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Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Fisheries,
European Commission,
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Dear Commissioner,

The European Commission's Six-Year Failure to Insist on the return by Member States of comprehensive information on their use of EU Fishing Subsidies: Eight Questions to President Barroso.

How extraordinary it is that six years ago, as Europe's fish stocks crisis deepened, the European Commission made an un-announced decision to relax its collection of information on Member States' use of fishing subsidies!

'Extraordinary' because the U.N., The World Bank, the European Court of Auditors and global marine scientists have all made clear the link between fishing subsidies and fish stock collapse. Quite simply, the subsidies make it profitable to continue fishing beyond the point from which the fish can recover. **Enclosed is a copy of our letter and questions to President Barroso on this and associated EU fisheries management.**

In February of this year the European Parliament came out in overwhelming favour of a change in the management of Europe's relentlessly declining fish stocks to demand new and responsible governance of them. The M.E.P.s could see the truth of the situation.

The problem has been, and remains, certain Ministers in the Fisheries Council for whom a major objective is the retention of fisheries subsidies both to advance the short-term interests of their major fishing industries, and sometimes the financial interests of their national governments as well. This is especially so where a nation's poor economic performance has resulted in a dependence on/addiction to EU funds from any quarter. While the economic woes of such countries are lamentable, it is criminally irresponsible - and a perversion of a Fisheries Minister's duties - to fight on these covert grounds for the continuation of a subsidies system that will culminate before long in the complete collapse of Europe's fisheries and marine food security.

In light of a changing world where the rapid extinction of species and ecosystems is an already-present reality, the need is for a new mindset in governing circles to move away from the traditional alliance with narrow economic interests and towards an attitude of environmental custodianship and the intelligent and sustainable exploitation of resources to establish their continued availability.

We therefore ask you, as a Fisheries Minister and member of the EU Fisheries Council: -

1. Do you believe it is acceptable for the European Commission to disburse fishing subsidies but not force Member States to return detailed information on how that money has been spent?

2. Do you believe it is acceptable for Member States to not bother to return such detail if they so choose?
3. Will you take up with the President of the Commission the serious questions that we have put on the above and associated matters in our letter to him (**copy enclosed**)?
4. Do you agree that the February vote by the M.E.Ps reflected a growing public awareness of, and concern about, the mismanagement to date of Europe's fish stocks?
5. In view of the severe ecological decline of Europe's seas and the drastic decline in its fish stocks, do you agree that there is now a need for a 'step-change' of attitude by those in positions of power away from parochial self-interest and towards a more intelligent governance that will provide for the continued availability of these fundamental resources for present and future generations?

We look forward to receiving your replies to these questions, and hope that you will be willing for us to share your views with the other EU Fisheries Ministers.

Yours

David Levy
Chair, Marinet

John Stansfield
EU Campaigner, Marinet