



Angling tourism must become an integral part of the EU's tourism strategy

While the European Union is working on a strategy for the recovery of the EU tourism sector, the European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment held a Webinar to discuss the **contribution of the recreational fisheries sector to the green recovery** after the COVID-19 crisis. Angling is a very selective type of fishing, which provides many economic, social and health benefits and can create a much-needed link between conservation plans, local communities and tourists. However, **more data is needed to fully grasp the sector's potential** and to develop adequate policies.

On the 16th of July, **MEP Niclas Herbst (Germany, EPP Group)** and **MEP Grace O'Sullivan (Ireland, Greens Group)** co-chaired a Webinar of the European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment dedicated to a discussion on the contribution of angling to the recovery of the EU tourism sector, after the COVID-19 crisis. Both Members of the European Parliament highlighted the important social, health and economic benefits of angling, including in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. Grace O'Sullivan gave the example of Ireland, quoting a study¹ that estimates that 406,000 individuals participated in recreational angling in 2012, with a direct spending of 555 million euros, of which 125 million euros were generated by overseas tourists.

"The promotion of angling tourism can be instrumental to support, not only the recovery of the recreational fisheries sector which has also been severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, but of all segments of the tourism sector especially in coastal, rural and remote areas that can only rely on few sources of income", explained **Stefan Spahn**, Board member of the European Anglers Alliance (EAA).

Six different panellists took the floor to showcase good practices and challenges of angling tourism, in relation to the conservation of fish stocks and the protection of the aquatic environment. Examples from Slovenia, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Finland were presented by the panellists. The European Commission, represented by **Evelien Ranshuysen** from the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, reacted to the panellists' presentations and acknowledged the need for quality data on recreational fisheries.

Olivier Portrait, CEO of the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA) wrapped up the discussion by saying that *"the potential of angling tourism in the context of the current health, economic and environmental crisis ultimately illustrates the need for the EU to fully integrate recreational fishing into its tourism strategy, its blue economy strategy, as well as in the Common Fisheries Policy"*, and by calling again for a pan-European study to be funded and conducted by the EU, encompassing the environmental as well as the economic and social impacts of marine and freshwater recreational fisheries in Europe.

In her conclusion, **MEP Grace O'Sullivan** added that *"comprehensive data will show the potential of the sector to deliver in a number of areas. The contribution of anglers is substantial and probably greater than our estimates. The angling community can contribute to the recovery and to building the resilience of the tourism sector"*.

¹ Tourism Development International, [Socio-Economic Study of Recreational Angling in Ireland](#), July 2013



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 panellists' presentations and the report of the event will be published on that page.

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 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 Trade Tackle 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 million affiliated members to EAA's 17 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.