Subject: Flexibility of the temporary cessation of fishing activities due to the public health crisis

In the wake of the public health crisis caused by COVID-19, the entire fisheries sector and related businesses in Italy, starting with fishing vessels, have been at a complete standstill since 10 March 2020.

During this time it has been noted, at various levels, that Italy’s seas and rivers have been restocked, and a great deal of evidence points to the fact that various types of fish stocks are recovering.

Nevertheless, provision has been made for the temporary cessation of fishing activities in various water basins, from north to south, between the end of July and mid-October; more than 1984 vessels will comply with those rules.

Given the huge number of boats involved, which have already suffered a severe economic impact owing to the public health crisis, and given that fish stocks are now in a better state of health, can the Commission answer the following questions:

Would it be possible to provide for a reduction of the period of temporary cessation of fishing activities upon production of sound scientific evidence that fish stocks have genuinely improved?

Can the flexibility the Commission is giving to Member States regarding the management of their own resources also be interpreted as an opportunity to readjust the period of temporary cessation of fishing activities?