



Dear Commissioner Vella,

Dear Karsten!

It has come to my attention that the Commission is discussing the possibility to use the emergency measures foreseen in article 12 of the CFP for the Eastern Baltic Cod.

The state of the Cod stocks in the southern parts of the Baltic Sea is indeed highly critical due to overfishing and a large seal population. As one of the most outspoken advocates for sustainable fisheries in the European Parliament the last mandate, I of course welcome decisive actions by the Commission to improve the situation. However, a full stop imposed by the Commission is not the best way to proceed.

The situation of the Cod varies greatly between different areas of the Baltic Sea. While catches in the southern parts of the Baltic Sea often are small and in a bad state, catches in ICES zone 29 are reported to be better than in a long time. Researchers at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences are for example currently looking into the matter in order to explain why the Cod seems to be doing better in that part of the Baltic than in others.

Imposing a full stop for Cod fisheries also in areas where the situation is not critical would have very severe consequences. For small-scale fishermen fishing in ICES area 29, Cod is essential for the survival of their businesses. While large-scale fishermen can target other species, the small ones cannot.

Besides the obvious loss of income for fishermen, such an action will also have wider political ramifications. The EU is often criticised for imposing "one size fits all" solutions without taking local conditions properly into account. I am afraid this would be a textbook example of such an action. How could we explain to fishermen that their activities have to be stopped because the state of the stock is critical in other waters where they don't fish themselves? In times of Euroscepticism, this would be extra sensitive.

I have many times with great concern noticed the unwillingness of the Council to take the necessary actions to end overfishing. I can therefore understand that there is a willingness in the Commission to use any tools available to solve the problem. I would however urge you, Commissioner, to take the whole situation into account and to wait for the October Council to discuss what actions should be taken to ensure sustainable levels of Cod also in the Baltic.

Thank you for taking this into account. I look forward to continue working together with you to secure sustainable and profitable fisheries in all EU waters.

With my best regards,

Nils Torvalds
Member of the European Parliament