



Mr. Javier Garat
President
Europêche
Rue Montoyer 24
1000 Brussels

Mr Pim Visser
President of European Association of Fish Producers Organisations
Ierse Zeestraat 50
8380 Zeebrugge

November 16th 2015

Re. Your letter from 11 November 2015

Dear Mr Garat and Mr Visser,

I would like to respond to your letter of November 11th in which you drew attention to the importance of implementing the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and to the contents of *Turning the Tide*, a report published earlier this year by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The report tells the story of decades of overfishing in Europe's north-western waters and the impact this has had on fishing communities and the fish stocks on which they depend.

Turning the Tide's conclusions on the need to end overfishing and implement the CFP without delay are based on a wealth of evidence, including peer-reviewed research from independent scientists and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Since the report was published, new data on fishing pressure in Europe highlight how overfishing persists, despite the reductions in fishing mortality over the past decade, which reaffirms the conclusions reached in *Turning the Tide*.



In April, the European Commission's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) reported that overall levels of fishing mortality in the ICES area are still above the levels required by the CFP and have even crept upward in recent years. STECF also classified a majority (61 percent) of stocks for which sufficient data exist as "outside safe biological limits". The data reinforce how important it is that we learn from past mistakes and act on the promise of the reformed CFP to end overfishing.

In December, fisheries ministers from all 28 EU member states will meet to set 2016 fishing limits for the waters covered by the report. This is an important moment to adhere to the scientific advice and establish limits that achieve the reformed CFP's objectives.

We welcome fishing industry groups' focus on the science and on the need to set annual catch rates that achieve maximum sustainable yield in line with the reformed CFP. The fishing sector has an influential voice that we hope to hear calling on ministers to implement the CFP and to set fishing limits for next year in line with ICES advice.

Civil society and the fishing sector have a great opportunity to make a lasting difference in the health of Europe's seas and the viability of the businesses that depend on their riches by collaborating in our call for an end to overfishing in these waters.

Yours sincerely,

Uta Bellion,
Director, European Marine Programme

CC: Tom Wathen, Vice President for Global Strategies and Operations