



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 28.1.2022
C(2022)567 final*

Dear Presidents,

The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013, as regards restrictions to the access to Union waters {COM(2021) 356 final}.

The current derogations concerning restrictions to access to Union waters, as set out by Articles 5(2) and 5(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, will expire on 31 December 2022. The aim of the Commission's proposal is to extend those derogations for another period of ten years, in order to ensure continuity of the current protection measures and to avoid disrupting the balance that has developed since the introduction of this special regime.

The Commission takes seriously the concerns expressed by the Joint Committee as regards the timing of the proposal and the sensitive nature of access to waters for fishing fleets especially in the current context. However, to avoid a situation where the general rule of access for all EU flagged vessels to all EU waters without any derogation or exception would become applicable as from 1 January 2023, the Commission had to present at this stage a proposal to extend the current derogations.

The report on the overall functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy that the Commission will present in 2022 will be an opportunity for further in-depth discussions on the implementation of the policy and its future.

Discussions between the co-legislators - the European Parliament and the Council - concerning the proposal are now underway and the Commission remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached in time before the expiration of the current derogations.

The Opinion will inform the ongoing legislative negotiations on the proposal.

*Mr Seán Ó FEARGHAÍL T.D.
President of Dáil Éireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL – DUBLIN 2*

*Senator Mark DALY
President of the Seanad Éireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL – DUBLIN 2*

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

Yours faithfully,

Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President

Virginijus Sinkevičius
Member of the Commission

