



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 22.2.2019
C(2019) 1502 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for fish stocks in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 establishing a multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) 509/2007 and (EC) 1300/2008 {COM(2018) 149 final}.

The Commission concurs with the Assembleia da República that this multiannual plan will contribute to the simplification of Union legislation and welcomes its conclusion that the proposal respects the proportionality principle.

The Commission is pleased to inform that a political agreement on the above-mentioned proposal was found between the European Parliament and the Council on 27 November 2018. The formal adoption of the Regulation by the co-legislators is expected to take place before the end of March 2019. The Commission believes that the concerns expressed by the Assembleia da República have been addressed positively in this context and would like to clarify the following issues raised in the Opinion.

The Opinion recommends adapting the explanatory memorandum of the proposal. The Commission recalls that the topics of "mixed fisheries", "ranges advised by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea", "landing obligation" and "regional cooperation" are dealt with in the explanatory memorandum. It is however to be noted that the explanatory memoranda included in all Commission proposals are of an indicative nature only and do not form part of the final legislative text.

The Assembleia da República recalls the open public consultation organised between 22 May and 15 September 2015. This consultation was open to all citizens and organisations.

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*cc. Mr Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES
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In parallel to this public consultation, a targeted survey was conducted with more detailed and technical questions. This targeted survey was addressed to the Advisory Councils, to the Member States, to the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament and to the Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of the European Economic and Social Committee. Altogether 28 replies were received, 14 of which came from environmental non-governmental organisations, 7 from professional organisations, 2 from other organisations and 1 from a national authority. The detailed summary of the consultation is available on the consultation webpage¹.

The Opinion underlines the importance of the mixed fisheries aspect of the stocks and zones tackled by the proposal, and the consequent impact it will have for Portugal and Portuguese fisheries as regards hake, black scabbardfish, megrims, anglerfish, Norway lobster and sole. The Commission confirms that in the political agreement reached between the co-legislators, alfonsinos in the Northern Atlantic and red seabream in the Azores (subarea 10) were excluded from the scope of the plan. The conditions for using upper ranges within the maximum sustainable yield's range for a stock have also been set in the political agreement, allowing to mitigate issues posed by mixed fisheries and to avoid too big fluctuations in the Total Allowable Catches set annually by the Council.

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*

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/multi-annual-plans-western-eu-waters_en