



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea
The Director

Brussels
MARE.D3/KJ

Jose Morey
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Dear Mr Morey,

Thank you for your e-mail of 23 November 2021 addressed to Commissioner Sinkevičius, raising issues related to marine reserves in the Balearic Islands (Mallorca). I was asked to reply on behalf of the Commissioner.

Your main concern seems to be that the creation of new marine reserves will exclude spearfishing from those areas and cause waste discharge, including of lost fishing nets. You are also claiming that the prohibition of certain activities in the reserve is to be implemented without scientific criteria and that recreational fishing is prohibited whilst it should rather be managed.

I can assure you that the Commission takes the issues of protection and restoration of marine biodiversity and sustainable fisheries very seriously. The EU legislation and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹ require taking effective conservation measures in marine protected areas (MPAs), including fisheries management measures in accordance with the rules of common fisheries policy (CFP). Creating MPAs does not always mean that the fishing activities have to be prohibited. Fishing, just like any other activity, may have to be regulated in order to achieve the conservation objectives of the MPA, based on the best available scientific evidence. It is up to EU Member States to designate and manage their MPAs and to decide on the appropriate management of activities, including by taking restrictive measures.

In order to address the problem of marine biodiversity loss, Member States have agreed under the Biodiversity Strategy to legally protect, by 2030, 30% of EU marine area and to strictly protect one third of that area. The need for this level of protection is underpinned by science, which in particular notes that strictly protected areas can deliver the greatest biodiversity and socio-economic benefits. When designed with the specific aim of achieving fisheries benefits, strictly protected areas (marine reserves) can also significantly increase size and biomass of fish in the reserve, resulting in a so called spill over of fish biomass into the surrounding area. The fish can then be fished outside the strictly protected area, including by recreational fishermen. Concerning other pressures

¹ [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0380 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

on MPAs, such as wastewater discharges and marine litter, Member States must address them as well in line with EU and national legislation. The Commission is also pursuing ambitious EU actions on pollution under the Zero pollution action plan².

Let me highlight that the CFP objectives aim to ensure that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and managed in the way to ensure a socio-economic sustainability. Fishermen already have the obligation to retrieve or report lost gear and the Commission has proposed to improve reporting on lost fishing gear. The EU funds are available to support measures contributing to biodiversity goals, more environmentally friendly fishing gears and techniques, addressing marine litter and many more.

We invite you to contact the competent authorities of the Balearic Islands to follow up on your concerns. Thank you again for your involvement and interest in marine biodiversity conservation and fisheries.

Yours sincerely,

Lena ANDERSSON PENCH

² [Zero pollution action plan \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)