



Brussels, 7 December 2017

Dear Minister,

Concerning sea bass 2018 management measures – recreational fisheries

We, the European Anglers Alliance and the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association launched a petition two weeks ago calling on the EU to not make it illegal for members of the public to fish for bass recreationally and retain them. Today, more than 16,000 people have signed to give their support to the plea, which you can read in the ANNEX copied in below.

- . We are asking you to support a roll-over of this year's measures into 2018 with regard to recreational fishing for Northern bass. The 2017 measures we wish to see rolled over are: no retention in the first half of the year and a one fish per day bag limit for the second half of the year.
- For 2018, the Commission has proposed no fishing for bass by recreational fishers in the first half of the year – which is impossible to enforce – and no retention of bass in the second half of the year. The science behind the Commission's proposal is pretty 'novel'. Robust trend data is lacking for the bass fishery which has left much to such modelling and assumptions, which we believe don't give an accurate picture of fishing mortality and the state of stock.
- New figures and modelling are under way from ICES. We believe this data will show that the state of the Northern bass stock is not as dire as currently assessed and that recreational fishing is not a threat to the stock. We believe some revised data will be available before Monday's Council meeting, which will support this.
- For more than 20 years we have consistently said that the virtually unrestricted commercial fishing for bass should be controlled in order to avoid a situation exactly like the one we now find ourselves in. At no point were our claims taken seriously until three years ago when the EU was forced to intervene with emergency measures. The EU Commission is now proposing that members of the public fishing recreationally shall not be allowed to fish for or then keep a single bass in 2018. This is grossly unfair to hundreds of thousands of EU citizens fishing recreationally for publicly-owned bass.
- . Furthermore, the Commission has proposed that some commercial fishing should be allowed to continue next year. We believe that access to fishing opportunities should be prioritised for recreational fishing by members of the public who will simply not understand why their fishing has been restricted while commercial fishing for bass continues under the current EU proposals.
- A week ago the Council and Parliament adopted the EU 2018 budget. In the budget 300,000 Euros are earmarked '*Pilot project - Control scheme for recreational catches of sea bass*' (*). If anglers are not allowed to keep any of the bass caught, then there is no motivation for them to take part in this project, which is to trial an electronic log-book scheme. This would undermine the EU's desire to collect better data on recreational catches.

* Title: 11 06 77 17; pages 105 and 106 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14587-2017-ADD-3/en/pdf>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fred Blot', with the name 'Fred Blot' written in a smaller font below it.

Fred Blot
President of the EAA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jean Claude Bel', with the name 'Jean Claude Bel' written in a smaller font below it.

Jean Claude Bel
CEO of EFTTA

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ANNEX:

Petition: www.change.org/o/european_anglers_alliance (in English and French)

- **Fishing for Sea Bass Is Not A Crime - Don't Let The EU Make It One!**
- **Pêcher le Bar n'est pas un crime Empêchons l'UE de faire que cela le devienne!**

Letter to:

EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council of Ministers

Dear Fisheries Ministers and EU Commission Fisheries Managers

I'm writing to express my serious concerns over the recent proposal by the EU Commission that sea anglers should no longer be allowed to retain a single bass caught in 2018. It is unacceptable that my right to take a bass for the table should be taken away, particularly since the Commission is proposing that some forms of commercial fishing should continue.

I am calling on EU Fisheries Ministers to defend my rights and to continue to allow anglers to catch bass throughout 2018 and keep one bass a day from July-December. I would ask you to:

- Firmly reject, at the European Union Fisheries Council meeting, proposals by the EU Commission which seek to restrict anglers' historic rights to the public Bass fishery, whilst allowing commercial exploitation to continue.
- Make clear that this measure is unfair, disproportionate and completely unenforceable. It would 'criminalise' thousands of anglers like me whose activities have had the lowest impact on European Bass stocks.
- Insist that there can be no justification for increasing the already severe restrictions on anglers who have borne a disproportionate burden of recent restrictions.
- Continue to rebuild Bass stocks by limiting commercial exploitation to sustainable hook and line fishing only.

I should be most grateful for your support.

● **EAA, the European Anglers Alliance** comprises angling organisations from 16 European countries with about 3 million members.

● **EFTTA, the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association** is the leading European trade association for manufacturers and wholesalers of sportfishing equipment. Membership is open to manufacturers, wholesalers, agents and press in the tackle industry.