

Commissioner Meeting Crucial for Irish Fishing Industry

Seafood Ireland Alliance urges EU to ensure fairness in quotas, workable rules, and protection for coastal communities.

Brussels, 2nd Sept: The Seafood Ireland Alliance said its meeting in Brussels this week (this morning) with EU Fisheries Commissioner Costas Kadić was a crucial step in pressing for fairer quotas and workable fishing rules to protect coastal communities.

The delegation expressed satisfaction that Commissioner Kadić agreed to visit Ireland again to see first-hand the challenges our fishing industry is facing.

“We also secured a commitment from the Commissioner to follow up on a number of key strategic issues for our sector,” said Aodh O Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO). “Ireland contributes hugely to Europe’s seafood, yet we do not get a fair share in return. We have 12% of EU waters but less than 6% of the quotas. The EU must now act.”

The Seafood Ireland Alliance said the meeting with Commissioner Kadić was an important step towards achieving greater fairness in quota talks and practical solutions on sustainability.

The meeting was facilitated by Fine Gael MEP Maria Walsh. Donegal Senator Manus Boyle, a long-standing supporter of the fishing sector, also attended.

The Alliance also noted the recent comments by Marine Minister Timmy Dooley following his meeting with Danish Fisheries Minister Jacob Jensen in Copenhagen. Denmark currently holds the presidency for the EU Council of Ministers and will chair the negotiations on quotas in December. “It is welcome that Minister Dooley has raised the challenges of zero-catch advice and unsustainable practices by some non-EU states,” said O Donnell. “That recognition must now translate into EU-level reforms that work for Irish fishers.”

Dominic Rihan of the Killybegs Fishermen’s Organisation said Ireland cannot afford more empty promises. “We need fairer quotas and workable solutions, especially on mixed fisheries in the Celtic Sea,” he said.

The Alliance has repeatedly highlighted that “zero catch” advice on cod, whiting and haddock — leading to small bycatch quotas — is unworkable. “Irish fishers need viable options, not impossible restrictions,” said Rihan.

Leaders also warned of wider threats. Overfishing by some non-EU states continues to undermine shared mackerel and blue whiting stocks. Rigid quota cuts likely for 2026 will damage processors and risk jobs in coastal communities. Additionally, the Hague

Preferences remain essential to secure Ireland's fair share of opportunities under the Common Fisheries Policy.

Brendan Byrne of the IFPEA stressed the economic impact. "When quotas are slashed without flexibility, processors cannot maintain throughput. The knock-on effect for jobs and exports is severe," he said.

Patrick Murphy of the ISWFPO pointed to the imbalance. "Ireland has some of the richest waters in Europe, yet others take more from them than we do," he said. "The EU must fix this imbalance."

The Alliance welcomed the support of Maria Walsh MEP and Senator Manus Boyle, noting their presence demonstrated broad political backing for the seafood sector.

Seafood Ireland is an alliance of five organisations — IFPO, KFO, IS&WFPO, IS&EFPO and IFPEA — representing Ireland's catching and processing sector.

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Notes to Editors:

Seafood Ireland was formed in 2024 and is an alliance of five fishing and processing bodies. These are the Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO), the Irish South & West Fish Producer's Organisation (IS&WFPO), the Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation (IS&EFPO) and the Irish Fish Processors & Exporters Association (IFPEA). The organisations are committed to working together to strengthen the voice of the Irish fishing industry.