

EUROPECHE STRENGTHENS ITS WORK TO SUPPORT FISHING INDUSTRY OF EUROPE

Appointment of new Managing Director signals fresh drive to communicate the modern face of the sector to the public and policymakers

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Europêche, the foremost trade body representing the fishing industry in Europe, is strengthening its activities to champion the sector and ensure its vital contribution to the economy, social fabric and food supply chain is fully recognised by EU policymakers.

With twelve member organisations across nine countries, Europêche represents 80,000 fishermen and 45,000 vessels within the EU fleet and which provide 48bn fish-based meals a year, injecting €41.3bn into the European economy.

Europêche plays a leading role in ensuring the views of fishermen and the concerns of the industry are heard in the European Commission, Council and Parliament when setting policy and regulations. It is focused on supporting what it calls its 'three pillars of sustainability' – environmental, social and economic.

As part of the organisation's reinvigorated approach, it has appointed Kathryn Stack, former Senior Policy Adviser on Fisheries Policy in the European Parliament, as Managing Director.

She said:

"The European fishing industry is the most well managed and regulated in the world. With tens of thousands of fishermen and their families relying on the industry for work, millions relying on it for food and Governments across the continent relying on it to contribute to their economies, the fishing industry has a greater impact than most people realise. This is all done whilst we also take a pro-active role in ensuring fishing activities are carried out in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way. The fishing industry relies on healthy ecosystems for abundant stocks. We want a sustainable fishery and a sustainable sector."

Stack continued:

"For too long, the sector has struggled to make itself heard among the throng of newly-emerging environmental groups. Fishing is a heavily regulated industry. The fishermen we represent have made huge strides in recent years, not only to comply with new European regulations designed to ensure the sustainability of fishing practices, but also to act proactively to safeguard stock levels and their own

livelihood in the years to come. Ultimately, we are all striving towards the same outcome: to ensure resource protection. What is important is that regulation is reasoned and proportionate, based on proven science, good environmental practices and provides for the long-term sustainability of the sector. The current image of the EU fishing industry does not represent the reality of our fishing operations.”

Europeche members include the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisation and the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation – the industry bodies which represents the interests of the United Kingdom’s 6,415-strong fleet, which lands 599,523 tonnes of fish each year.

Europêche has renewed its drive to illustrate how sustainable and responsible commercial fishing can be. Currently 66 European fisheries hold Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation, an official recognition of the sustainable fishing practices in operation, with a further 29 currently under assessment.

European fishermen operate within strictly defined quotas, which are often set below the Maximum Sustainable Yield advice suggested by scientists. Such a policy has allowed the majority of European fish stocks to experience a significant recovery in recent years, with a recent study declaring that the majority of assessed stocks were being fished sustainably¹.

Javier Garat, president of Europêche, said: “ Europêche is here to support the excellent work done by our fishermen in this crucial industry. Our fishermen deserve appreciation and recognition for the work they do in often challenging conditions to provide food for so many people, whilst also helping towards creating and maintaining a sustainable marine environment.”

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¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-23358256>
[http://www.cell.com/current-biology/abstract/S0960-9822\(13\)00707-0](http://www.cell.com/current-biology/abstract/S0960-9822(13)00707-0)