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Mr Jan Isakson
Director, The Fisheries Secretariat

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Executive Director, Oceana in Europe

Mrs Catherine Weller
Head of Programme, Biodiversity, Client Earth

Mrs Ariel Brunner
Senior Head of Policy, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

Mrs Päivi Lundvall
Executive Director for Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto

Mrs Johanna Sandahl
Chair of the Board Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

Mr Henning Mørk Jørgensen
Marine Policy Officer, Danish Society for Nature Conservation

Mr Mikhail Durkin
Executive Secretary, Coalition Clean Baltic

By email only: christian.tsangarides@fishsec.org

Dear Madams, dear Sirs,


Thank you very much for your letter dated 23 February 2017 on the German and Danish decision to allow a flatfish fishery to operate during the cod closure period. I would like to ask you to convey my reply to your colleagues who co-signed the letter.

My services were in close contact with you on a regular basis during February 2017 and this helped us to assess the situation properly. My services immediately acted once we were informed of the decision of the German and the Danish authorities. They contacted both authorities to inform about the legal situation and to ask the authorities to take immediate action to close these flatfish fisheries. This has finally led to both Denmark and Germany accepting to close these fisheries as of 7 March.

Furthermore the Commission also conducted unannounced inspection and verification missions on-the-spot in Denmark and in Germany to obtain more information and assess the extent of the fishery in question. We are now in the process of evaluating our findings from these inspection missions.

We have made it very clear to both Member States that the legislation is clear and does not permit any fishery during the closure period that is likely to catch cod.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karmenu Vella', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Karmenu Vella