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Mr Fred Bloot,
President of the European Anglers Alliance (EAA)
Mr Jean Claude Bel,
CEO of the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA)
Rue de la Loi 81a
1000 Brussels

Dear Mr Bloot, Dear Mr Bel,

I would like to thank you for your letters of 6 and 23 July 2018 on the issue of the new ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) advice for sea bass fishing and the impact of recreational anglers on this important stock.

The ICES advice is based on new information and analysis. According to this new analysis, the impact of recreational fishermen on sea bass is indeed lower than estimated in 2017. In addition, ICES now advises that 95 % of the seabass survive when they are released from recreational angling. Although ICES has released advice for total catches at maximum sustainable yield (MSY), the stock remains below the minimum level, where reproduction is impaired.

In order to be in line with MSY, ICES advises that the total commercial and recreational removals in 2018 should be no more than 880 tonnes. Given this evolution of the scientific advice and in line with the commitment made in the Council of Ministers in December 2017, I have asked my services to prepare a proposal that takes account of this new scientific advice in order to adapt the management measures for recreational fisheries for 2018 to these new recommendations.

I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to sustainable management of fisheries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karmenu Vella".