

Stockholm & Brussels, 10 July, 2012

To: The Fisheries Ministers of EU Member States

Re: Input to the EU Fisheries Council Meeting, 16 July 2012

Dear Minister [],

On behalf of the Fisheries Secretariat (FISH) and Seas At Risk (SAR) we send you our recommendations regarding the Communication from the Commission concerning a consultation on Fishing Opportunities for 2013 (COM(2012)278). We ask you to consider our views at the Council meeting in order to ensure more sustainable utilisation of our common marine resources.

We welcome this Communication, in which the Commission sets out some basic principles for agreeing on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and effort levels for 2013. In general, we support the proposed principles, but would like you to consider the following points:

- Applying FMSY this autumn when setting the fishing opportunities for 2013 would bring about a faster recovery of European fish stocks than the alternative “MSY transition scheme”, allowing more stocks to reach biomass levels consistent with MSY by 2015 and an earlier recovery of catches securing a future for the EU fishing sector.
- Existing long-term management plans should be adhered to when setting TACs and effort limits, but some plans are in need of revision in order to comply with the overarching objectives for the CFP. We call on the Council and the Parliament to resolve the ongoing impasse on division of responsibilities with respect to management plans, enabling the adoption of much needed revisions as well as new plans.
- The new assessment approach for data limited stocks, enabling qualitative advice on fishing opportunities for a range of stocks is very positive. However, more clarity on the application of the precautionary approach for stocks where no scientific data is available is needed.
- A phase out of catches of deep-sea species for which no catch limits have been established and/or for which neither the status of the stock nor the impact of fishing on the stock is known.

See Annex 1 for more detailed comments on the communication.

Yours sincerely,



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