

SURPRISE EFTTEX U-TURN

2023 organisers are ready to do it again

July 2023 Issue 186

Angling International

Essential reading for buyers in the tackle trade

www.angling-international.com

No.1 FOR
TACKLE NEWS
& IN-DEPTH
ANALYSIS

Catching up with EFTTA's Jan Kappel

EFTTEX in June offered *Angling International* the perfect opportunity to meet face-to-face with a key member of the EFTTA team – the Association's lobbyist in Brussels, **Jan Kappel** – to review the challenges facing the trade in Europe and his priorities defending its interests.



How did you get the job with EFTTA?

It was back in 2001. Through the Danish Angling Association, I was approached by the European Anglers Alliance to set up an office in Brussels and work as a lobbyist. The job was to put angling on the Brussels map and to protect not only the anglers' interests but the tackle trade's interests as well. EAA and EFTTA share the cost for my work.

And after all these years, what is still your biggest frustration in the job?

The workload – tough priorities are needed. The task of monitoring EU and international policies and legislation of importance to the industry has grown in recent years in both volume and complexity. To make sure I provide quality input to our decision-makers, which they will actually listen to, I need to make myself familiar with the details. Hot topics on the agenda include lead, litter, plastics and protected areas.

And what is your biggest fear for the industry?

Anything that can harm the industry and the angling community either in the long or short-term. Today, angling enjoys a lot of support from most members of the public, but animal protection and rights organisations are campaigning continuously to turn that around.



This month in deep NO.4 THE LOBBYIST



No one wants to talk about it, but we cannot hide from the animal welfare groups who claim that they finally have proof that fish feel pain and suffer. We know from Switzerland and Germany what that could mean for other countries sooner or later – no fishing with the intent of not killing the catch to eat and rules or rulings about how long you can fight a fish. It could be worse than that, of course, but I don't want to be scaremongering about it. These animal protection brigades, vegans included, are well organised across the borders globally.



What is the toughest challenge you face in your job?

Basically, EFTTA and EAA could do with more people in Brussels. By comparison, the hunting fraternity has 14 people in its office – recreational fishing has me. However, this doesn't mean I am the only person lobbying the EU and the international policy makers, so does EFTTA's CEO, Olivier Portrat, as well as staff at the national angling organisations. Also, the consultancy 'Alienor', based in Brussels, is lobbying the European Parliament for EFTTA and EAA.

But tough priorities must be made. Sometimes, two important meetings are run at the same time. I have to choose between them.

What will fishing in Europe look like in five years?

Hopefully, not much different, but – for sure – the industry has to become more 'green'. For one thing, pending EU lead legislation proposals regarding sinkers and lures may have been fully phased in – if not it will be soon after.

What has been the highlight of your time in Brussels?

There has been quite a few, but the biggest achievement for me and everybody else involved in the EFTTA-EAA lobby project is that angling today is a force to be reckoned with at the European level.

When I first started 22 years ago members of the European Parliament and the European Commission did not know anything about us or the size and value of recreational angling in Europe. Today, EFTTA and EAA are recognised as genuine representatives for the industry and the angling community at the European level. We are now invited to the meetings that matter and that is very important for the sport.

Why do you do it?

I like it. I used to work in the European Parliament, which is why I was hired in the first place. I know the EU system.



After more than 20 years in the same job I have the knowledge, experience and network needed to make a positive difference for the industry and the EAA.

What is a typical day in the life of Jan Kappel?

I start with reading news emails and do the first round of email responses – or go straight to a meeting. There are several meetings a week to attend in person or online and others to keep an eye on or watch via video recordings or catch up through the minutes.

Meetings often need preparation and then reports written to EFTTA and/or the EAA. There is also always a document waiting to be read or notice to be written.

Answering questions from EFTTA/EAA people or those in my network, including EU staff and others, is a daily task.

Are you an angler?

I am not a hardcore angler, but an occasional one. As a child I often fished Copenhagen harbour and only do it while I am at home in Denmark. I go boat fishing for cod and flatfish, which are my preferred fish to eat.

However, this month I am attending a shark tagging event in the Netherlands – I am hoping they will bite, but not me!