

Brussels, 15.02.2011
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Dear Mr. Knigge,

Thank you very much for your e-mail dated 4 February 2011 on the issue of discards. I would also like to thank you for sending me the position of Ocean 2012 on eliminating discards in EU waters and for EU fishing activities in third country waters. I am heartened by the interest that you together with many other NGOs and even many citizens in the UK and other Member States take in this problem.

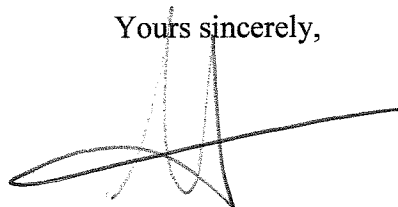
Tackling discards has been high on my agenda since I have taken office last year and I could not agree with you more that we must eradicate this wasteful practise. I consider it a shameful waste that cannot be justified and that should certainly not be encouraged by EU or any other legislation.

In the upcoming Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy I intend to make concrete proposals by summer 2011 on how to tackle this complex problem with a view to bringing it to an end. This will certainly not be an easy exercise, because it will mean, among other things, that we need the clear commitment from Member States as well as from the fishing industry to be forthcoming towards such proposals. I am convinced that these proposals will bring a lot of benefits to the fishing industry but also to citizens at large, as fish stocks will be put under less pressure and fishermen would no longer find themselves in a situation of having to throw fish overboard.

I am also committed to start working on a similar approach to stop discards undertaken by EU vessels in international waters or in waters of third countries as indeed we need to meet the same standards of sustainability and environmental protection for the EU fleet irrespective of where it operates.

I would like to thank the NGOs again for their interest and support in eradicating discards and would hope that you copy my answer to all the organisations forming part of the 2012 coalition.

Yours sincerely,



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