



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.VIII.2013

C(2013) 5496 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion concerning {COM (2012) 371 final}.

The Commission takes note of the concerns expressed as to the impact of the proposal on the Portuguese fleets, most of them fishing in deep waters as a consequence of Portugal's particular coastal geography. The Assembleia da República notes that most Portuguese vessels concerned are polyvalent (ie able to use different gears, including not just bottom trawls but also nets, longlines and traps).

The Commission would like to underline that the proposal seeks to incentivise fishermen to harvest deep sea species in a way that is more sustainable, not just from the perspective of the stocks themselves, but also in term of minimising the impact of the activity on the marine environment which, at great depths, is particularly fragile. For that reason, the proposal aims to phase out targeted fishing for deep sea species with bottom trawls and nets.

The Commission would like to reassure the Assembleia da República that polyvalent Portuguese vessels will be able to continue operating. The Commission is aware that the key stock for these vessels is Black Scabbardfish, which in the Island regions is fished with longlines. This activity will continue unaffected by the proposal, and the same applies to any fishing with longlines by the Portuguese mainland fleets.

The Commission also notes that the Regional Parliaments of Azores and Madeira have expressed support for the Commission's proposal.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Assembleia da República and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Connie Hedegaard
Member of the Commission*

*Ms Maria da Assunção ESTEVES
President of the
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