



To: Mr. Aguiar Machado, Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Copy to: Mr. Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Paris, 1 April 2019

Re. Electric fishing licenses

Dear Sir,

We hereby acknowledge receipt of your two letters dated 22 March (Ares(2019)1954129) and 26 March 2019 (Ares(2019)2135370), in response to our letter of 4 February and our email of 31 January 2019, respectively. **We thank you for the clarification, but note that we are still waiting for a detailed answer regarding our repeated information requests on the licenses granted by the Netherlands to practice electric fishing.**

In our letter dated 22 February 2019 — to which you are yet to reply — we reiterated two crucial questions:

- 1) Could you send us without any further **delay the full list of fishing vessels that have been equipped with electrodes, including the date of issue of the derogation as well as its legal basis**, i.e. the article that was used to grant these derogations?
- 2) Could you **inform us of the precise date upon which the 42 derogations issued in February 2014 (through Article 14 of Regulation 1380/2013) will expire?**

We expect a transparent and timely response to these crucial questions. Indeed, the last series of 42 derogations issued in February 2014 were supposed to expire in February 2019.¹ However, it does not seem to be the case given that none of the Dutch electric trawlers seems to have stopped fishing with electricity so far.

On the contrary, **we have learned through the press that Dutch Fisheries Minister, Ms Carola Schouten, has unilaterally decided to extend these derogations for a further three months, i.e. until 1 June 2019.**² We would like to know whether the Commission is aware of this decision, whether it has been consulted, and whether it has agreed to such an extension.

If this is not the case, we ask the Commission to assume its role as Guardian of the Treaties and to enforce the law by immediately cancelling these illegal licenses. This situation has lasted long enough and, just a few weeks before the European elections, it is of crucial importance to ensure fair treatment between Member States and compliance with EU regulations. European citizens demand transparency and probity.

Respectfully,

Frédéric Le Manach
Scientific director

¹ <http://www.nsrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Paper-4.1-Dutch-derogation-Eng.pdf>

² Article published Saturday 23 March 2019: <https://nos.nl/artikel/2277283-schouten-verlengt-pulsvisvergunningen-nog-een-keer.html>