EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Member of the European Parliament

Dear Commissioner Vella,

We, as members of different political groups and committees in the European Parliament, write to you in order to raise our serious concerns about the **technical measures regulation** currently discussed between the co-legislators.

When the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was adopted, it was regarded as somewhat of a revolution for fisheries management in the EU. With the new CFP, we have all the tools we need to on the one hand ensure healthy fish stocks and adequate marine protection while at the same time ensuring a long-term profitable sector and a shift away from detailed micro-management from Brussels. However, it is clear that the principles of the CFP are not worth much more than the paper they are written on if they are not implemented in practice.

One of the most important pieces of legislation for turning the CFP into a reality is indeed the regulation on technical measures. We welcomed the Commission proposal, which would have enabled a move away from prescriptive legislation and instead adopt the detailed technical measures under the regionalisation principle. The introduction of EU-wide, quantitative and mandatory targets would allow tailor-made measures that would achieve those targets for the different EU regions, greater flexibility for EU fishermen as well as ensure a sustainable exploitation of marine resources. Only with mandatory and binding targets can we address the overall objective to better and sustainably avoid unwanted catches and to reduce the impact of fishing on nature in order to reach the goals of the CFP.

Regrettably, the proposal of the Commission has been radically changed by both co-legislators. The plenary vote was overshadowed by the ideologically sensitive issue of pulse fishing. Whereas it is clear that the pulse fishing issue needs a practical and functioning solution, the focus of the debate on technical measures shifted away from the more significant parts of the dossier. We noted with great concern how the EU-wide quantifiable targets were deleted and replaced by wording that means nothing in practice, for we doubt very much that the regional groups of Member States will adopt equivalent and ambitious targets that ensure a level playing field. Without such targets there are only two ways forward. Either we return to a system with detailed micro-management in Brussels or we face a situation where different EU regions will adopt different levels of ambition, or even different ambitions in different fisheries.

In practice, such an approach would risk a deterioration of the current protection rules and also mean a type of "multi-speed CFP" with unfair competition between different EU waters. None of these two options are in our opinion acceptable ways forward.

We acknowledge the need for a new framework for technical measures. However, as the situation stands, if you want to safeguard the CFP the only feasible way forward is to withdraw the proposal and return to the drawing table. We are very much aware that it is a strong action to take but we want you to know that you can trust on the support from us and many other MEPs. You probably noted that an unusually high number of members already voted against the Parliament position in plenary.

Commissioner Vella, we see you as a Commissioner with a high sense of dignity and a great responsibility lies with the Commission when it comes to safeguarding the CFP. Now you have a difficult but important choice to make and we can only trust on you to stand up for the CFP and **withdraw the proposal**.

We look forward to receiving your reply.

Nils Torvalds, ALDE

Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, ALDE

Ulrike Rodust, S&D

Jytte Guteland, S&D

Marco Affronte, Greens

Linnéa Engström, Greens

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