

Brussels, 22.07.2014

MK/pb Ares 2690007

Dear Chair Melding,

Thank you for your letter of 16 July 2014 arguing against the total ban on driftnet fishing in EU waters.

I would like to clarify that the proposal is not to implement a "one size fits all" approach neglecting the local specificities. It is rather an answer to a genuine widespread concern on the environmental sustainability and controllability of driftnets across the EU regions. The reason why the Commission decided to propose a full driftnet ban is that it was considered the most appropriate way forward to minimise the impact of driftnets, irrespective of their size, on the marine ecosystem and to reduce as much as possible unwanted catches.

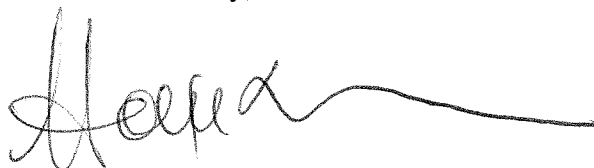
This concern has been underlined by the results of an on-line public consultation, which lasted for about six months from 27 March to 15 September 2013 and, where more than 52% of the respondents, including fishermen's cooperatives, were in favor of a total ban. The consultation had been widely publicized through different means including formal communications to the different Regional Advisory Councils and to all Member States.

Two studies were launched with a view to provide updated information from the field and consultation with stakeholders through case studies including UK fisheries.

Furthermore I have asked my services to arrange a meeting with representatives from the small scale industry that are using driftnet in the UK in order to listen to their arguments about this proposal and to hear about the situation of driftnet vessels in the UK. This meeting should take place in September and fishermen from all parts of the UK are being invited to the meeting, including fishermen from Wales.

Let me finally mention that your input and the experience from Wales are very valuable for us in this legislative process. We are only at the start of the legislative process and the proposal will now be discussed in the Council of Ministers and in the European Parliament. I would like to underline that we are listening carefully to your concerns and individual situations to take them into account in this legislative process.

Yours sincerely,



Mr David Melding AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales
CLA.Committee@wales.gov.uk