



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 22.04.2015  
C(2015) 2548 final

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion concerning the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down a prohibition on driftnet fisheries, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 812/2004, (EC) No 2187/2005 and (EC) No 1967/2006 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 894/97 {COM(2014) 265 final}.*

*The Commission welcomes the support of the Senato della Repubblica for its proposal. The Commission would like to underline that the concern of the Senato della Repubblica that the provisions of the proposal could badly affect the competitiveness of EU enterprises has been taken into account when formulating the proposal. Indeed, the proposal would affect a limited number of fisheries carried out only in EU coastal waters by a limited number of multipurpose vessels whose overall fishing production is not expected to be substantially reduced. Thus no direct effects on the volume of the imports of fish and fish products to the EU are forecasted following the driftnet ban.*

*The recently adopted modifications of the Agreement for the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) will enhance the effectiveness of GFCM also in terms of better compliance and enforcement vis-à-vis the Mediterranean and Black Sea countries. This goes in the direction advocated by the Senato della Repubblica.*

*The European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) should be used to support the transition towards a total ban of small-scale driftnets. For instance it could be used to substitute currently legal driftnets with other fishing gears, provided that the new fishing gear is more selective and that the substitution is done before the entry into force of the driftnet ban.*

*The EMFF can also support, under certain conditions and not later than 31 December 2017, measures for the permanent cessation of fishing activities through the scrapping of vessels.*

*Mr Pietro GRASSO  
President of the Senate of the Republic  
Piazza Madama 00186  
Roma, Italy*

*The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) can also be used, under certain conditions, to support the transition towards a total ban of the small-scale driftnets provided that eligible expenditures are executed by the beneficiary by 31 December 2015.*

*The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council at which your government is represented.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Karmenu VELLA  
Member of the Commission*