

European Association of Fish Producers Organisations

Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche



EAPO / AEOP

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Ms Charlina VITCHEVA
Director-General
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
1049 BRUSSELS
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EAPO20-37

Oostende, 22 September 2020

Dear Ms. Vitcheva,

Subject: Communication campaign to support seafood consumption

The fisheries sector has been severely affected by the COVID19 crisis since early 2020. The pandemic has had and still has a negative effect on market demand for seafood. Consequently, although many parts of the fleet have reduced activity, first sale prices have plummeted. In reaction to this, the fisheries sector has alerted the European Commission, who took urgent measures to mitigate the economic impact on fishers and their communities, including the enabling of support for temporary cessation schemes, of increased state aid and of support to PO's for storage. However, no additional funds were made available for the sector and this proves to be a limiting factor for the application of these measures in several Member States.

One of the measures proposed by the Commission was the launch of a wide communication campaign to support seafood consumption. This is now more important than ever. As a second wave of the health crisis seems to be unfolding, the perspective of further lock downs, travel restrictions and the great fall in the GDP could represent an end point for many businesses.

On top of this, the seafood market has not returned to price and consumption levels that are acceptable for the sector. The recovery of prices and demand is taking a lot more time than projected and is expected to remain uncertain well into 2021. It is now critical for our fragilized industry to boost the market and support the sector.

EAPO therefore appreciates the announcement by DG MARE of the communication campaign to promote eating local and in-season seafood to enhance sustainability and support European Union coastal communities. Following this announcement of a campaign in July on twitter, EAPO would appreciate being informed about the envisaged timeline. We would like to reiterate our will to participate and assist as much as possible.

EAPO would also appreciate to continue examining the market evolution with the Commission in the future. EAPO is thankful for the Commission's support in these particular times and remains confident that the Commission will fulfil its commitments on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Visser', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Pim Visser
President