



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/A4/GH (2021)

Subject: MAC advice on sustainability in marketing standards

Dear Mr. Pastoor,

Thank you for the MAC advice of 15 October 2021 on the incorporation of sustainability aspects in the marketing standards framework. The advice raises a number of important points and many of them are already reflected in our current impact assessment process for the revision of existing marketing standards.

We believe that adding a sustainability element to the marketing standards framework is of great value in terms of promoting the sourcing and consumption of seafood products with a positive sustainability performance. A transparent product grading of selected sustainability criteria would not only meet consumer demand, but also provide valuable information throughout the supply chain. Due to the unique character of seafood, such an initiative can adequately complement other upcoming actions that the Commission has announced under the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The Commission is currently looking at different policy options for a marketing standards initiative, with a varying product scope. Without prejudice to such discussions, where necessary, a new sustainability element of the marketing standards should be build on and around the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). This, I believe would leverage the positive sustainability performance that numerous operators have already achieved under the CFP, including many SMEs. Furthermore, there is evidence and arguments that a product grading would help producers with a positive sustainability performance in terms of market access and valorisation of their products. As such, economic sustainability would be factored into the impact that a possible revision of existing marketing standards would create.

Mr. Guus Pastoor
Chairman
Market Advisory Council
bestuur@visfederatie.nl
rue de la Science, 10
B-1000 Brussels
BELGIUM

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111
Office: J-99 05/014 - Tel. direct line +32 229-50483

charlina.vitcheva@ec.europa.eu

We further envisage that any potential proposal would apply to both EU and imported products within the relevant scope. While no decision has been made on the final scope of a possible revision of marketing standards, a number of aspects would in any case need to be taken into consideration: for example the traceability of data that feeds into the sustainability indicators. It is our guiding principle to achieve a good balance between the benefits of a proposal on one side and administrative burden on the other side.

Finally, let me clarify that the impact assessment of the marketing standards revision will be published at the same time as the potential legislative proposal. This is a standard procedure for all Commission initiatives.

We are grateful for the MAC feedback on the revision of the marketing standards and look forward to continue our cooperation on this important subject. Should you have any further queries, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Pedro Reis Santos secretary@marketac.eu