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Joe Borg: coastal stakeholders' participation is key to sustainable development of maritime activities

Stakeholder participation in the consultation process that will soon be launched on a future maritime policy for the European Union, and in fisheries management, is crucial for the future of regions such as Brittany. This is the message that Joe Borg, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, will take to Brittany during his two day-visit to the region. Tomorrow morning, Mr Borg will be visiting shellfish growing businesses in Carantec, before touring the port facilities in Roscoff, where he will meet Dominique Bussereau, French Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. In the afternoon, the Commissioner will address a conference, in Brest, organised by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, on the state of play of the Commission Green Paper on an EU maritime policy. On Saturday, he will visit the ports of Saint Guénolé and Le Guilvinec where he will meet with regional and local authorities and sector's representatives.

"Brittany has a long tradition with the sea. This is why it is an important partner in both Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. I am looking forward to meeting stakeholders and exploring with them how best to optimise the potential of sea-based activities in a sustainable way." Commissioner Borg said.

In his address to the CPMR, Commissioner Borg will say that the heading of the Conference – Regions at the heart of the Green Paper - is fitting. The Commission is preparing to publish this consultation paper before the summer on the potential of a Maritime Policy for the Union. He will say that the challenge is to find a balance between economic growth from sea-related activities and the protection of the environment which is essential to their sustainability.

In his meetings with the fishing sector, on Friday and Saturday, Commissioner Borg will encourage stakeholders to continue their efforts in setting up Regional Advisory Councils. With a long tradition of fishing throughout EU waters, the Breton fleets have an interest in almost all of these stakeholder-led organisations, designed to ensure their involvement in the fisheries management process. He will also welcome the contribution of the sector in enhancing the selectivity of fishing gear in the Nephrops fishery, off the Breton coast, to allow the escape of young fish from the trawled nets.

The contribution of stakeholders, both in the fisheries and fish and shellfish farming, to minimising the impact of these activities on the marine environment, is crucial to ensuring their future. A healthy and balanced environment benefits both fish stocks and aquaculture by providing good yields of safe fisheries products.

Furthermore, stakeholders' involvement in the management process and interaction with scientists and fisheries managers, for example, should increase their trust in the process and encourage compliance with the measures to whose setting up they have contributed. In this context, the creation of the Community Fisheries Control Agency, this summer, should help towards achieving more uniform and effective control and monitoring of fishing activities – a development which stakeholders have been calling for.

Other themes to be discussed during the Commissioner's visit include the economic difficulties of the fishing fleets and possible measures; the future European Fisheries Fund for the period 2007-2013, to be discussed at the April Council and measures to rebuild depleted stocks.

For programme of the visit, see [Memo/06/77](#)