



Environment Attachés
Permanent Representations to the EU

September 22nd 2009

Subject: Upcoming Environment Council 21st October 2009

Dear Environment Attaché,

At the Environment Council on October 21st Ministers are expected to discuss the Eco-Efficient Economy in the context of the post 2010 Lisbon Agenda and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. WWF, BirdLife International and OCEAN2012 – a coalition of organisations dedicated to trans-forming European fisheries policy - encourage your delegation to ask the European Commission to present, as a matter of urgency, a roadmap for the reform, sector by sector, of subsidies that have environmentally harmful effects with the aim of their removal.

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Strategy, the EU committed to removing environmentally damaging subsidies, announcing that by 2008 the Commission would put forward a roadmap for their elimination sector by sector.¹ It is now September 2009, no such roadmap exists and some subsidies continue to support environmentally harmful activities.

Of particular interest to us are some of the subsidies to the fishing sector. The Commission's Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) from April 2009 states that public financial support "often contradicts with CFP objectives, in particular the need to reduce overcapacity (...)"² which has resulted in a situation where more than 80 percent of assessed EU fish stocks are overfished and 30 percent are outside safe biological limits.³

The removal of environmentally harmful subsidies is one of the key milestones on the road to sustainable development in the EU, as well as the effective reform of the CFP. It is unacceptable that EU aid continues to support the depletion of valuable natural resources and the deterioration of the environment, threatening coastal communities. We are calling on you to urge the Commission to come up with a roadmap for the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies, including fisheries subsidies, as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

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Regional Director, BirdLife
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¹ EC (2006): Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy

² EC (2009): Green Paper – Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

³ EC (2008): Fishing Opportunities for 2009 - Policy Statement from the European Commission

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