By LinusYoungSung

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Baltic Sea: Greens/EFA push for better protection

Multiannual Plan for the Baltic Sea

Today, the European Parliament adopted Greens/EFA MEP Isabella Lövin's report on the Baltic Sea report negotiated over the past year in the Committee on Fisheries (PECH). The report is the most far-reaching of its kind on the Baltic Sea ever adopted by the Parliament.

MEP Isabella Lövin, European Parliament's rapporteur on the report, comments:

“After years of irresponsible management and political failure, the European Parliament is finally sending a clear message to the European Commission and EU governments: business as usual is over. The Baltic Sea cannot survive more empty promises and delayed action. It is time to rebuild our sea. Millions of citizens across the eight EU Member States surrounding the Baltic expect politicians to take responsibility — and with this report, Parliament is finally delivering on that expectation.

“A demand for a ban on industrial trawling is something the Greens have long fought for. The fact that it has now become the Parliament’s official position is a major win for us – especially in a parliament that is so right-leaning. With this decision, small-scale fishing is now being prioritised — the kind of fishing that puts food on people’s tables — instead of industrial fishing that mainly fish for animal feed production.”

Background:

The report concludes that the multiannual management plan for the Baltic Sea has failed to meet its objectives. It expresses clear dissatisfaction with the current management framework and calls on the European Commission to change course and propose a recovery and rebuilding plan for the Baltic Sea. At the same time, it establishes that an ecosystem-based approach must guide all Baltic Sea policy going forward.

The Parliament also calls for new scientific advice for setting fishing quotas, placing the ecosystem as a whole at the centre—taking into account entire food webs and interactions between species rather than individual fish stocks. It further stresses the need to fully implement the requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive for healthy fish stocks, including a proper age and size structure. Scientific advice should also include precautionary buffers and automatic measures that are triggered when stocks fall below critical levels.

More:

At the end of 2024, Isabella Lövin was tasked with leading the European Parliament’s own-initiative report on the Baltic Sea. The report that was approved in the PECH committee contained a call for a halt of industrial trawling until the stocks have recovered. It also assessed the effectiveness of the multiannual management plan in force since 2016. The report contains both sharp criticism and concrete proposals for measures needed to reverse the current environmental decline.

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