

# **Open letter from chefs to the European Parliament on the need for a strong fisheries control system that ensures legal and sustainable seafood**

8 March, 2021

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

As chefs, we go to great lengths to provide our clientele with information about where the food we serve comes from. However, with seafood, it is not always feasible to guarantee that all of it is sustainably sourced. We would like to see a clear track of seafood products from net to plate, to provide our consumers clear information about where our seafood products come from and how they are caught. Currently, not enough is being done to make this information available.

The root of this problem is that the rules currently controlling the European Union's (EU) fisheries have too many loopholes to be effective. As a result, illegal and unsustainable seafood products make their way into the European market, undermining our hard work to serve responsibly sourced food.

An opportunity to set the EU on course to a sustainable seafood system is now on the horizon. This week, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) will vote on a revised fisheries control system. If they make the right choices and apply the same rules fairly across the entire fishing sector, we, as chefs, could start to feel confident about the seafood we serve.

For this to happen, we need MEPs to vote in favour of a fisheries control system that delivers the information we need to be able to choose the right suppliers. For this to work, all EU countries need to start publishing information on how they monitor fishing activities, control the industry and prosecute rule breakers. Both fresh and processed seafood products should be tracked from net to plate through digitised systems — systems which have already been proven worldwide and which are available to EU fishers today. Installing cameras to record the fish catches should also be mandatory, to instil confidence that our waters are being fished sustainably, that fishers are complying with the rules and that bycatch of sensitive species is monitored very closely.

We ask MEPs to grasp this opportunity and vote in favour of a new fisheries control system that will pull our seafood out of the shadows, so that we can guarantee that all of the seafood we serve is responsibly and sustainably sourced. Their vote can contribute to a post-pandemic recovery that is more aligned with the balance of nature, as all of us will be empowered to make better informed and more responsible seafood purchases.

**David Ariza Abad**, Spain

Founder and Chef at Freeland  
Cook

**Bertílio Gomes**, Portugal

Owner and Chef at Taberna Albricoque  
Promotor of sustainable and locally-sourced seafood

**Paco Morales**, Spain

Chef at Noor (2 Michelin stars)

**Hans Neuner**, Portugal

Chef at Ocean (2 Michelin Stars)  
2019 Chef of the Year in Portugal;  
2020 nominee in the international  
Best Chef Awards

**Bart van Olphen**, The Netherlands

Chef, author and co-founder of the  
sustainable seafood brand *Fish Tales*

**Ximo Saez**, Spain

Head Chef at Restaurante Alma  
and President of the International  
Rice Association