



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 15.7.2015
C(2015) 4911 final*

Dear Presidents,

The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Opinion concerning the Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EU)2015/14 as regards certain fishing opportunities for sea bass {COM(2015) 41 final}.

The Commission takes note of the positions expressed in the Opinion and would like to offer the following observations.

Firstly, the Commission would like to acknowledge the conservation actions that Ireland has taken at national level to protect sea bass stocks which have resulted in a higher level of protection than in other Member States and takes note of Ireland's commitment to develop and implement further conservation measures.

The Commission has promised a package approach for 2015 to halt the decline of sea bass. The first element of the package was the emergency measures to prohibit the targeting of sea bass by pelagic vessels during the spawning season. The second element of the package was the three fish bag limit for recreational anglers for which the Commission welcomes the Houses of the Oireachtas's support. On 20 May 2015 the Commission adopted a Council regulation on further measures with monthly catch limits for various commercial fisheries, which is the third element of the package. Furthermore the proposal contains an extension of the national prohibition on catching sea bass currently in place for Irish commercial vessels to the vessels of other Member States while in the waters adjacent to Ireland. The Commission, in conjunction with Member States' representatives, has been developing this proposal and therefore welcomes the Houses of the Oireachtas's timely contribution.

The Commission takes note of the Houses of the Oireachtas's concern that this proposal may have an adverse impact on Ireland's current conservation policies and would like to reassure the Houses of the Oireachtas that it will continue to work closely with Member States' representatives to ensure the overall coherence of proposals for sea bass.

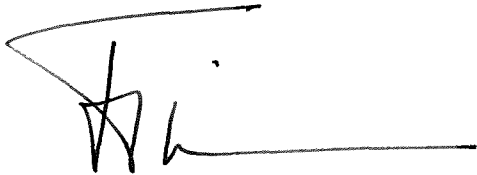
*Mr Seán BARRETT T.D.
President of the Dáil Éireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL - Dublin 2*

*Senator Paddy BURKE
President of the Séanad Éireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL - Dublin 2*

The Commission is also considering more long term measures to improve the condition of sea bass. In the long term, the management of this stock will be considered in the context of multi annual planning for the North Western Waters which is expected to be adopted by the Commission in 2016 and to be decided upon in co-decision between the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Houses of the Oireachtas and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'F' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

*Karmenu Vella
Member of the Commission*