



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Opinion on the Commission Communication on the External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) {COM(2011) 424 final} and apologises for the delay in replying.

The Commission appreciates the Riksdag's support as regards the Commission orientations for external action under the CFP and welcomes that you agree that the EU should play a leading role in the responsible management of international fisheries to achieve sustainable exploitation of fish stocks across the globe in line with the objectives and principles of a reformed CFP.

Your Opinion highlights some important areas where EU action would need to be targeted and I would like to comment on some of the issues brought up.

With regard to the proper implementation of international commitments, the Commission concurs with you that this is essential for good fisheries governance. In that respect, the EU will have greater leverage towards third countries if it is credible in its own actions. Furthermore, as the Communication has pointed out, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) are appropriate fora for the development of mechanisms to ensure compliance. The EU has the advantage of being a member of most RFMOs and already pursues a coherent agenda of promoting compliance monitoring and review schemes in addition to Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) listing procedures. However, more work needs to be done, jointly with our key partners, in convincing other RFMO members to cooperate sincerely in compliance examinations and demonstrate good will in implementing RFMO recommendations or sanctions.

The Riksdag has expressed support for an international agreement on multiannual fisheries plans for all stocks. A number of RFMOs to which the EU is a party are moving in that direction by undertaking extensive preparatory work on reference points and management objectives. The Commission agrees with the Riksdag that the EU should fully support such work in keeping with the best available scientific advice and encourage the provision of reliable data by EU member states and third parties.

As far as future Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) are concerned, with respect to the promotion of long-term resource sustainability, the Commission will launch scientific

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audits and make better use of RFMOs findings in order to determine the share of the surplus for the EU fleet and better assess the stocks before negotiating new protocols to multispecies agreements. In addition the Commission will reinforce transparency concerning the total fishing effort in third countries' waters through a standard clause in bilateral agreements and improve the catch reporting scheme and the control of catches.

Regarding your opinion on the phasing out of the EU financial contribution for access rights, the Commission would underline that this risks to pave the way for purely privately funded licences and hence to undermine the need for external EU fisheries agreements altogether. In addition, in case of insufficient interest for privately funded access rights, it would put certain developing countries, which are heavily dependent on access payments, in financial difficulties. Instead a progressive reduction towards a more balanced sharing should be supported.

As for the strengthening of third countries' fishery sector, the decoupling of the sectoral support should be seen as a means to improve delivery and effectiveness of the EU contribution, leading to a suspension of payments in case of insufficient delivery.

Finally, I can assure you that the Commission is committed to making the respect of human rights and democratic principles by third countries prerequisites for negotiating and maintaining FPAs.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided above address the main issues raised in the Riksdag's Opinion and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President