



HOUSE OF LORDS
European Union Committee

House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 4579
Fax: 020 7219 6715
euclords@parliament.uk
www.parliament.uk/lords

20 May 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,

Access to UK fisheries post-Brexit

Thank you for your letter of 5 May responding to the conclusions of our predecessor Committee's inquiry on access to UK fisheries post-Brexit.

We are, frankly, disappointed by your response. It gives the impression that you are not genuinely seeking to reach a fisheries agreement, nor to engage with the Committee's concerns.

In considering the need for annual negotiations you conflate negotiations on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and negotiations on access rights. Can we please ask that you deal with both aspects separately and inform us clearly of your position on each.

You argue that the UK, as an independent coastal state, will have every right to control fishing access to its waters. This is of course true. However, in making that argument you ignore our central contention that exercising that right comes with consequences for both the fishing industry and the wider economy that you entirely fail to acknowledge.

And your statement that there is "ample time" to strike a deal ignores the political reality of the issues yet to be agreed, and, not incidentally, the ratification processes on both sides.

You argue that the EU may be amenable to a zonal attachment approach to rebalancing quota allocations if it results in stable quota shares. We are glad to hear it. That, however, is the only reason for optimism we can glean from your letter.

You began your response by acknowledging the potential impact of COVID-19 on the fishing and aquaculture sectors. In that context, where the industry is facing the dual challenge of COVID-19 and Brexit, we are surprised that you would dismiss the concerns raised by our expert witnesses, including experienced representatives of the sector, as "hypothetical".

Please write to us regarding the current state of play in the fisheries negotiations, outlining both Parties' positions, the key points of contention, your view on any potential ways forward, and whether you believe agreement will be reached by 1 July.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin".

Lord Teverson
Chair of the EU Environment Sub-Committee