

# European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

23 July 2020

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

## **8871/20: Commission Communication — Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2021 (41347)**

We have considered your Explanatory Memorandum on the above document.

We note that the Government is pleased with the Commission's overall assessment of the state of stocks in the North-East Atlantic, but the Commission also mentions the reduced sustainability of those North-East Atlantic stocks shared with non-EU countries. Given that the UK will be negotiating as a non-EU country, could you tell us if you agree with the Commission's assessment and, if so, why you believe that the state of those stocks has deteriorated? Finally, what action will the UK take to manage the risk, particularly in the event that the UK and EU are unable to conclude a fisheries agreement?

The Commission points to remedial measures undertaken both within the EU's Multi-Annual Plans and through the EU-Norway consultations. Noting the Government's view that it wishes to base its future fisheries relationship on the EU-Norway relationship, would the Government be supportive of similar remedial measures between the UK and EU? Should any such measures be developed in an ad hoc manner, or would the Government favour a broader framework, similar — although not identical — to the Multi-Annual Plans already in place under the Common Fisheries Policy?

Finally, the Government and Commission note the pressure that COVID-19 has placed on the timing and nature of scientific advice and that there are consequently implications for the annual negotiations. We consider that the

wider EU-UK negotiation is another source of pressure on those negotiations. Bearing in mind those pressures, could you tell us the approximate timeframe to which the Government is working for coastal state negotiations and final agreement and the underlying assumptions? This should include a timetable for the development of the UK's priorities, which you note is a process that has just begun.

We ask for a response by 12 August 2020.

We are copying this letter to Neil Parish MP, Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and Ian Bradshaw, Clerk of the Committee; the Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the EU Select Committee in the House of Lords and Christopher Johnson, Clerk of the Lords EU Select Committee; your Departmental EU Scrutiny team; and Les Saunders and Donald Harris in the Cabinet Office.

**CHAIR**