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Commissioner Karmenu Vella  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium

Tuesday, 06 January 2015

Dear Commissioner,

We understand that the UK government has called on the EU Commission to implement emergency measures to try and prevent a collapse in bass stocks, following the ICES advice in June 2014 and the failure of the recent Fisheries Council meeting to reach an agreement on any bass conservation measures whatsoever. There is no doubt that given the parlous state of bass stocks emergency measures are now the right thing to do. As the national representative body for angling in England we urge you, most strongly, to use the emergency measures open to the Commission, through Article 12 of the CFP regulation (1380/2013), to close Area VIIe, to all targeted trawling for bass from 1st January 2015 until 1st May, 2015 in order to reduce fishing pressure on this year's spawning aggregations. It is essential that this applies to vessels of all member states if it is to provide meaningful protection for the remaining bass stock as well as to prevent opposition to the measures on the grounds of individual member state fleets being disadvantaged.

Furthermore, ahead of the implementation of minimum conservation reference sizes, we urge you to increase a minimum legal size to be above the 42cm breeding size so any new adult entrants to the stocks do at least get a chance to breed and replace themselves before they can be legitimately harvested. We would also like to see a complete phasing-out of destructive pair trawling for bass and a move to creating a sustainable line caught only fishery.

We look forward to a positive response to the request from our government for long overdue emergency measures to protect bass stocks for both the recreational and inshore commercial sectors across the European Union.

Yours Sincerely

Mark Lloyd  
Chief Executive