



Madam Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission  
Rue de la Loi,  
Wetstraat 200,  
1049 Bruxelles, Belgique

## To the attention of Madam Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

Madam President,

In view of the grave situation affecting the fishing sector in the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion and the irreversible impact this is having on the entire north-western Mediterranean as well as on the economy and food sovereignty of the European Union, we are addressing you to request firm and immediate action on the part of the European Commission.

The three member regions of the Euroregion (the Balearic Islands, Occitanie and Catalonia) share a deep relationship with fishing activity. Our coastal fleet is of modest size, territorially rooted in coastal municipalities, managed by small family-run businesses which predominantly fish for one day at a time (lasting less than 12 hours), providing fresh produce that is marketed daily on the local market. This reality of small-scale Mediterranean fishing is not considered in the Common Fisheries Policy, which equates our trawler fleet with an industrial fleet, failing to consider the specificities and needs of the Mediterranean. This oversight has resulted in the application of the Regulation establishing the multiannual plan for demersal fisheries in the north-western Mediterranean (MAP).

Regional authorities, the scientific sector and the fishing community are all acutely aware of the importance of safeguarding the environmental sustainability of Mediterranean fishing zones, and our policies in recent years have been oriented towards this objective.

The fishing sector in the Euroregion has withstood, throughout these five years of MAP implementation, extremely heavy measures intended to guarantee maximum sustainable yield (fleet reduction, decreased number of fishing days, introduction of over two months of biological rest periods, spatial and temporal fishing zone



closures, installation of trawl panels to reduce seabed impacts, increased selectivity of mesh sizes across the fleet, etc.). Despite these measures and scientific evidence of a recovery in fish stocks, the current fishing opportunities available to our fleet do not allow for viable economic or professional activity.

This situation is unsustainable from both an entrepreneurial and social point of view, leading to a loss of businesses (20% of the fleet over the last five years), workers (25% over the same period), greater precarity throughout the sector, a weakening of fishermen's guilds, and consequential negative effects on the economy as well as on the supply of local fish products to our markets.

The state of the fish populations concerned by the MAP within the Euroregion has, nevertheless, improved significantly in recent years. However, the drastic measures to reduce fishing effort that have been implemented demonstrate that the sector's considerable efforts have not been duly considered, nor have the socio-economic impact, other external factors affecting stock status (biological elements, the impact of climate change on water temperature, etc.), nor the need to adapt to the mixed nature of Mediterranean fisheries. We have already informed DG MARE of the necessity to evaluate the use of alternative stock assessment models (already accepted for official advice in other zones) as recommended by scientific experts. We also wish to convey our concern regarding the tardiness of the data used in the assessment of fishing opportunities, which, in the case of the Mediterranean, still rely on data from 2022, negatively impacting the sector.

The drastic fishing effort reduction measures applied by the MAP are provoking social and structural changes within the sector, which are increasingly disconnected from the reality of the Euroregion's fishing communities. To avoid this transformation, which is contrary to our social and territorial model, we have requested the adoption of amendments to the MAP regulation, including the removal of the distinction between coastal and deep-sea fishing areas as well as the limitation on landings of red shrimp. Such reforms are essential in order to preserve the local mixed nature of Mediterranean fishing, to guarantee the economic and social viability of marine businesses and workers, and to maintain the territorial balance of coastal communities.

In our view, the current application of the MAP's management measures fails to comply with the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Case C-330/22, 2024), which requires that the Common Fisheries Policy guarantees long-

term sustainable fishing and aquaculture activities, to be managed coherently with objectives for economic profitability, social viability and employability, whilst contributing to food availability. It is urgent to act quickly to restore the security and confidence necessary to ensure the continuation of the sector, food sovereignty and to facilitate generational renewal. Failing this, we will soon be confronted with irreversible biological, economic and social consequences.

Additionally, we received with concern the Commission's proposal regarding post-2027 funds. As Mediterranean territories, we believe it is essential to maintain and strengthen the sectoral instruments for rural and fisheries development. We consider that the current proposal compromises the attainment of the objectives and challenges facing our Euroregion in this field (generational renewal, fleet modernization and decarbonization, development of rural and fishing communities, combating climate change, ocean conservation, etc.).

We write to reaffirm our strong commitment to work with the Member States and the European Commission to ensure the environmental, economic and social sustainability of fisheries, and to call for urgent, determined action by the Commission, in particular by the Commissioner for Fisheries and the Oceans and the Commissioner for the Mediterranean, so as to guarantee the future of fishing, of our fishers, of our coastal communities and of our Euroregion.

Please accept, Madam President, the assurances of our highest consideration.

**Margalida Prohens**

President of the Government of the Balearic Islands

President of the Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean