

BalticSea2020

Öppet brev till alla fiskeministrar i Östersjöregionen

2011-02-28

Alla Europas fiskeministrar är inbjudna av Kommissionär Maria Damanaki till ett särskilt möte i Bryssel imorgon. Mötet kommer att handla om hur det skulle vara möjligt att inrätta ett förbud mot utkast av fisk. Inför detta möte har Baltic Sea 2020s grundare och styrelseordförande, Björn Carlson, skrivit ett brev till Östersjöregionen fiskeministrar och uppmanar dem att stödja Kommissionärens förslag. Läs hela brevet här (endast på engelska)

Dear Minister,

URGENT - In preparation for the High Level Meeting on eradicating discards, 1 March

You and other fisheries Ministers will meet on Tuesday 1 March in Brussels to discuss how to end discards of fish. Commissioner Damanaki's initiative has given all Baltic Sea Ministers a chance to show their common leadership and end the indecency of discarding.

In the Saltsjöbaden declaration 2009 the Baltic Sea ministers agreed to develop a roadmap for how discards could be eliminated in the Baltic Sea. The Commissioners proposal is in line with the Saltsjöbaden declaration and for the Baltic Sea it can be implemented already year one!

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that discards are particularly harmful to the Baltic Sea cod stock, which has been under heavy fishing pressure for decades. Since there is little mixed fishery in the Baltic the discards mostly consist of small, undersized cod. Cod is the main top predator in the Baltic Sea. Overfished cod stocks result in an increase of sprat and/or herring stocks, which in turn depletes zooplankton which these fish feed on. The end result is excessive amounts of phytoplankton as there is not enough zooplankton that feed on phytoplankton. The interaction between fish and its food, has direct bearing on water quality.

From our perspective, the rebuilding of the Baltic Sea cod stocks to levels that help curbing excessive algal production is in the short and medium term probably the most important measure to improve the water quality in the Baltic Sea. Prohibiting discards will achieve this. Landing quotas should be replaced by catch quotas, where the fishermen have to land everything they catch. Avoiding catching small fish by modifying gear selectivity and "moving on" provisions will then become a natural development. It is important to develop regulations which encourage fishermen to fish in such a manner that they catch only the fish that they want to land.

I ask that you take this opportunity to kick start the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and back concrete steps to ban discarding today. There is overwhelming public support throughout the Baltic to end this needless waste of fish.

Sincerely,

Björn Carlson
Chariman of Baltic Sea 2020

Cc: Commissioner Damanaki