



Director General

Brussels,
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Dear Sirs,

The Commission would like to consult the Advisory Councils and the Member States Groups responsible for the North Sea and the North Western Waters on the measures to take for 2019 in order to promote the recovery of sea bass.

As you know the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) has advised for 0 catches for northern sea bass for 2018 and 2017. The next ICES advice on sea bass is expected to be released on 29 June 2018. ICES issued a warning that this stock is in a critical state and therefore advised that "*...there should be zero catch (commercial and recreational) in 2018.*"

Against this background, the Council of Ministers decided in December 2017 to limit fishing possibilities for hook and line vessels to 5 tonnes per vessel per year and to limit by-catch allowances for fixed gillnets to 1.2 tonnes per vessel per year, for seines up 180 kilogrammes per month and 1% of the weight of the total catches and for demersal trawls to 100 kilogrammes per month and 1% of the weight of the total catches.

In light of the upcoming advice by ICES, the Commission would like to hear the views of your Advisory Councils and your regional Member States groups on how to best take the recovery of this important stock forward both for commercial as well as recreational activities for 2019, notably in the context of the Council Regulation on 2019 Fishing Opportunities to be adopted this year.

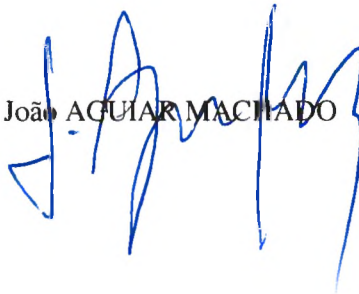
We would welcome your constructive advice as well as concrete proposals that can realistically bring down the fishing pressure on sea bass and that can increase the biomass further for 2019. In making your suggestions we would appreciate if you could underpin these with evidence of their positive impact on sea bass.

The Commission remains deeply committed to taking effective management measures to help improve the situation of this important stock for the sake of the fishermen and their families and for the sake of the many recreational fishermen in Europe.

I would appreciate if you could consult your members on this important matter and could send us your position by 28 August 2018.

I very much look forward to our continued cooperation and invite you to take contact with Ms Maja Kirchner should you have any question on this letter.

Yours sincerely,


João AGUIAR MACHADO