



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

**Director General**

Brussels,  
MARE D3 ARES(2017)

Mr. Ivan López  
Chairman Long Distance Advisory  
Council  
C/del Doctor Fleming 7, 2º Dcha  
E- 28036 Madrid  
SPAIN

**Subject: Conflict on inspections and boardings of European fishing vessels in the EEZ of Third Countries signatories of sustainable partnership fishing agreements with the European Union**

*Your reference: your letter of 5 December 2017*

Dear Mr. López,

Thank you for your letter and for LDAC's recommendations.

We are fully aware of the recent inspections and boarding operations that have taken place over the last few months by control authorities of Third Countries in inspection vessels chartered with the assistance and participation of the international conservationist organisation *Sea Shepherd*.

We have been alerted to how these aforementioned boarding operations have taken place. We have been informed of blatant cases of abuse of authority such as conducting the inspections by armed inspectors while photographing and video recording the proceedings.

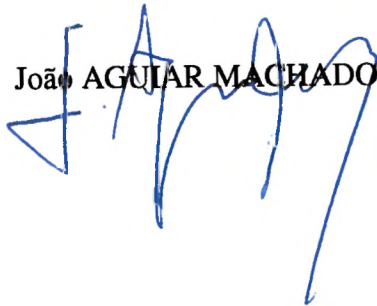
Official letters have been sent to the Fisheries Authorities of our Sustainable Fishing Partnership Agreement (SFPA) partner countries (notably to Liberia, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe), conveying these concerns, insisting on the need to respect the SFPA's protocol provisions and requesting these practices to cease immediately.

In addition, we have raised these issues with our SFPA partner countries within the framework of Joint Committees. These concerns have been registered in the last Joint Committee minutes of Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon.

Please, rest assured that this is a point of high concern to us and we will keep working with our SFPA partner countries in order to put an end to these practices.

I thank you for keeping us informed of the situation and invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273) should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

  
João AGUIAR MACHADO