



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels, 26 January 2022
MARE/C1/UK/dsb/Ares(2022)

Subject: Recommendation #22 - Difficulties of the fishermen from La Palma Island (Spain) due to the volcano activity

Dear Mr Pavon,

I would like to thank you for your recommendation with regard to the impact of the volcano activity on La Palma on the local fishermen.

The Commission is aware of the difficult situation you are confronted with, the level of damage caused by the volcanic eruption, and the need to support the sector.

Based on the Covid-19 experience, the co-legislators agreed to introduce crisis measures in the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund from the start. Thus, Member States can in case of a natural disaster, provide temporary cessation support to fishers.

As the Spanish EMFAF programme is still in preparation, the Spanish authorities could decide to provide this type of support if needed and at their own initiative, as the EMFAF Regulation applies retroactively from the beginning of 2021.

We have been informed that the Spanish government is supporting the fisheries sector with EUR 0.5 million, channelled through the regional government. We are happy to know this support can alleviate the problems.

We understand that the fishing grounds have been heavily damaged along the coastline, and an effort to improve the biodiversity will take time. Nevertheless, following the experience with the eruption of the El Hierro underwater volcano in 2011, we hope recovery will bring positive results and profitability for the sector soon. Regeneration of the fisheries resources in the coastal area covered by lava is paramount, and small-scale fisheries have a great role to play in order to allow damaged marine areas to recover.

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The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund can be used directly to support measures already in place in the Canary Islands to protect and regenerate the bio diversity and marine ecosystems, and also to improve port infrastructure and landing sites. Moreover, support measures are also in place if needed to improve infrastructure or to ensure the safety of fishermen.

Let me in the end thank you for having written to us and shared with us your concrete experience from this natural disaster. This kind of direct information is very valuable for us. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

In the end, I would like to wish you a very happy new year and I am looking forward to our continuing fruitful cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
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