



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels, 21 March 2022
MARE/C1/CA/dsb/Ares(2022)

Subject: Reply to the letter of the NWWAC and NSAC on the fuel provisioning affecting fisheries in the North Western Waters, North Sea and beyond

Dear Mr Brouckaert, dear Mr Fischer,

I thank you for your joint letter of 14 March addressing the concerns of the fishing sector regarding the rising fuel prices caused by the war in Ukraine.

First I would like to underline my full understanding for the hardship faced by European fishermen which were confronted with Brexit, with the Covid-19 pandemic and now with the disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine. This series of crises is unprecedented for fishermen, and obviously also for all of us and for the world.

The Commission is actively listening to the concerns of all stakeholders, we are closely monitoring the socio-economic situation and assessing its impact. In this time of crisis, receiving the concerns you have expressed is very helpful for us in order to maintain a full understanding of the difficulties faced by European fishermen and the fisheries and maritime sector as a whole. The war in Ukraine has disrupted the supply of raw materials, energy, trade and markets, the labour force, conducting fishing activities, as well as other aspects. The operation of businesses across all sectors of fisheries, aquaculture and processing, all along the supply chain has been impacted. This includes short and long-term consequences. I am also fully conscious that this crisis comes on top of the recent impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic on the sector.

In light of these disruptions and the consequent socio-economic impacts, let me assure you that we are considering all possible options across the full range of instruments available. This includes an unprecedented level of sanctions to disable the Russian war effort, while also considering the impacts these sanctions could have on the EU industry. The sanctions package is being complemented by actions to support EU operators and to help them both during the immediate crisis and to transition to a more resilient, energy efficient and sustainable future operating model in line with our EU Green Deal and for resilient EU economy. This includes looking at possible re-allocation of the existing funding under the EMFF (2014-2020) and triggering the crisis mechanism under the EMFAF (2021-2027), as well as EU State Aid options.

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We are working to act quickly (in the coming days) to address the real needs of the sector, including those set out in your letter, while giving careful consideration to how best to address them.

I would like to invite you to keep close contacts with my services on these issues and provide us on a regular basis information on the state of play on the ground.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
Charlina VITCHEVA