



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/ D3 PCO-VG ARES(2019)

Mr. Guus Pastoor, Chairman  
Market Advisory Council  
rue de la Science, 10  
B-1000 Brussels

**Subject :** European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

**Your Ref.:** *MAC's email of 28 February 2019*

Dear Mr. Pastoor,

Thank you for the opinion delivered by the Market Advisory Council on the proposal of the Commission concerning the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

As you know, the Commission proposal was adopted on 12 June 2018<sup>1</sup> and is currently being discussed by the co-legislators. We believe that some of the recommendations, such as a better alignment of the fund with the CFP objectives, the need to simplify the implementation of funds and the utilisation of financial instruments are already incorporated in the Commission proposal.

I have taken good note of your comments and would like to come back on some specific points. On control and enforcement, I agree with you that a harmonised electronic EU system for the Catch Certification Scheme, as proposed in the Commission proposal on a new Fisheries Control System, would be very useful. This is not specifically mentioned in the EMFF proposal as, in view of simplifying its architecture, the Commission proposal does not lay down prescriptive measures but describes the different areas of support. However, under control and enforcement, the EMFF would support the development of catch certification schemes.

Under the principle of shared management, it will be up to each Member State to indicate in its Operational Programme what are the most appropriate means for achieving the priorities and objectives of the EMFF. Similarly, the Commission Proposal on the

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2018)390

Common Provisions Regulation for the European Structural and Investment Funds<sup>2</sup> provides for flexibility on financial instruments and foresees their combination with grants as you are proposing.

As regards the non eligibility of storage aid, public support for this mechanism has been phased out under the current EMFF in the 2014-2020 programming period. As noted in the accompanying Impact Assessment, the Commission's proposal reflects the basic principle that that public support should focus on the main tools of the Common Market Organisation, i.e. the production and marketing plans, rather than on market intervention mechanisms. In this respect, Article 24 of the proposal clearly includes the development and implementation of production and marketing plans by producer organisations, as key tools of the EU market policy for fisheries and aquaculture products.

As regards your suggestion to grant a 100% aid intensity rate to collective actions, I would like to insist on the necessity to reach a balance between public support and private investments. In certain cases (e.g. small-scale coastal fishing, outermost regions, implementation of the landing obligation, control and enforcement), a higher rate of public aid is clearly justified, but the Commission considers it should not be broadly extended in order to ensure ownership of projects by private stakeholders. As regards productive investments in aquaculture and support to the processing sector, the Commission believes that financial instruments are relevant tools to tackle the funding needs of these sectors, which are not subject to obvious market failures.

As far as Article 40 of the Commission's proposal on functioning costs of Advisory Councils is concerned, let me inform you that Advisory Councils may benefit from other strands of the EMFF for other projects they may carry out. This is possible either under direct management, subject to call for tenders or call for proposals by DG MARE or our executive agency EASME, or under shared management in accordance with national programmes and selection procedures.

I encourage you to take contact with national authorities in your respective Member States in order to see how you could benefit from EMFF support under shared management. Contact details of national Managing Authorities are available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/national\\_authorities.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/national_authorities.pdf)

I also invite you to closely follow calls for proposals for projects under direct management available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-opportunities-maritime-affairs-and-fisheries\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-opportunities-maritime-affairs-and-fisheries_en).

Last but not least, I encourage you to exchange good practices between your members having benefitted from the EMFF in the past.

In addition to the EMFF, the future EU research programme ("Horizon Europe") is a significant source of funding for research projects in the field of fisheries. DG MARE, in coordination with DG RTD, intends to discuss with stakeholders on the identification of the post-2020 research and innovation agenda for fisheries. This research agenda should feed into the larger development of the Horizon Europe programme, in particular into the Strategic Programme to be developed in 2019. This will help to identify an agenda of short, medium and long-term priorities for fisheries research and innovation at European

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<sup>2</sup> COM(2018)375

You will soon be consulted in this context, and I would be grateful for your contribution to this consultation.

Should the Advisory Council benefit in the future from EU financial support as described above, this would require you to clearly separate in your accounts the operating costs (covered by our grant) from any other costs you may have in relation to a project for which you received other specific support.

Should you have any further question on this reply, I invite you to contact Ms. Pascale Colson ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273).

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO



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