



Recreational anglers urge the EU to step up support for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures

Climate change has both direct and indirect impacts on the aquatic environment and the European recreational fisheries sector: shifts in fish stocks distributions, extreme weather events, changes in river stream, increasing water temperature, etc. The sector is particularly active in projects to help mitigate those impacts but adequate EU policy, funding and research are crucial to help the sector to adapt.

Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) taking place in November 2021 in Glasgow, **MEP Niclas Herbst (Germany, EPP Group)**, Chair of the Forum, and **MEP Franc Bogovič (Slovenia, EPP Group)** co-chaired on 7 September the European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment webinar addressing the impacts of climate change on the recreational fisheries sector.

MEP Franc Bogovič recalled that climate change has been identified as one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. He explained that the problem is not only the increase of average temperatures but also the extreme highs and lows of temperatures in different seasons, even during a very short period of time, that can have dramatic effects on the environment. Furthermore, he highlighted *“the need to find win-win solutions that involve protecting, restoring and sustainably managing ecosystems to build resilience”*.

MEP Niclas Herbst stressed the importance to look at the impact of climate change on recreational fisheries. *“It is essential to understand how it affects our marine and freshwater ecosystems and how to best prepare the sectors that depend on it, such as the recreational fisheries”*, he said.

Three panellists took the floor to discuss the various impacts of climate change on the aquatic environment and on the recreational fisheries sector. Regarding the freshwater environment, **Marijan Govedič**, Director of the Centre for Cartography of Fauna and Flora (Slovenia), insisted on the need to consider both the visible (water regimes and temperature) and invisible changes on rivers (in the interstitial and riparian zones) which affect the natural resilience of ecosystems. Adding to that, **Igor Miličič**, Secretary General of the Fishing Association of Slovenia, described the negative impact of climate change on fly fishing tourism in Slovenia and the uncertainty it creates, as well as mitigation activities in which anglers can be involved such as restoring riparian growth.

Regarding the marine environment, **David Mitchell**, Chair of the European Anglers Alliance' Sea Subgroup, drew attention to some challenges and opportunities, focusing on the North Sea and shifting fish stocks distribution. He argued that **further research into the impacts of climate change on fisheries and dependent communities should be funded by the EU** and that the recreational fisheries sector needs **recognition from the EU given its economic importance and potential jobs at stake when it comes to climate adaptation**.

In addition, **Olivier Portrat**, CEO of the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA), called on the EU and Member States **to support anglers' and angling clubs' habitat restoration projects as well as projects linking restoration or restocking activities and angling tourism**. Nevertheless,

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those efforts may be pointless if there is no understanding of such phenomenon, including at the EU level, notes Olivier Portrat. *“By better understanding climate change impact, we will take better policy decisions”*, he argued.

In conclusion, **MEP Niclas Herbst** finished the event by an important statement: *“We know that anglers are a big part of the solution. Who else could do it if not the recreational fisheries sector?”*



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.

The EAA recently adopted its position paper on climate change. The position paper can be downloaded [here](#).

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 [here](#).

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 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.