

CECILIA MALMSTRÖM

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 9 August 2019
CR/cz S(2019)5639269

Dear Ms Verbeek,

Thank you for your email dated 12 June 2019 in which you ask me and Commissioner Vella to send a strong signal to the Member States to end harmful subsidies in order to avoid a weakened EU position in WTO negotiations.

At the outset, let me stress that the Commission's proposal regarding the future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) aimed precisely at avoiding harmful fisheries subsidies including vessel construction aid. This also reflects a long-standing EU negotiation position in the context of fisheries subsidies negotiations in the WTO. I would like to reassure you that this continues and will continue to be the Commission's position.

The Commission consistently conveys this position in meetings both with the European Parliament and the Council. The latest such occasion was on 18 June 2019 at the AGRIFISH Council in Luxembourg where the Commission forcefully defended its view that harmful fisheries subsidies eliminated in the EU 15 years ago should not be reintroduced, first and foremost vessel construction aid. Indeed, the Commission sees such aid as an ineffective use of public money that would in addition undermine the EU negotiation position in the WTO.

Please rest assured that the Commission will continue to do its utmost to ensure that the EMFF is fully in line with EU conservation policy and our international commitments. I hope to be able to rely on Seas at Risk and other NGOs for your continued support of the Commission in this effort.

Yours sincerely,



Cecilia Malmström

Ms Monica Verbeek, Executive Director
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