

March 2nd 2017

Subject: Action needed to save seabirds from drowning from fishing activities

Dear European Leaders,

In European waters, it is estimated that more than 200,000 seabirds are incidentally caught annually due to fishing activities. This can be prevented thanks to simple and cost effective solutions that have already been identified. Seabirds are long lived species and therefore incidentally catching large numbers of them has an impact on their populations, rendering some species in critical situation such as the Balearic Shearwater, a critically endangered seabird.

The BirdLife Partnership is extremely concerned with the level of ambition being set by governments across the European Union with regards to the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures (2016/0074(COD)). As you might be aware, this regulation is fundamental for ensuring that Union wide action takes place to minimise, and where possible, eliminate incidental catches of seabirds as laid down in the seabird plan of action of 2012 (COM/2012/0665) and in Article 2.3 of the Common Fisheries Policy ((EU) 1380/2013).

The BirdLife partnership has been working intensively with scientists, fisheries, and local authorities to identify methods to minimise seabird bycatch. This has included gear and vessels modifications and temporal and spatial recommendations. In order to ensure the strict protection that is required under the Birds Directive, technical solutions are established on the basis of EU wide basic mitigation standards. This does not hinder the opportunity (through regional joint recommendations) to establish more regionally focused measures that are equivalent or better than the EU set standards.

We therefore urge you set up your commitment in this regulation and to:

- Ensure that the objectives set are not weakened and therefore minimise, and where possible, eliminate seabird bycatch
- Ensure that there are no minimum levels set for incidental catches and instead the objective to minimise and where possible eliminate incidental catches should be reached progressively
- Ensure that EU standards are set in every sea basin.

Sincerely,



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On Behalf of:



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