of the sector's added value to these areas by EU institutions.

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