



Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius
European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
Brussels

Brussels, 30 March 2021

Dear Commissioner,

We greatly appreciate your effort in quickly creating and proposing an instrument to help the EU fishing fleet to overcome the losses incurred by the Brexit agreement – just one day after the TCA was agreed in December 2020. Now, 3 months later, we observe with grave concern the increasing risk that the Brexit Adjustment Reserve will miss its target in helping fishers to survive Brexit.

This letter aims at informing you about our concern and call upon you to make the BAR an effective instrument.

One month ago, the European Fisheries Alliance has published its position paper on the Brexit Adjustment Reserve with the following 3 key messages:

1. The legal framework of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve funds must allow for a sufficient range of options for using the reserve; it should come with a low level of administrative burden, and expenditure should be spread out over 5 years instead of the proposed two years.
2. The funds allocated to fisheries as part of the BAR should be increased considering the level of permanently lost fishing opportunities by the Brexit agreement.
3. All EU member states' fishing fleets impacted by Brexit should be compensated for the losses incurred. The BAR funds for fisheries should therefore solely be allocated to those Member States that lose fish quota to the UK and in proportion with the value of these lost fish quota.

We are of course aware that the Commission's BAR proposal is still under discussion in the Council. Yet, from the discussions that we as fishing industry have with the authorities in our member states, it has become increasingly clear, that the room for member states to use the Brexit Adjustment Reserve allocated to them to compensate fishers, will be very restrictive. In our view too restrictive. Apparently, as things stand now, the rules on State Aid which are made conditional by your Commission's services to use the BAR fund, will prohibit the Reserve to play a meaningful role in helping the impacted fishing companies to overcome the losses incurred to them by Brexit.

Brexit is a unique situation, and fisheries within the Brexit agreement is the only economic sector in the EU from which a part of their production potential in the form of percentual shares of allowed catches (fish quota) will be taken away on a permanent basis. This loss is not the consequence of market forces, but the result of a political intervention in the form of the Brexit negotiations and the subsequent approval of the outcome of these negotiations by the Council and the European Parliament (still pending).



This unique situation calls for a support mechanism, the BAR, that gives sufficient room to member states to define bespoke supporting approaches for the specific situation of their fishing fleets and to compensate fishers.

Dear Commissioner, we very much fear that the current discussion in the Council and between the Commission's services and individual member states on the ins and outs of the BAR for fisheries, will result in BAR financed actions in which the fishers and fishing companies do not recognize the helping hand they so urgently need.

We very much look forward to hear a reassuring response from you that the BAR instrument indeed will lead to the effective and expeditious compensation of losses that our fishers will suffer, as already this year 60% of the agreed quota transfers to the UK will be effectuated.

Yours sincerely

Also on behalf of Europêche and EAPQ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerard van Balsfoort', written in a cursive style.

Gerard van Balsfoort
(Chair EUFA)

In copy to the ministers of Fisheries of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden