



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 24.7.2018
C(2018) 3124 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the proposal for the Fishing Opportunities Regulation for 2018 {COM(2017) 645 final}.

The Fishing Opportunities Regulation for 2018, on which the Council of the European Union has reached a political agreement on 13 December 2017, implements the Common Fisheries Policy and is an important building block for achieving the objectives of this policy, including reaching exploitation rates in line with the maximum sustainable yield as soon as possible and at the latest by 2020. The Regulation, as adopted by the Council, has brought the European Union closer to this important objective. Now, the total allowable catch is set in line with the maximum sustainable yield for 53 management units in the Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea, compared to 44 in 2017 and only 5 in 2009.

Achieving the maximum sustainable yield is in the interest of the fishermen because it allows achieving the highest possible yield from a fishery in the long term. In fact, experience shows that fishermen can benefit from significantly higher profits when stocks are restored to sustainable levels.

However, in some cases of overfished species, the transition towards the maximum sustainable yield is challenging, as catches may have to be reduced significantly in the short term in order to allow the fish stock to grow. Therefore the Common Fisheries Policy allows postponing the achievement of the maximum sustainable yield to 2020 at the latest, if a Member State can demonstrate that reaching this objective sooner would seriously jeopardise the social and economic sustainability of the fishing fleets involved.

*Ms Regina BASTOS
Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Assembleia da República
Palácio de S. Bento
P – 1249-068 LISBOA*

*cc Mr Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES
President of the Assembleia da República
Palácio de S. Bento
P – 1249-068 LISBOA*

In the case for hake in Portuguese waters, the Commission agreed to reduce the total allowable catch only by 12%, instead of by 24% which would have been required to achieve the maximum sustainable yield in 2018. The Commission has also agreed to allow fishing for anchovy in Portuguese waters at the current level, instead of the suggested reduction by 20%. This is a stock for which the advice based on the maximum sustainable yield is not available yet. Therefore the Commission welcomes Spain's and Portugal's commitment, made during the 11-13 December 2017 meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, to improve data collection for this fish stock in 2018, in order to improve the availability of data for a full scientific assessment.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Karmenu Vella
Member of the Commission*