



Department
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The Lord Ricketts GCMG GCVO
Chair
European Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

7 November 2024

Dear Lord Ricketts,

Annual fisheries consultations

I am writing to outline the approach the Government is taking to the fisheries consultations taking place this autumn.

As an independent coastal State, the UK negotiates annually with other coastal States to set fishing opportunities. We will be seeking to agree total allowable catches (TACs) for 2025 (and in some instances, for 2026 also) for around 90 stocks. Our approach to those negotiations will be guided by the objectives set out in the Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement. We will seek to ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries in our waters and the marine environment, and we will aim to achieve a balanced outcome for all sectors of the UK fishing industry.

Coastal States consultations

Each year we negotiate with several coastal States to set the TACs for the three main widely distributed pelagic stocks in the North-East Atlantic (i.e. mackerel, blue whiting and atlanto-scandian herring). Earlier in October, parties agreed to set those TACs at the levels advised by scientists at the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. In parallel, we will continue to advocate for comprehensive quota-sharing agreements on these stocks that ensure we collectively do not fish above the TAC.

UK-EU bilateral and UK-EU-Norway trilateral consultations

We will commence bilateral negotiations with the EU and negotiations on the stocks we manage trilaterally with Norway and the EU this week (commencing 4 November). We envisage those consultations lasting until early December. These negotiations focus on catch limits for 2025 for a range of stocks, any temporary quota transfers for those stocks, access arrangements with the EU for certain species not covered by the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, as well as any related fisheries management measures including for non-quota stocks.

RFMO annual meetings

We will be participating in a number of Annual Meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

Our objectives are to ensure that fisheries for RFMO stocks are managed sustainably, to maximise fishing opportunities for the UK, and to ensure that RFMOs adopt measures that protect ecosystems and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

UN and OECD

We will be participating in consultations on the UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries where the UK will be seeking to promote sustainable fisheries management at a global level, including proposing text relating to the application of the precautionary principle and transparency in fisheries management.

We will also be attending the OECD's Committee on Fisheries where work will continue on an OECD Recommendation seeking to eliminate Government support to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

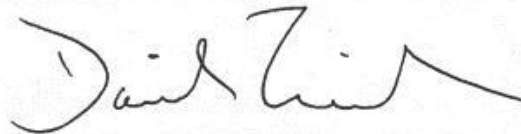
UK-Norway and UK-Faroes bilateral consultations

Finally, we will be meeting with Norway and the Faroe Islands under our respective Fisheries Framework Agreements to negotiate possible quota exchanges and access to each other's waters for 2025.

I will provide a Written Statement once we conclude our negotiations across all the forums mentioned above.

I am copying this letter to Rt Hon Mr Alistair Carmichael MP, Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Zeichner', written in a cursive style.

DANIEL ZEICHNER MP