



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

Europêche calls on von der Leyen to ensure political neutrality during interim fisheries period

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Europêche, the leading trade body representing the fishing industry in Europe, has formally requested Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to address the imminent vacancy that will be left by Commissioner Sinkevičius and ensure stability in fisheries governance during this transitional period.

In a letter addressed to President von der Leyen, Europêche underscored two critical requests for the Commission President's immediate attention. First, the sector appreciated her decision to appoint a dedicated Fisheries Commissioner for the upcoming term, emphasizing the need for a true balance between biodiversity conservation, a competitive fishing fleet, and food security. An equilibrium that was clearly lacking in the previous legislative term, according to Europêche.

Second, Europêche also called for enhanced focus on primary food production and food sovereignty, advocating for these issues to be elevated to the Vice-Presidency level within the Commission's agenda and structure.

With Commissioner Sinkevičius set to assume a parliamentary seat following the recent European elections, Europêche highlighted the impending political gap in the Commission's structure. The organization outlined two possible scenarios for addressing this vacancy: either leaving the position open until the new college of Commissioners takes office or appointing an interim Commissioner. In either case, Europêche urged that any interim leadership refrain from exercising provisional political mandates. Instead, the sector calls for institutional continuity and stability.

The letter to President von der Leyen voiced the fishing industry's apprehensions regarding some of the decisions and actions taken by the outgoing Commissioner that may have been influenced by his candidacy for Parliament. For instance, in 2023, the Commissioner considered the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) fit for purpose. However, only a year later, during the election campaign, he called for a full evaluation with a view to revising the CFP. To prevent a recurrence of such issues, Europêche stresses that the EU should not grant political mandates during transitory regimes.

Javier Garat, President of Europêche, emphasized the sensitivity of transitory political periods, stating, *'During these interim times, it is crucial that decisions affecting our industry are made with institutional continuity and necessary democratic backing. We urge President von der Leyen to ensure that any interim arrangements prioritize stability over political interests.'*

Europêche reaffirmed its commitment to constructive engagement with the European Commission, pledging to support ongoing dialogue and collaboration in the lead-up to the new legislative term.

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