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[Press release](#) | 16.01.2024

MEPs sink attempt to gut EU fishing safeguards

Today, Members of the European Parliament voted down a proposal from the Council and Commission to circumvent normal procedures in order to remove safeguards that stop fish stocks from collapsing. The Greens/EFA Group have long been in the forefront for sustainable fisheries policies and welcome the decision taken today.

On Thursday, the Parliament will vote on its report on the EU action plan to protect and restore marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries. The action plan was presented by the Commission in February 2023. It is an important component of the biodiversity strategy and the Green Deal promoting sustainable management of fisheries and the protection of the marine environment.

Grace O'Sullivan MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Fisheries Committee, comments:

"The EU made a legal commitment to end overfishing by 2020. Member States have failed to achieve that and they are now facing the repercussions, as citizens and civil society groups are now taking them to court over the failure to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems. In response, the Council and Commission tried to legalise overfishing through the back door by removing an important safeguard to prevent the collapse of fish stocks. I am proud to say today that the European Parliament successfully stood its ground and backed our fishing communities and our oceans."

"However, there is worrying backtracking on the protection of marine biodiversity in the EU Action Plan. It echoes the events surrounding the Nature Restoration Law and the Pesticide Reduction Directive. Once again, the EPP has been preoccupied with supporting the big fishing industries. In doing so, they have ignored scientific evidence and downplayed the impact of certain fishing techniques, such as bottom trawling, on the ecosystems of the seabed. This strategic calculation is not only disastrous for the health of marine areas or our food security, but it also overlooks the objective environmental and socio-economic benefits of effectively protected marine areas".

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Responsible MEPs



Grace O'Sullivan

Member

Contact person



Helena Hellstrom

Harassment Prevention and Response Officer

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