

**KARMENU VELLA**

Member of the European Commission

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Alun Ffred Jones AM  
Chair of the Environment & Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
United Kingdom

Dear Mr Jones,

Thank you for sharing the views of the Environment and Sustainability Committee of the National Assembly for Wales on the Commission's proposal for a prohibition of driftnets. I am particularly grateful for the support expressed for the action to address large-scale, illegal and environmentally damaging driftnets.

Let me stress that during the preparation phase of this proposal particular attention was paid to the quality and scope of the impact assessment. A wide public consultation took place, complemented by a number of studies and analyses. Despite our efforts, not all stakeholders were able to provide, at that time, detailed information about the use of driftnets and their impact on protected species. This may have prevented the Commission from having an inclusive picture of the situation, including in the UK and more particularly in Wales.

Therefore, further information has been sought by the Commission in an additional effort to offer a more comprehensive view of the likely consequences of a total ban.

I would like to thank you for having transmitted information related to the possible impacts of the Commission's proposal on the small-scale fishing activities taking place in Wales. We have also received detailed clarifications from the UK government.

Since the proposal is currently before the European Council and Parliament, it will be up to both institutions to work on the final text of the Regulation. The Commission intends to facilitate the debates and to put at the disposal of the co-legislators all necessary elements for such a process, including this additional information on the use of driftnets in Wales.

To this end I have transmitted your letter to my services, including the comments on the draft report that is being discussed in the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee and your suggestions on possible further modifications. The relevant information contained therein will be considered to contribute to the inter-institutional debate and negotiations on the final outcome of the Commission proposal.

Discussions of the proposal by the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, will surely allow for further consideration of the concerns regarding potential specific impacts of the legislation on driftnets.

Yours sincerely,

