

Commissioner Vella to urge for sustainable Baltic fisheries at AGRIFISH Council



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EU Fisheries ministers are meeting at the AGRIFISH Council in Luxembourg on 15 and 16 October to discuss the Commission's proposal on the Baltic Sea fishing opportunities for 2019 and reach a political agreement. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, will present the proposal, and urge ministers to set fishing opportunities at sustainable levels.

Fishermen could receive good news this year, as the Commission proposed to increase Total Allowable Catches for plaice, Western cod, sprat, Gulf of Riga herring, and Main Basin salmon stocks. The scientific advice from the [International Council on the Exploration of the Seas](#) [2] shows that these stocks have been recovering thanks to the sustainable management over the past years and the efforts of our fishermen. The increased fishing opportunities will have a positive impact on the profitability of the fleets, both for small-scale coastal fleets and industrial fleet segments, in the Baltic Sea.

Not all stocks have seen a similar positive evolution, however, and further effort is needed to ensure all stocks are restored to levels that allow for sustainable exploitation. Commissioner Vella will particularly point out the necessity to reduce the quotas for Western herring and Central herring. The most recent scientific advice shows that this is necessary to ensure that enough offspring is produced to keep the stock within its safe biological limits.

In addition, Commissioner Vella will discuss with Ministers the preparation for the upcoming meeting of the **International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, ICCAT**, which will take place from 12 to 19 November in Dubrovnik, Croatia. A decade after the launch of successful EU-led efforts to halt the decline of the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin tuna, ICCAT will explore how to move from the current recovery plan towards a new management plan. Another topic

of discussion at the meeting in Dubrovnik will be a possible new management framework for tropical tunas, in particular bigeye tuna, which is currently overfished.

Finally, the Commissioner will also participate in an exchange of views on the **EU-Norway annual consultation** in the framework of the bilateral fisheries agreement. The consultations with Norway on fisheries arrangements for 2019 will take place in Bergen at the end of November.

The press conference can be [followed online](#) [3] at the end of the negotiations.

For more information:

[European Commission proposal for Baltic fishing opportunities](#) [4]

[Baltic multiannual fisheries management plan](#) [5]

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[2] <http://www.ices.dk/Pages/default.aspx>

[3] <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/commission-proposes-baltic-sea-fishing-opportunities-2019-increased-quotas-plaice-and-western-cod_en

[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_2016.191.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2016:191:TOC