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Republic of Côte d'Ivoire  
Minister of transport  
Secretary of State to the Minister of Transport,  
responsible for Maritime Affairs

Republic of Senegal  
Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy  
Directorate for Sea Fishing

Brussels, 23 June 2020

Dear Sirs, dear Madams,

Europêche, Cogeca and ETF are the recognised representatives of fishing vessels owners and fishers' trade unions in the European Union.

The world is currently affected by the outbreak of a novel coronavirus, declared a pandemic by the UN World Health Organisation, and people worldwide are working to address this crisis.

Although COVID-19 does not infect aquatic species, it has affected the fisheries and aquaculture food systems like no other shock before. The maritime fishing sector, which employs tens of millions of fishers, is a major supplier of food, and particularly animal protein.

The protection measures taken by governments to contain the spread of the disease, while necessary, have impacted each step of the seafood supply chain, from fishing and aquaculture production, to processing, transport, and wholesale and retail marketing. Many fishing vessels are unable to leave port and the demand for many seafood products is substantially reduced.

The COVID-19 crisis is affecting the personal safety and health of fishers, their conditions of work and their ability to join and leave their vessels, with a consequent impact on their capacity to perform their key role in ensuring transport by sea, and harvesting seafood. In addition, many fishers and fishing vessel owners suffer as result of insufficient medical care on board vessels and lack of access to shore side medical care. The inability to change crews, leading to extended periods on board, is particularly problematic in the case of fishers due to the physical and fatiguing nature of their work.

In these difficult times representatives and owners of the of the European Union fishing vessels operating in West and East Africa are making their outmost for chartering the flights across the continent required to ensure the crew changes on board their fleet to preserve good labour conditions on board, taking into account and in line with the IMO and ILO recommendations to facilitate crew change of fishers.

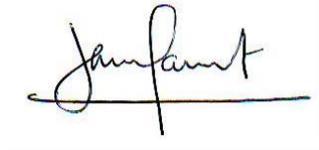
European companies are organising transfers via charter flights to guarantee crew changes of the fishing vessels.

Your kind help and cooperation in facilitating the testing and transfers of these essential workers across the continent is crucial.

This would possibly help quite a few Senegalese and Ivoirian fishers and preserve the good health on board and ashore.

Looking to hearing from you

With our best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Javier Garat', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Javier Garat  
President of Européche

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo', with a large, stylized flourish above it.

Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo  
President of the ETF Fisheries Section