

Europêche welcomes Council agreement on 2026 Baltic catch limits

- Press Release -

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Europêche welcomes today's political agreement by EU fisheries ministers on the 2026 catch limits for key Baltic Sea fish stocks. The sector particularly recognises that the final Council agreement represents a major improvement compared to the initial European Commission proposal, which would have resulted in the closure of many fishing companies across the Baltic region. The decision more effectively balances environmental sustainability with socioeconomic realities in setting Total Allowable Catches (TACs). For key species such as cod and Western herring, the revised measures will help preserve a minimum level of activity and maintain the viability of remaining fleets while continuing to support stock recovery.

While the agreement offers limited relief for some fisheries through increased opportunities for sprat and central Baltic herring, Europêche underlines that the overall situation in the Baltic remains extremely difficult for fishing communities. Fishers have already implemented substantial reductions and restrictive measures to allow the recovery of fish stocks, yet their livelihoods are increasingly threatened by external pressures.

Kenn Skau Fischer, Europêche, stated: *"We welcome the Council's efforts to strike a better balance between environmental sustainability and the socioeconomic survival of Baltic fishers. This outcome brings some breathing space for many Baltic fleets that are currently struggling to survive. Fishers have already borne the brunt of drastic reductions and closures, yet the ecosystem remains in a fragile state due to factors far beyond fisheries management. It is time for the EU to act decisively against all major stressors in the Baltic Sea — including nutrient pollution, chemical contaminants, climate change and predator impacts — while ensuring inclusive governance that fully involves the fisheries sector."*

The fishing sector has shown responsibility and resilience under the Common Fisheries Policy, implementing unprecedented reductions to aid stock recovery. However, without addressing the broader environmental and predator pressures undermining these efforts, such sacrifices risk being in vain. Europêche therefore reiterates its call on the EU to adopt effective management measures for seals and cormorants, as requested by several Member States, and to establish socio-economic mitigation mechanisms for affected fishing communities — including financial support, flexible temporary cessation schemes, compensation systems and transition assistance.

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[Fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2026 – table](#)