



Department
for Environment
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Neil Parish MP (Chair)
EFRA Committee
House of Commons
London
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Dear Neil,

I am writing to inform you on the outcome of fisheries negotiations with the European Union (EU), Norway and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

Conclusion of UK-EU fisheries negotiations for 2022

The UK has now concluded bilateral annual fisheries consultations with the EU and reached an agreement on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 69 fish stocks and other fisheries management measures for 2022.

The negotiations between the UK and EU were productive and at times challenging. However, throughout the negotiations my Department officials, alongside Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish colleagues, worked closely as part of the UK delegation to secure a balanced and positive outcome for the whole of the UK fishing industry.

The resulting outcome is one which provides much-needed stability for the UK fishing industry, while delivering sustainability improvements, and setting a good platform for our continued future relationship with the EU on fisheries management. For example, the agreement includes new and continued commitments by the UK and EU to work together via the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) across a range of issues including the challenges presented in the Celtic Sea mixed fishery and combined TACs in the North Sea as well as for Non-Quota Species.

Value and sustainability

The total value of the fishing opportunities for the UK in 2022 across the 69 agreed EU-UK TACs is approximately 140,000 tonnes, worth around £313 million. For these stocks, the UK fleet will have around 12,000 tonnes less quota available than year, estimated to be worth about £18 million. However, the UK has around 28,000 tonnes more quota from these negotiations than it would have received with its previous shares as an EU Member State. This is estimated to be worth around £45 million based on historic landing prices.

As in previous years, the UK negotiated this year's TACs and quotas taking full account of sustainability principles. A full assessment on the number of individual TACs set consistent

with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advice on catch opportunities will be published shortly and after the conclusion of all the UK's annual fisheries negotiations and the setting of consultative TACs.

Quota exchanges

On exchanges of quota with the EU, both the UK and EU agreed to the continuation of the interim exchange mechanism which has operated successfully since July this year, enabling voluntary exchanges between the UK and EU Member States. We agreed to continue using this mechanism until the SCF can agree a permanent replacement, as envisaged by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). We did explore the possibility of making quota exchanges within the annual consultations but did not get any engagement from Member States on this. Instead, the UK and EU agreed to hold a final round of exchanges on 21 January 2022 to allow for the wrapping up of this year's exchanges of 2021 quota.

Non-quota Species

For Non-Quota Species (NQS), the UK and EU finalised the 2012-16 baseline tonnage figures provided for in the TCA. Exceptionally, it was agreed not to apply these figures for 2022. In the event either Party reaches 80% of their total, a discussion will be held in the SCF to consider next steps. Non-quota data exchanges at EEZ level will continue monthly, with further discussions to take place in 2022 to ensure the robustness of exchanged data.

The UK and EU committed to work at pace to develop multi-year strategies for shared NQS as set out under the TCA, with the aim of developing the first of these by 31 July 2022 to ensure the sustainable management of NQS stocks from 2023 onwards.

The UK and EU agreed to roll forward the previously agreed measures for seabass. In addition, it was agreed that further adjustments would be introduced in 2022. These include an increase in the annual limits for landings of bass from hook and lines and fixed gillnets, as well as an amendment to the commercial trawl/seine flexibility.

UK-Norway Bilateral Negotiations

The UK has also concluded bilateral annual fisheries consultations with Norway on fisheries access and quotas for 2022.

The agreement includes reciprocal access to each other's waters. We will gain access to 30,000 tonnes of whitefish stocks such as cod, haddock and hake. There will also be access to fish pelagic stock. The UK industry will be able to fish its full quota of Atlanto-scandian herring in Norwegian waters, and up to 17,000 tonnes should it swap in additional quota from the EU in 2022. In return, Norway will be able to fish up to 17,000 tonnes of North Sea herring in UK waters. This is less than a third of the level of access for North Sea herring enjoyed by Norway while the UK was a member of the European Union. We also agreed some quota exchange, estimated to be worth just over £5m. This includes bringing in stocks such as North Sea whiting, hake and anglerfish, and arctic cod.

The agreement puts in place a process which ensures that the fishing arrangements do not have detrimental consequences for fish stocks and the wider marine environment. The mutual access will also allow respective fleets more flexibility to target the stocks in the best condition throughout the fishing year, supporting a more sustainable and economically viable fishing industry.

In parallel to the conclusion of these negotiations, we have secured from Norway an allocation of 6,550 tonnes of cod around Svalbard. Together with tonnage secure in the bilateral agreement, this means the UK can fish over 7,000 tonnes of cod in the arctic in 2022, estimated to be worth around £16 million. This is 1,500 tonnes more than in 2021, despite a 20% cut in the Total Allowable Catch.

UK-EU-Norway Trilateral Negotiations

We have also concluded negotiations trilaterally with the EU and Norway on catch limits for shared North Sea stocks for 2022. With this agreement, the UK has struck a balance that will benefit both our fishing industry and the long-term sustainability of our marine environment. As with our other fisheries negotiations, my department's officials worked closely with Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh officials as a joined-up UK Delegation.

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)

The UK is a Contracting Party to five RFMOs. We have played a central role this year in securing important new measures for 2022 and beyond in all five. Key examples include a new rebuilding plan for North Atlantic shortfin mako shark in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and a measure to protect juvenile haddock at the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). The UK also confirmed its 2022 shares in the four ICCAT stocks negotiated with the EU under the TCA. We aim to build on these successes in our RFMO work in 2022 and beyond.

I am copying this letter to Lord Kinnoull, Chair of the Lords European Affairs Committee; Sir William Cash, Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee; the Clerks of the Commons and Lords EU Committees; Les Saunders, Cabinet Office; Ben Williams, Clerk of the EFRA Committee and Steve Wigham, Defra Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,



VICTORIA PRENTIS MP