



Europêche calls for a level playing field at EU-China Blue Forum

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The Chinese Ministry of natural resources and the European Commission organised last Saturday in Shenzhen (China) the second Ocean Forum under the EU-China Blue Partnership for the Oceans. The goal: to ensure effective ocean governance for the conservation and sustainable use of the seas and its resources. The Forum brought together stakeholders from both sides, including Member States representatives, the business sector, academia, think-tanks and NGOs. Europêche appreciated the genuine engagement with China and called on all parties to drive global efforts towards sustainability, effective fisheries control and transparency, as it is applied by the EU authorities, to ensure that all fleets play by the same rules.

During the conference, high-level authorities from EU and China, showed a strong spirit of commitment to enhance coordination and cooperation in global fora, such as the FAO and international fisheries management bodies (RFMOs) with the goal to promote better governance, science, compliance and science-based fisheries management. China particularly expressed its wish to work with the EU to tackle climate change and illegal (IUU) fishing.

Daniel Voces, managing director of Europêche, declared: *“Achieving sustainable fisheries requires a holistic approach that combines science, policy, enforcement and stakeholder engagement. All these elements are integrated in the current international conventions¹, which are the common denominator of what should be considered by all countries in the world as the accepted level of sustainability. The international community needs to ratify and implement those rules at once. China, as the most prominent fishing nation in the world, must take responsibility and be instrumental in its region and in global arena to drive change. We need a global race to the top, not to the bottom”.*

All participants agreed that international cooperation is fundamental to create momentum as well as to boost innovation, knowledge and capacity building in developing countries.

Mr Voces concluded: “The European market demands nothing less than high standards and expects fleets from all countries to operate with the same level of sustainability as European fleets. This is crucial to ensure fair competition within the EU market. The EU cannot allow a situation where it opens its doors to products of questionable origin and practices, while burdening its own industry with rigorous sustainability requirements and controls”.

In this context, Mr Voces reminded that, as long as the situation does not change, it is imperative for the EU to continue using its internal market and fisheries policies to combat illegal fishing and labour abuse as well as to drive global change. This approach not only preserves the sustainability of European waters but also fosters equitable competition.

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¹ UNCLOS, PSMA, C188, WTO fish subsidies, CTA, CBD, BBNJ, STCW-F