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EU Fisheries

Power struggle between Commission and Council jeopardises fisheries

EU fisheries ministers are expected to decide on fishing quotas for the Baltic Sea when they meet at tomorrow's council (Tuesday, 26 October). Green MEPs are concerned about reports that the Council will again set fishing limits too high.

Ahead of the Fisheries Council meeting, Green MEPs **Isabella Lövin** (Sweden) and **Raul Romeva** (Spain) said:

"We are deeply concerned about indications that fisheries ministers could reject the Commission's proposals on fishing limits for some fish stocks in the Baltic Sea. Voting for excessive fishing limits would clearly sabotage any chance of putting fisheries in the area on a sustainable basis, from either an environmental or a social point of view.

"Ask any minister if they are in favour of sustainable fisheries and the answer will be 'yes, of course, we want to protect jobs and fish stocks' but the history of past Council meetings shows that they are simply lying. The European Commission has proposed catch limits that would help depleted stocks to recover, an essential step if the EU is ever to achieve sustainable fisheries management and stop being the example of how not to manage fisheries. Even the Commission's proposal is a bare minimum and does not comply with the EU's international commitments and its own legislation. It is irresponsible and reckless for ministers to consider even higher quotas.

"Fisheries ministers must stop defending the short-term interests of a few powerful operators and think, for the first time, about the future of coastal communities that depend upon the recovery of so many depleted fish stocks, the very same they pretend to care about. They must accept the Commission's proposal."

Notes to editor:

❑ Overall, 80% of fish stocks in the NE Atlantic are either outside safe biological limits or they cannot be assessed due to poor data according to the European Commission (COM (2010) 241 final).

❑ The EU treaties and the Common Fisheries Policy include the requirement for a precautionary approach which would set limits even lower than the COM proposal; this is especially true for salmon.

❑ The Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 agreed to allow stocks to recover by 2015.

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