



The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D3/PC/mbe/Ares (2019)

Mr. Ivan López
Chairman Long Distance Advisory
Council
c/del Doctor Fleming 7, 2º Dcha
E- 28036 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: LDAC Recommendations for the Implementation of the SMEFF Regulation EU 2017/2403

Your Ref.: R-03-19WGS

Dear Mr. López,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 22 April 2019 with recommendations on the implementation of the EU Regulation 2017/2403 on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets (SMEFF). I take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation of the work that LDAC is doing in providing advice on Commission's proposals regarding sustainable fisheries management.

I fully agree with you that an equal level playing field in terms of implementation of the SMEFF regulation is important, so that the regulation constitutes a genuine benchmark in terms of improvement of the external fisheries' governance.

This Regulation entails new obligations for EU Member States as regards activities outside Union waters, and particularly aims at transparency through the creation of an EU public database.

We concur with you that the EU public register for fishing authorizations is essential to achieve more transparency, which is one of the objectives of this Regulation. As you may know, this register is not yet in place because of the complexity of the IT project supporting it, as well as procedural delays and budgetary constraints. However, preparatory works are now well under way. The first phase of the IT project should be delivered by end 2019 and the final deliverables, in 2021.

In the meantime, the information on external activities collected by my services will be made available through the publication of tables on the Commission website (link will appear on the following webpage: https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/international_en).

These tables will contain all the information required by the Regulation for the public part of this Register.

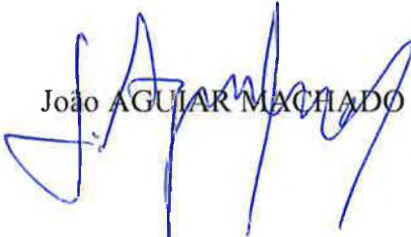
This temporary solution will be available in the coming weeks, until a comprehensive record of authorizations to conduct fishing activities outside EU waters becomes fully operational. I do hope this solution will already address your concern to obtain information on the activities of the EU external fleet, in line with the commitments taken in the framework of Our Ocean conferences.

On the precise case of Italy that you are mentioning, I would like to let you know that Italy recently transmitted information on authorizations previously granted to its fishing vessels in third countries' EEZ.

I can reassure you that DG MARE is fully committed to pursue a timely implementation of this database and ensure a level-playing field in the fisheries sector.

I am looking forward to our continued cooperation and invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273) should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,


João AGUIAR MACHADO