



EP(20)71 / EAPO20-56

Ms Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General
for Maritime Affairs
and Fisheries
European Commission
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 28 December 2020

Re. URGENT: Delay of fishing authorisations to operate in UK waters

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Following the recent EU-UK Brexit agreement, it is fundamental for the fishing fleets represented by the main EU fishing associations impacted by Brexit (EUFA, Europêche and EAPO) to continue to have access to UK waters as of 1st January 2021.

The European fishing sector welcomes the EU Regulation¹ for access possibilities that lays down specific rules on how to grant authorisations to continue fishing in UK and EU waters respectively after the end of the transition period or, as it is the case, when an EU-UK fisheries agreement has been concluded. Authorisations will only be granted if and to the extent that the United Kingdom provides authorisations for Union vessels to make use of fishing opportunities allocated to them. Furthermore, fishing operations shall not commence until both the flag Member State and the United Kingdom have issued a fishing authorisation.

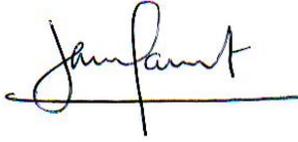
In light of the number of Union vessels that carry out fishing activities in the waters of the United Kingdom, these conditions and procedures could lead to considerable delays given the increased administrative burden both for the UK and EU authorities.

Against this scenario, our operators are deeply concerned about the possible delays in issuing the necessary fishing authorisations, preventing the continuity of their fishing operations in UK waters as of the beginning of next year. This is particularly worrying for vessels already at sea and whose fishing trips will extend well into January 2021.

Therefore, we urge your services to further liaise with UK and Member State's authorities as a matter of urgency to facilitate the process and to issue the authorisations on time.

¹ Amending Regulation (EU) 2017/2403 as regards fishing authorisations for Union fishing vessels in United Kingdom waters and fishing operations of United Kingdom fishing vessels in Union waters

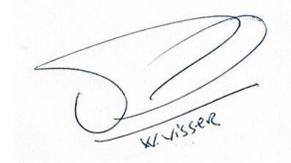
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Garat', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Javier Garat,
President of Europêche

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G van Balsfoort', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Gerard van Balsfoort,
President of EUFA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Visser', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Pim Visser,
President of EAPO