



HOUSE OF LORDS
European Union Committee

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11 November 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,

COM(2020) 637: Recommendation for a Council Decision to authorise the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the conclusion of the Fisheries Agreement with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Norway

Thank you for your Explanatory Memorandum (EM) on the above Recommendation, which was considered by our Environment Sub-Committee on 11 November 2020.

We note that you believe the Recommendation is ambiguous regarding whether it is referring to an enduring framework agreement or the annual negotiations on total allowable catches (TACs). The remainder of this letter assumes the former, but please inform us if, at some point, it becomes clear that the EU's goal is for the latter.

We note your decision to reach bilateral fishing agreements with both Norway and the EU before beginning trilateral negotiations. Do you intend subsequently to reach a trilateral fishing agreement with Norway and the EU? If so, please clarify your view of the benefits of the additional trilateral agreement, and how quickly you would seek to reach it after the bilateral agreements have been established.

We note your statement that it is possible to agree TACs in the absence of an overarching framework agreement. What is your view of the added benefits of a framework agreement?

Finally, looking ahead to any trilateral negotiations and assuming the existing EU-Norway fishing agreement¹ may be used as a starting point, what would you seek to update or change?

¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21980A0227\(05\):EN:HTML](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21980A0227(05):EN:HTML)

The Committee continues to take an active interest in this matter and we look forward to a response in 10 working days.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Kinnoull', with a horizontal line underneath.

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee