



Department
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The Earl of Kinnoull
Chairman
Select Committee on the European
Union
House of Lords
London
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26 May 2020

Dear Lord Kinnoull,

EM 6546/20: PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 2019/1838 AS REGARDS CERTAIN FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2020 IN THE BALTIC SEA AND OTHER WATERS, AND CORRECTING AND AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 2020/123 AS REGARDS CERTAIN FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2020 IN UNION AND NON-UNION WATERS

6546/20 ADD 1: ANNEXES TO THE PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 2019/1838 AS REGARDS CERTAIN FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2020 IN THE BALTIC SEA AND OTHER WATERS, AND REGULATION (EU) 2020/123 AS REGARDS CERTAIN FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2020 IN UNION AND NON-UNION WATERS

Thank you for your letter of 15th May, I will address each of your questions below.

North Sea and Skagerrak Cod Recovery Measures:

The Commission's first proposal for remedial measures for North Sea cod, as detailed in document 6546/20, was not progressed. The Commission have now responded to the UK's letter dated 11 March 2020 confirming that a decision has not been taken on the technical measures for North Sea cod and this issue should be addressed in the context of the second amendment. Furthermore, the Commission stated that they fully recognise the UK's interest in this issue, which primarily impact UK waters, and intend to honour their obligations under the Withdrawal Act and ensure the UK is consulted on these issues. The UK has recently received the Commission's second proposal and we are now beginning to evaluate it in detail. I will update the Committee on this in due course.

Northern Albacore Tuna:

As mentioned in your correspondence, the UK does have an interest in the Albacore tuna stock. The amendment does not change the UK's allocation of licenses as compared to last year, the amendment therefore does not give rise to concerns for the UK. In relation to sustainability, the stock is managed internationally by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna, it is the view of the Standing Committee Research and Statistics (ICCAT'S scientific body) that the stock is not currently overfished, and it therefore considers current exploitation levels to be sustainable.

UK Consultation of Fisheries Proposals by the Commission:

On the topic of the Commission consulting the UK in line with the conditions set in the Withdrawal Agreement. The UK has recently been consulted on the proposed EU position for the upcoming consultations with Norway on fishing opportunities for sprat in the North Sea and Skagerrak-Kattegat. However, the UK was given just seven days to consider the proposals, while EU Member states were consulted over a longer timeframe. Therefore, in our response we took the opportunity again to remind the Commission of their obligations to consult the UK Government with respect to fishing opportunities related to the UK during the transition period, including in the context of the preparation of relevant international consultations and negotiations. We will continue to monitor the amount of time we are given in consultation and will escalate the issue where we feel the EU's approach is insufficient in allowing proper consultations.

As noted above, the UK have since received a letter from the Commission, which whilst primarily concerned with North Sea cod, did confirm the Commission's intention to ensure the UK is consulted during the transition period.

I am copying this letter to Sir William Cash MP, Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee. I am also copying this letter to the Clerks of the Commons and Lords Committees, Jessica Mulley and Chris Johnson respectively; Les Saunders, Cabinet Office; and Steve Wigham, Defra Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

Yours sincerely,



VICTORIA PRENTIS MP