

Minister Michael Creed T.D
Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

23rd April 2019

Re: Urgent meeting with the Seafood Sector on COVID 19 Outbreak

Dear Minister Creed

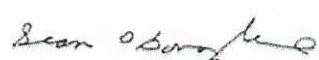


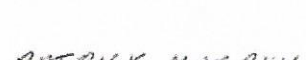
The four producer organisations namely (IFPO, ISEFPO, ISWFPO and KFO) are seeking an urgent meeting with you and your Officials to discuss the implementation of a suite of specific measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID 19 outbreak on the Irish seafood sector. We fully recognise and thank you for the national measures that have already been put in place such as the COVID payments and keeping our fishery harbours open. Unfortunately, these are insufficient to maintain a viable fishing industry in the aftermath of this unprecedented COVID 19 crisis. As already voiced by the fishing industry in several fora we have fully supported your call for the continuation of the fishing activities to secure seafood supply to Irish and European markets during this unprecedented crisis but making it very clear from the start that the industry required urgent financial assistance to remain viable.

As you are aware the fishery sector has been particularly hard hit by the market disruption generated by a significant drop in demand. The closure of sales venues, markets, outlets and distribution channels has seen prices and volumes drop substantially. The drop in demand and prices combined with the vulnerability and complexity of the supply chain made the operations of fishing fleets and seafood production loss-making. Consequently, some fishermen are forced to stay in port while others that go sea have seen prices for certain species collapse. The EU has recognised this with the adoption of some significant amendments to the EMFF regulation covering temporary cessation, storage aid and additional support for producer organisations under their production and marketing plans but no additional funding has been provided.

In the Irish context we are requesting an urgent meeting early next week with you and your Officials to discuss a suite of measures particularly all the EMFF amendments, the di-minimis and additional funding. The meeting on 21st April with Officials only addressed one element storage aid which all of the industry representatives considered was a totally inadequate response to this unprecedented COVID19 crisis.

Hoping you will respond favourably to our request and we look forward to meeting you in the very near future.

Yours Sincerely

			
Sean O Donoghue KFO	John Ward IFPO	Hugo Boyle ISEFPO	Patrick Murphy ISWFPO