



EBFA meets Commissioner Kadis to discuss the future of bottom fishing in Europe

- Press Release -

Brussels, 2 December 2025

The European Bottom Fishing Alliance (EBFA) held its first official meeting today with European Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans, Costas Kadis, to discuss the future of bottom fishing in the EU. The meeting provided an opportunity for EBFA to convey the sector's contribution to food sovereignty, progress made in environmental protection and concerns regarding current policy developments and growing regulatory pressure across Europe.

EBFA Chair Iván López van der Veen opened the meeting by highlighting the essential role of bottom fishing in Europe's food system: *'We are committed to responsible fishing and to constantly improving our practices through science, innovation and effective management. We stand ready to work with Commissioner Kadis to ensure that Europe's environmental ambition goes hand in hand with a viable future for our fleets and the communities that depend on them.'*

Balancing ambition with reality

EBFA emphasised that while fishers fully support biodiversity protection, EU-wide targets must reflect the complexity of marine ecosystems and the multi-national nature of EU fisheries. The Alliance welcomed Commissioner Kadis' case-by-case approach but warned that proposals such as a blanket phase-out of bottom fishing in MPAs by 2030 are incompatible with both science-based management and food security objectives. EBFA stressed the need for balanced spatial planning and recognition of EU-advanced fisheries management as a tool for biodiversity protection, especially in the upcoming Ocean Act.

Protecting oceans without penalising fishers

EBFA highlighted major concerns with the United Kingdom's unilateral MPA measures, based on flawed data, which will create disproportionate losses for EU fleets. The Alliance urged the Commission to ensure that UK measures remain proportionate, non-discriminatory, and fully compatible with the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Fisheries management: best tool for thriving oceans

The Alliance stressed that many MPAs aim to protect species or habitats unaffected by bottom gears. Additionally, existing EU fisheries measures—such as vulnerable ecosystem protections—already provide strong safeguards. Margot Angibaud, EBFA Secretary, noted: *'It is not because an area is not labelled 'protected' that it is not already highly regulated. The FAO calls for 100% management of marine areas, and the UE should be proud of already meeting this target. EU management measures must be recognised as an effective tool to achieve EU's '30by30' environmental targets.'*

Restoration that works for oceans and fishing communities

With Member States due to begin implementation in 2026, EBFA warned against poorly supported restoration measures—particularly the risk that ‘passive’ restoration becomes the default approach at sea. The Alliance called for strategies that allow coexistence with fishing, based on integrated land–sea management, careful attention to spatial constraints and full consideration of Europe’s food security needs.

Protecting vulnerable ecosystems with science, not sweeping measures

EBFA expressed concern over current regulation and scientific models that are leading to disproportionate closures. The Alliance reiterated its commitment to protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) while urging the Commission to adopt high-resolution mapping, proportionate buffer zones, gear-specific assessments and a revision of the Deep-Sea Access Regulation dated 2016 to ensure fair and scientifically grounded decisions.

Delivering Good Environmental Status

EBFA welcomed the planned revision and the aim to simplify the Directive since some of the current environmental indicators are not workable nor aligned with the Common Fisheries Policy. The Alliance stressed that Good Environmental Status for seabed habitats must be compatible with sustainable seafood production.

Mr López concluded: *‘Our fleets cannot plan for the future if the policy landscape keeps shifting under their feet. Fishers need predictability, proportionate rules and decisions rooted in the best available science. We count on the Commission to ensure that Europe’s environmental ambitions do not come at the cost of its coastal communities or its capacity to feed its citizens, specially since both can coexist.’*

Press contact

Margot Angibaud, Secretary of EBFA, info@bottomfishingalliance.eu +32 494 19 03 96

Daniel Voces, Secretary of EBFA, info@bottomfishingalliance.eu +32 489 26 81 07