

Department of Communications,
Marine and Natural Resources

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Mara agus Acmhainní Nádurtha

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31 January 2006

Dr Joe Borg,
Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs,
Berlaymont Building,
Brussels 1040,
Belgium

Dear Joe

I am writing to you to advise you of certain information that has come to the attention of the Irish authorities in relation to undeclared landings and possible illegal fishing by Irish fishing vessels.

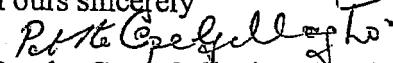
An analysis has been carried out of the data collected by Ireland's scientific marine research body, the Marine Institute under the Data Collection Regulation (EC No.1639/2001) and the EU logbook data recorded by the Department. This analysis, which relates to a number of fishing trips in the years 2003 and 2004, indicates that in respect of the sample trips there were significant discrepancies between the scientifically observed retained catches and the logbook returns.

The Scottish Authorities advised the Department in the late autumn that its investigations into illegal fishing activity in certain Scottish pelagic factories indicates a significant level of undeclared landings of mackerel by some Irish fishing vessels landing into the factories over recent years. The Scottish authorities have this week provided data on the amount of undeclared mackerel landed in 2005 and data on earlier years is expected to be provided very shortly

As the matters arising are potentially serious from a fisheries conservation and control perspective, I am seeking an urgent meeting with you and your officials in order to provide you with the information available to the Irish authorities at this time and to outline for you the package of significant actions that the Government has taken and plans to take immediately to address the undeclared landings and to deliver substantially strengthened fisheries control.

I would appreciate if our secretaries could make contact to make the necessary arrangements as early as possible.

Yours sincerely


Pat the Cope Gallagher T.D.
Marine Minister

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