

# European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

20 January 2021

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

## Fisheries Discard Plans:

- **10229/20: Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) .../... of 21.8.2020 specifying details of implementation of the landing obligation for certain fisheries in the North Sea for the period 2021-2023 (41518)**
- **10231/20: Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) .../... of 21.8.2020 specifying details of the implementation of the landing obligation for certain fisheries in Western Waters for the period 2021-2023 (41519)**

We considered your Explanatory Memoranda on the above documents at our meeting of 20 January 2021, having delayed our consideration of these documents pending any agreement on the future EU-UK fisheries relationship. We note that the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement provides for cooperation between the EU and UK in the management of shared fish stocks and that a wide degree of flexibility is given to a Specialised Committee on Fisheries in that respect.

We agree with you that, from 1 January 2021, the UK is able to set its own exemptions from the discard ban and need not follow those set by the EU. It would be helpful if you could set out:

- where the UK's exemptions now differ from those of the EU; and
- where the UK and EU have adopted identical changes to exemptions (such as that for plaice in the North Sea so that the exemption also covers mesh sizes of 100-119 mm).

We note the potential for the EU and UK to cooperate on fisheries management measures in the Specialised Committee for Fisheries. To what extent might the

Specialised Committee on Fisheries discuss rules concerning implementation of the landing obligation for shared stocks in the North Sea and in Western Waters, and potentially adopt decisions binding on the EU and the UK?

As this is our first opportunity since the entry into force of the TCA to engage with the Minister on the implications of the TCA's Fisheries Chapter, we would also welcome the following information:

- your expectations in general terms for the work of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, including its initial priorities;
- the expected date of the first meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries;
- the process for setting the agenda of meetings of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries;
- the expected composition of the UK's delegation; and
- the Government's intentions for parliamentary scrutiny of the work of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, including notice of agenda items and intended UK positions.

We would welcome a response within ten working days.

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**