

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002693/18**  
**to the Commission**  
**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**  
(18 May 2018)

*Subject:* By-catches of deep-sea sharks in the context of targeted fishing in Melga (Mora moro) and the error margin for registering catches in logbooks

The fishing quotas for black swordfish include by-catches of deep-sea sharks (Regulation No 2016/2285 of the Council). The landing of a certain number of by-catches is authorised, considering the specific nature of such fishing activities and the estimated impact on stocks.

The Association of Producers of Demersal Species of the Azores (APEDA) has suggested that targeted fishing in Melga (Mora moro), which has a significant impact on the region (189 tonnes in 2017), bearing in mind that the fishing of this species includes small numbers of deep-sea sharks, could also be covered by provisions governing black swordfish with regard to by-catches.

Furthermore, bearing in mind the predominantly handcrafted nature of the fleet, the small size of vessels and the impossibility for vessels to carry scales, the APEDA proposes a change to the tolerance margin used when estimating the weight of fish, from 10% to 20%.

Can the Commission say how willing it is to receive proposals from the APEDA on by-catches in the context of targeted fishing activities in Melga (Mora moro) and changes to the error margin for registering the weight of catches in logbooks.

**Answer given by Mr Vella on behalf of the Commission**  
(16 July 2018)

In line with the regulation on the common fisheries policy <sup>(1)</sup>, the Commission bases all its proposals for Total allowable catches (TACs) on scientific advice.

However, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) provides advice for very few deep-sea sharks, given the lack of scientific data. In order to improve the scientific information on deep-sea sharks, in the deep-sea fishing opportunities for 2017 and 2018 a small by-catch quota of 10 tons was introduced for deep-sea sharks in the Azores caught as by-catches in the longline fishery targeting black scabbardfish.

The Commission remains available to engage with stakeholders. Should the Association of Producers of Demersal Species of the Azores (APEDA) have any suggestions to increase the scientific data available on deep-sea sharks, or have suggestions on how better to manage the fishery for Melga (*mora moro*) in order to reduce the by-catches of deep-sea sharks, the Commission is ready to discuss possible ways forward.

The Commission will adopt its proposal for deep-sea fishing opportunities for 2019 and 2020 in October 2018. This is therefore an opportune moment for stakeholders to present any suggestions to the Commission.

Concerning the margin of tolerance in the logbook, the Commission would like to point to its recent proposal for a revision of the Control Regulation <sup>(2)</sup>, adopted on 30 May 2018. Any possible revision of the margin of tolerance should therefore be raised in the context of the upcoming interinstitutional discussions.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common fisheries policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22-61)

<sup>(2)</sup> COM (2018) 368 final.