

Att:

Directors General of European Commission:
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), Trade (DG TRADE),
and Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (DG MARE)

Madrid, 30th of May 2022

Subject: Request for designation of European fishers as essential workers

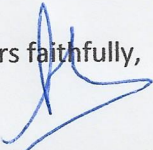
Dear Mr Korte, Ms Weyand and Ms. Vitcheva,

I am addressing you on behalf of the EU Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC). The LDAC is an EU fisheries stakeholder body established in 2007 which comprises more than 50 professional organisations from 12 EU MS. It represents the European fish catching and processing sector, trade unions and other interest groups including environmental and cooperation for development NGOs. The LDAC mainly focuses on the implementation of the international or external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, providing advice to the European Commission and the Member States on topics such as fight against IUU fishing or international ocean governance. One of the topics which is high in our priorities is the promotion of social sustainability and responsibility in the fisheries sector, including fostering decent working conditions, improving safety at sea, or promoting compliance of human and labour rights in the fishing value chains, amongst others.

The fishing sector is of high importance when it comes to creation of employment and development of coastal communities. It has an estimated 39 million people worldwide involved in fisheries and in the supply chain¹. As a primary sector activity, fishing play a fundamental role in providing a healthy food security source with an increasing population worldwide. In fact, the European Parliament² has already recognised **fishers as fundamental workers** who even in situations such as the recent health crisis and despite the challenging circumstances it has ensured the supply of marine protein food. Also, the International Labour Organization (ILO)³ and the International Maritime Organization⁴ (IMO) had a statement on the need to ensure 'key Worker' designations for the millions of skilled personnel now maintaining essential global trade capacities.

Due to the critical occupation of the EU distant water fleets and associated fishing sector in terms of ensuring food supply and trade during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their role in fulfilling the UN SDG2 in terms of food security and "zero hunger", **we would like to ask you to consider that you work jointly in proposing that the European Commission would consider to officially recognize the importance of the workers of the EU fishing sector and designate them as essential workers with permanent character.**

Yours faithfully,



P.P.

Iván López van der Veen - LDAC Chair of the EU Long Distance Fleet Advisory Council

¹ [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020 \(SOFIA\), FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department](#)

² [European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2021 on Fishers for the future: Attracting a new generation of workers to the fishing industry and generating employment in coastal communities \(2019/2161\(INI\)\)](#)

³ [Vid. Statement of the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention](#)

⁴ [IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.35/Rev.8](#)