



# HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 4579  
Fax: 020 7219 6715  
euclords@parliament.uk  
www.parliament.uk/lords

5 March 2020

Victoria Prentis MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Block  
2 Marsham Street  
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Victoria,

**EM 13438/19: PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION FIXING FOR 2020 THE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CERTAIN FISH STOCKS AND GROUPS OF FISH STOCKS, APPLICABLE IN UNION WATERS AND, FOR UNION FISHING VESSELS, IN CERTAIN NON-UNION WATERS**

**EM 13438/19 ADD 1: ANNEX TO THE PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION FIXING FOR 2020 THE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CERTAIN FISH STOCKS AND GROUPS OF FISH STOCKS, APPLICABLE IN UNION WATERS AND, FOR UNION FISHING VESSELS, IN CERTAIN NON-UNION WATERS**

**EM 13438/19 ADD 2: ANNEXES TO THE PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION FIXING FOR 2020 THE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CERTAIN FISH STOCKS AND GROUPS OF FISH STOCKS, APPLICABLE IN UNION WATERS AND, FOR UNION FISHING VESSELS, IN CERTAIN NON-UNION WATERS**

Thank you for your Explanatory Memorandum (EM) and letter dated 13 January on the above Proposal, which were considered by our Energy and Environment Sub-Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2020.

We note and welcome your focus on sustainability and discard reduction in the negotiations on this Regulation, and also thank you for the level of detail provided in your EM.

While it is a welcome development that the percentage of stocks with a maximum sustainable yield (MSY) assessment in which the UK has an interest with a TAC set at or below their MSY has increased from 59% in 2019 to 69% in 2020, that remains a far cry from the EU's target

to fish all stock sustainably as of 2020, as enshrined in the CFP<sup>1</sup> and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>2</sup> We therefore have serious concerns about the continued levels of unsustainable fishing. Given that the 2020 goal has demonstrably not been met, when do you expect the EU and UK to reach that target? And what plans do you have to drive progress towards that goal, at both a national (i.e. through domestic action) and regional (i.e. in collaboration with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations) level?

In addition, pages 2-3 of the Commission's EM on the proposed Regulation clarify that TACs continue to be set at a level that assumes full implementation of the landing obligation. We have serious concerns about this approach: speaking with us last year, your predecessor Robert Goodwill acknowledged that discards may be continuing alongside the use of the additional quota.<sup>3</sup> Will data about the increase of landings be used to assess whether the quota uplift is justified and in the interests of sustainable fishing? And if so, when will that assessment take place?

Please provide us with your economic assessment of the settlement when it is complete.

We note that the equivalent negotiations regarding the fishing opportunities for 2021 will take place in December 2020, during the transition period. Please confirm what you anticipate the UK's status being at those negotiations, assuming that the transition period is not extended.

We also note your vote in favour of the Regulation at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in December 2019. We acknowledge that in this instance it was in the UK's interest for you to override the scrutiny reserve.

The Committee continues to take an active interest in this matter and we would therefore welcome being kept updated on developments. We look forward to a response within ten working days.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Commons European Scrutiny Committee; Jessica Mulley, Clerk to the Commons Committee; Les Saunders, Cabinet Office; and John Leach, Departmental Scrutiny Coordinator.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Kinnoull  
Chair of the European Union Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Article 2(2): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF>

<sup>2</sup> [https://sdgcompass.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Goal\\_14.pdf](https://sdgcompass.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Goal_14.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [Q 91](#)