



**EAPO**  
H. Baelskaai 20  
8400 Oostende - Belgium  
Tel: +32 59 43 20 05  
e-mail: [info@eapo.com](mailto:info@eapo.com)  
website: [www.eapo.com](http://www.eapo.com)

**EUROPECHE**  
Rue Montoyer 24  
1000 Brussels-Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 230 48 48  
e-mail: [europêche@europêche.org](mailto:europêche@europêche.org)  
website: [www.europêche.org](http://www.europêche.org)

EP(19)15/EAPO19-09

Brussels/Ostend, 3 May 2019

Dear Mr. Machado,

**Subject: Multiannual Management Plans for the North Sea and Western Waters**

The newly adopted regulations establishing the Multiannual Management Plans (MAP) for the North Sea and Western Waters are currently raising an indirect but major, unexpected and un-evaluated difficulty in the control of fishing activities.

Certainly, these plans must indeed be considered according to the terms established in Article 44 of Regulation 1224/2009 on Control, which obliges to a separate stowage of all demersal stock catches subject to these two multiannual plans. This stowage must also be attested at sea by keeping a plan to identify the precise location of the different species in the holds.

The above interpretation has apparently been recently confirmed by the Commission's services to several Member States. However, compliance with such an obligation, which has been already requested to certain community vessels by EU inspectors, is materially impossible.

Namely, for fishing vessels not currently sorting the species on board, in order to comply with this provision, they would have to completely readjust their design and organization of work on board. For those who do sort the boxes on board, it cannot be expected from them to stow each of the stocks covered by these plans in different and designated storage places, as this would jeopardize the stability of the ship and thus safety at sea. For the record, Regulation 472/2019 establishing a MAP for the Western Waters covers no less than 48 different stocks. On average, for each fishing trip, the vessels will have to stock separately and identify an average of about ten stocks (and up to twenty in certain cases), whereas a maximum of 2 or 3 species have been concerned up until now. Moreover, by virtue of the landing obligation, fish under the minimum conservation size also has to be stowed separately on top of the number of stocks under the MAP. This in itself already presents a further difficulty.

These two MAPs have created huge difficulties, even the impossibility, for our EU vessels to comply with the obligations laid down in Article 44 of Regulation 1224/2009, which ultimately prevents them from accessing the waters that they are officially authorized and entitled to exploit. This constitutes an unidentified but major breach of one of the highest principles that governs the Common Fisheries Policy, to *“provide conditions for economically viable and competitive fishing capture and processing industry and land-based fishing related activity”* (Art. 2, CFP).

While the forthcoming revision of the Control Regulation may be a means to clarify the situation in the medium term, solutions need to be found very quickly, relying for example on the risk approach advocated by the current Regulation 1224/2009, to limit the number of stocks concerned (biological stock status, special management measures, etc.) and to legally and immediately secure the activity of EU fishing vessels.

This approach would also make it possible to implement and apply in practice, in a reasoned manner, other underlying issues relating to MAPs in terms of the control of fishing activities. These would otherwise require the designation of designated ports and prior landing notices for all stocks covered by these plans, which we doubt Member States’ authorities are willing or capable to assume.

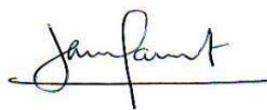
Considering the aforementioned, we would hereby request clarification from the European Commission on how to move forward to solve this difficult matter, which undoubtedly comes from a failure of analysis, in which we must all take our share, including the European Commission which is at the origin of the regulatory proposals.

We trust you will devote particular attention to this matter in order to safeguard the sustainable operations of the fishing industry and we would highly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your services to explain and clarify the technicalities of the situation and find adequate and cost-effective solutions to overcome the above-mentioned problems.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pim Visser', with the name 'P. VISSEER' printed in small letters below the signature.

Pim Visser  
President of the European Association  
of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Javier Garat', with a horizontal line underneath the signature.

Javier Garat  
President of the association of national  
organisations of fishing enterprises in the EU  
(Europêche)