



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 8.6.2015
C(2015) 3630 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República 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}.

With its proposal for a total ban of driftnets, the European Commission seeks to address persisting environmental and conservation problems related to the use of this particular fishing gear. The aim is also to close any possible loopholes and avoid circumvention of the rules, thus strengthening control and enforcement on illegal drift-netting.

The Commission would like to emphasise that it undertook a broad public consultation before coming forward with its proposal. This consultation was also complemented by a number of studies and analyses. The potential socio-economic effects of the proposal were also analysed based on the data which was then available.

Despite the consultation and studies, not all stakeholders and Member States were able to provide, at that time, detailed information about the use of driftnets and their impact on protected species. This may have prevented the Commission from having a complete picture of the situation on some regional driftnet fisheries.

Therefore, further information has been sought by the Commission, in an effort to offer a more comprehensive view of the situation. The Commission has taken note of the new data provided by the Assembleia da República in its opinion and is grateful for this important input.

*Ms Maria da Assunção Andrade ESTEVES
President of the
Assembleia da República
Palácio de S. Bento
P – 1249-068 LISBOA*

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 in which your government is represented. The Commission intends to facilitate the debates and to put at the disposal of the co-legislators all necessary elements for such a process, including this additional information on the use of driftnets in Portugal.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Karmenu Vella
Member of the Commission*