



Open Letter: MoU urges Greenpeace and PFA to join forces

Dear Mr. Sauven,

In August 2016 the Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association and its member companies signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with Greenpeace Netherlands. The shared objective of this unique agreement is to collaborate on the improvement of sustainable fisheries management of pelagic resources. It is with great surprise that we have seen an increase in media interest around the activities of our members following your report and subsequent campaign around Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in UK waters.

The MoU signed by Greenpeace recognizes the leading role the PFA and its members take in sustainable fisheries, both in the collection of scientific data and scientific research on (pelagic) resources, improving selectivity and avoiding bycatch, and in contributing to effective fisheries management in all regions where PFA members have a pelagic fishing operation.

We are surprised and disappointed that Greenpeace UK's current campaign goes entirely against the intention and ambitions as set out in this MoU.

Equally disappointing is the misuse – or better framing – of images of our vessels to mobilize negative public opinion on a campaign that is based on fiction and half-truths and that arbitrarily targets pelagic non-UK flagged vessels larger than 100 meters, leaving aside the many other pelagic vessels under UK flag that fish with the same nets, for the same species, in the same areas.

The campaign furthermore lacks any scientific base to call for a ban on “supertrawlers” larger than 100 meters to enter British MPAs. Whatever one can say about pelagic fisheries in British MPAs, most importantly in this context is that this fishery is entirely legal for the simple reason that it has no impact on seabed habitats. And protecting seabed habitats is the reason almost all MPAs in UK waters have been designated as such. For your information we have added the briefing note we have published on our website (see: <https://www.pelagicfish.eu/01337/>).

While we take a leading role in sustainable fisheries, we also would like to highlight that we catch for human consumption. By this we directly contribute to the food security in markets much in need of healthy and affordable animal protein. Moreover, animal protein produced with the lowest carbon footprint. The Covid-19 outbreak and climate change are just two of the challenges for mankind in guaranteeing global food security. Since 1961, annual global growth in fish consumption has been twice as high as population growth, demonstrating that the fishing sector is crucial to achieve FAO's goal of a world without hunger and malnutrition. We feel you are ignoring a core reason that pelagic trawlers like ours exist.

As the MoU is still in place, we urge you as the representative of Greenpeace UK to enter into a dialogue with us in the interests of healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries, but also because we need the contribution of pelagic fisheries to keep guaranteeing global food security. If we can commit to working together, we are confident solutions will be easier to find. We are open to speaking directly as we have let you know already and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the points above in more detail.



A copy of this letter will also be sent to Greenpeace Netherlands as they promised to broker compliance with this MoU by all other relevant actors in the Global Greenpeace network.

I look forward hearing from you so we can arrange a meeting to discuss taking this forward at your earliest convenience.

Gerard van Balsfoort
President
Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association
24 June 2020