

Brussels, 22.10.2014  
MK/pb CAB (2014) 3725223

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter which reached me on September 24<sup>th</sup> on the issue of the Commission's driftnet proposal. I am happy to inform you that the meeting of my services with the UK driftnet fishers and representatives of the fishing sector was held on September 17<sup>th</sup> as scheduled.

The meeting was attended by 9 UK driftnet fishers or fishermen's representatives (around 20 people had been invited to the meeting) representing the National Federation of Fishermen's Organizations (NFFO), the New Under Ten Fishermen's Association (NUTFA), the West Mersea Fishermen Association, the Hasting Fishermen's Protection Society and the Clovelly driftnet fisheries. Unfortunately, representatives of the driftnet Welsh Fisherman's Association Ltd could not attend. No information was therefore provided on the distribution of driftnets in Wales.

During this meeting, my services and the representatives of the UK sector had a very open and frank discussion on all the issues at stake, both in terms of process and scope of the Commission proposal.

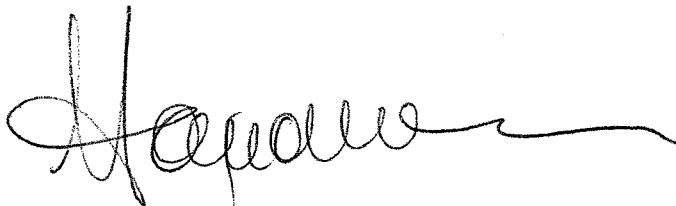
The meeting was a good opportunity to gather further information about the state of knowledge related to this fishing activity and the impact on fish stocks. It appears that there are still important gaps in terms of assessment of the use of driftnets and on their possible effect on the ecosystem.

My services also informed the representative of the sector that we are only at the start of the legislative process and that the proposal will now be discussed in the Council of Ministers and in the European Parliament.

Let me underline again that the Commission will continue listening carefully to all concerns voiced and will promote contacts with Member States, regions and stakeholders to further exchange information.

My services have indeed written to Member States requesting further information on the driftnet fisheries to better grasp all issues at stake. This will facilitate a fruitful dialogue in support of the legislative process also through regional meetings as required.

Yours sincerely,



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