



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 27.11.2012
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) {COM(2011) 425 final} and apologises for the long delay in replying.

Your Opinion reiterates your basic approach to the reform of the CFP which was presented by the Assembleia da República in its previous Opinion on the "Green Paper on the Future of the Common Fisheries Policy". Among other things it is pointed out that there is growing improvement in the sustainability of fishing in Portugal. The Commission takes note of your view that for Portugal the review of the CFP should be seen as a window of opportunity, taking into account risks and challenges, with a view to adopting the most appropriate positions on the balance between the environmental, economic and social dimensions of the policy.

The Assembleia notes that progress towards achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) by 2015 should be gradual due to lack of scientific data in particular as regards mixed fisheries. It is also noted that the introduction of a system of individually transferable concessions should be transitional. As regards the introduction of an obligation to land all catches it is pointed out that it is essential to systematize the data available from fisheries and fishing effort assessment methods suitable for a multispecies approach to fisheries management.

The Commission proposals emphasize that this reform is about sustainability in all possible dimensions, and believes that the different proposals ensure a balanced approach. The proposed timelines for making the necessary changes to reach the objectives are ambitious but realistic. For the obligation to land all catches, a gradual approach is set out for different stocks and this has been confirmed by the General Approach adopted by the Council of Ministers on 13 June last.

As regards improvements in consumer labelling requirements and the external dimension of the CFP, the Commission appreciates that the Assembleia's views are very much in line with the Commission's proposals. Likewise the Commission takes positive note of your conclusion that the proposal for a Regulation on the CFP represents an opportunity to strengthen the environmental, economic and social sustainability of fisheries in the EU, with a need to ensure proper management of marine stocks.

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Finally, I would like to add that the proposal for a European Maritime and Fisheries Fund¹, which was adopted by the Commission on 2 December 2011, entails support for the implementation of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and the transition to sustainable fishing and reduction of impacts on the ecosystem, which will also include the need for improved scientific information. Investments will be made in economic potential and growth. For example, the new Fund will support investments to improve health and safety on board, investments on board or concerning the gear to improve selectivity, business advisory services for individual fishermen, partnerships between fishermen and scientists as well as training and lifelong learning.

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its valuable Opinion. Its views will be duly considered by the European Commission in the course of the negotiations on the reform of the CFP. The Commission looks forward to further co-operation with the Assembly in the process of the reform of the CFP.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*