

EN

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Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(30.6.2020)

The Commission is aware that recreational fisheries can have an impact on the conservation status of some stocks and monitors the situation closely. Measures restricting recreational fisheries have been proposed on a case-by-case basis, as it was done for example for seabass and European eel<sup>1</sup>. Those measures were adopted considering the environmental, social and economic circumstances<sup>2</sup> to strike an appropriate balance between the interests of commercial and recreational fishermen. The measures would allow recreational fishermen to exercise their fishing activities taking into account their impact on the stock.

Reliable and uniform data collection remains vital for the Commission to assess the impact of recreational fishing on specific stocks and to set appropriate measures. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Working Group on Recreational Fisheries Survey<sup>3</sup> plays a role to summarise and ensure the quality of data collected of recreational fishery in EU countries, facilitating the ICES advisory process.

The General Court of the EU in its judgement of 10 March 2020<sup>4</sup> concluded that the measures restricting recreational fisheries of seabass were not discriminatory<sup>5</sup>. In particular, the Court refers to the differences between commercial and recreational fishing<sup>6</sup> and states that 'it is clear that the difference in treatment of the two activities in question [ ... ] is linked to their respective nature and is in line with the objectives pursued under the common fisheries policy'. The Court concludes<sup>7</sup> that the difference in treatment of the two activities is not manifestly inappropriate or arbitrary for a leisure activity when the aim of the legislation in question is to preserve marine biological resources and to ensure that that activity can be resumed freely once stocks have replenished.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EC) 2020/123 of 27 January 2020 fixing for 2020 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters

<sup>2</sup> Especially the dependency of commercial fishermen on those stocks in coastal communities.

<sup>3</sup> See most recent [2019 report by the ICES Working Group on Recreational Fisheries Survey](#).

<sup>4</sup> <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/celex.jsf?celex=62018TJ0251&lang1=fr&type=TEXT&ancre>.

<sup>5</sup> For the 2018 fishing opportunities.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraphs 120 and 121 of the Judgement [Case T-251/18](#).

<sup>7</sup> In paragraph 123 of the judgement.