

MEPs Urged to Act on Fisheries Crisis

Tues 11 November 2025: The **Seafood Ireland Alliance** will meet Irish MEPs in Brussels tomorrow, (**Wed 12 Nov, 14:00 European Parliament**), to press for decisive EU action to protect Ireland's seafood sector and coastal communities.

The Alliance — representing Ireland's leading fishing and processing organisations — will outline the key steps needed to stabilise the industry and safeguard employment as the sector faces another difficult year. The delegation will call for immediate progress on **Hague Preferences**, **emergency financial support**, and a **fleet restructuring programme** to address the mounting pressures on the Irish fleet.

They will also urge MEPs to support a **review of licensing and quota allocations**, stronger **representation for Ireland on the EU Pêche Committee**, and fairer **trade measures under Regulation 1026/2012** to ensure a level playing field for Irish operators. The Alliance will highlight the need for a comprehensive **BIM impact analysis** to quantify the effects of recent quota reductions, rising operational costs, and the ongoing imbalance in quota distribution since Brexit.

Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), said Ireland's fishing communities are at a breaking point. "This meeting is about accountability and delivery. We need Ireland's MEPs to champion immediate, practical support at EU level."

"Coastal communities are running out of time," said **Dominic Rihan**, CEO of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO). "Without targeted financial assistance and fair quota access, Ireland's seafood sector faces irreversible damage."

Patrick Murphy, CEO of the Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation said the Alliance's proposals represent a clear and achievable roadmap. "Irish fishers must not continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of the burden of cuts in fishing opportunities and quota transfers to third countries. We need Europe to implement the measures at their disposal to restore balance".

Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association said the Alliance "will also reaffirm its position that Ireland must secure **zero access and zero transfer** under the current **EU-Norway negotiations**, unless Irish fishing interests are fully protected. These priorities are vital to re-establish fairness within the Common Fisheries Policy and to restore confidence in the future of the industry.

The meeting follows September's initial engagement with Irish MEPs. "We aim to build unified political support ahead of the **December Fisheries Council**," said John Lynch CEO of Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation, "where key quota and policy decisions will be finalised."

The **Seafood Ireland Alliance** delegation comprises **John Lynch (ISEFPO)**, **Brendan Byrne (IFPEA)**, **Patrick Murphy (ISWFPO)**, **Dominic Rihan (KFO)**, and **Aodh O'Donnell (IFPO)**.

ENDS/

Notes to Editors:

- The "**Hague Preferences**" mechanism was created to compensate Ireland and the UK for their heavy dependence on fishing — but it is not always fully applied. It only comes into play when Total Allowable Catches (TACs) are due to fall below certain quotas.

- **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.
- **EU Regulation 1026/2012** allows the European Commission to impose trade measures against non-EU countries that permit non-sustainable fishing of shared stocks, which can include import restrictions on fish caught by those countries. These measures are a tool to enforce the conservation of fish stocks and encourage countries to cooperate with EU international obligations. A recent amendment proposal aims to improve clarity on how the regulation is triggered and strengthens the due process for dialogue before measures are taken. Details [here](#).
- [ICES](#) has recommended drastic quota cuts for 2026:
 - **Mackerel: -70%**
 - **Blue whiting: -41%**
 - **Boarfish: -22%**
- For Ireland, this could mean:
 - Mackerel quota falling from **78,000 tonnes in 2020** to just **10,800 tonnes in 2026** — an **85% reduction**.
 - A direct loss of **€66 million** in landings value for mackerel alone.
 - Total losses to the wider Irish economy estimated at **€200 million** when processing, logistics, and export value are included.