



## **Fishing is part of Europe, its culture and traditions**

**The European bottom fishing fleet represented by EBFA calls for a Europe wide protest against the EU policies that are putting the future of the sector at stake. The sector wants to show its concern with the fisheries bans and restrictions of bottom fishing gears proposed by the European Commission, particularly via the Action Plan to protect marine ecosystems. We have chosen May 9<sup>th</sup> as the date to signify how the fishing communities are reaching the limit and the fear for their survival. Fishing is a purely European policy, and the Commission is the sole administrator of the Common Fisheries Policy. Yet, what should be a policy that unites fishermen and makes them proud of the EU, has instead turned in a source of a feeling of disfranchisement. That is why we have chosen the Day of Europe as the date to sound the horn of our vessels, as the call of distress it signifies.**

The European fishing fleet, under the coordination of EBFA, Europêche, and EAPO, calls for this symbolic action in the hope that it will serve as the framework for the fishing communities to express their angst with local actions in the ports and send the message to the EU authorities that fishing matters in Europe and that it has reached its limit.

We call on all fishing vessels and all vessels who want to show their support to sound their sirens and horns at noon on May 9<sup>th</sup> for 5 minutes whether on port or whilst fishing at sea. A call that must be heard throughout the coast of Europe, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, the North Sea, and the Baltic, but also those fishing in all the seas around the world. All in unison as one Community. We encourage fishers and citizens to film and record the sounds and upload them to their social media in support of this call of distress using the hashtag #SOS\_EU\_Fishing.

The sector faces huge challenges like Brexit, post-COVID pandemic effects, competition over marine space with industries such as offshore windfarms, inflation, and skyrocketing energy costs. The European Commission with its Action Plan and its proposal to prohibit bottom fishing in 30% of our seas, comes as yet another nail in the coffin of bottom fishing in Europe that has triggered the protests of governments, the European Parliament and the sector.

Iván López van der Veen, Chair of EBFA, declared: *“Fishers and their communities are European citizens. Through the Common Fisheries Policy we are under the stewardship of the European Commission, who should care for us. We fulfil our role by providing the best quality and healthy food to our fellow EU citizens. We do it sustainably, under one of the most stringent regulations in the world and we do it proudly. We deserve respect and recognition from the authorities. Instead, we see our way of life endangered”*. He continued: *“There is great discontent with the situation. Fishers have made huge efforts to protect the marine environment and recover fish stocks. Thousands of Km2 have been closed to bottom fishing and 28% of the fishing fleet has disappeared in the last 20 years. But nothing seems to be enough. The Action Plan is the straw that breaks the camel's back. Fishers had enough and want to show their immense discontent. The future of their jobs and their families is at stake”*.