

**Written evidence submitted by the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
(NFFO) (FRE0031)**

Summary

1. The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) is the representative body for the fishing industry in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The NFFO exists to provide a voice for fishermen and to lead policy change for the benefit of our members and the wider UK fishing industry.
2. The NFFO has played a key role throughout the Brexit process acting as a conduit between Government, Parliament, our members and the wider UK fishing industry, and leading the campaign for the UK to become an independent coastal state after Brexit. The Government has made promises to the UK fishing industry that steps can and will be taken to realise the opportunities of Brexit. Throughout the process, the NFFO has striven to hold the Government to account in delivering these promises and has set out the policies that are necessary to deliver on the opportunities that Brexit presents.
3. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's inquiry into the progress of the negotiations on the UK's Future Relationship with the EU.
4. There is widespread recognition across Government, Parliament and industry that the UK fishing industry was given an extremely unfair deal when the UK joined the European Economic Community in the 1970s. Fishing was considered expendable by national politicians and was consequently sacrificed for other objectives. We believe that Brexit presents a unique opportunity for the UK fishing industry to break free from this unfair arrangement.
5. As we approach the end of the transition period, the UK will no longer be bound by the Common Fisheries Policy and will be able to act as an independent coastal state reflecting its new legal status under international law. Outside the Common Fisheries Policy, we have a generational opportunity to match the achievements and growth of Norway and Iceland in managing their fisheries. As an independent coastal state we will:
 - Regain sovereignty over who is permitted to fish in UK waters
 - Get a fair deal on quotas for UK fishermen which better reflect the resources located in UK waters
 - Participate in annual fisheries negotiations over access to fishing opportunities
 - Revive coastal communities bringing immediate and long-term opportunities
 - Grow the UK industry's role as a world leader in sustainable fisheries management.
6. Negotiations between the UK and the European Union are currently under way. Fisheries is a key focus of the negotiations. The NFFO supports the UK Government's negotiating position in seeking no more and no less than the types of arrangements that other coastal states like Norway already have with the EU. The EU's mandate is to maintain the status quo

on access and quota shares for the clear reason that it benefits them and disadvantages the UK.

7. The NFFO and the wider UK fishing industry expect the Government to deliver on its promises to redress the historic injustice from the Common Fisheries Policy and allow the UK to become an independent coastal state. This once-in-a-generation opportunity will help to revive coastal communities across the UK and build the industry for future generations.

What are the UK and EU fisheries industries' priorities for the future relationship negotiations? How do these priorities vary between different parts of the fishing, aquaculture and processing industries and by product, region and nation?

8. The UK's priority in relation to fishing is to secure a position in which the UK can assert its rights and meet its responsibilities under international law, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, like any other independent coastal state. It is now well understood within Government, across Parliament and the country at large, that the UK fishing industry was sacrificed in 1973 for other national priorities. This has been the reason why for 40 years the UK has been tied into an asymmetric and essentially exploitative relationship with the EU over this period. It also explains why fisheries has become such an emblematic issue within the context of the UK's departure from the EU.
9. As a result of the terms on fisheries agreed to in 1973, EU vessels fish around six times as much in UK waters as UK vessels fish in EU waters. This is a very different ratio from countries like Norway and Iceland who hold independent coastal state status and enjoy the primary use of their fisheries resources, with access to non-national fishermen only when there is a mutual benefit to this arrangement.
10. The EU's negotiating position is to seek to maintain the status quo on access arrangements and quota shares, and to hold the UK as close to the Common Fisheries Policy as possible, for the clear reason that it benefits them enormously and disadvantages the UK.
11. If there is a failure for the UK and the EU to agree a framework agreement, the default would be to try to agree a stand-alone arrangement for 2021, with no automatic rights of access for either party.
12. Different interests including sectoral, target species, catching, processing, regional, devolved administrations all have slightly different priorities. There is however a recognition, that as an independent coastal state, the UK would be in a much stronger position to secure quota shares which reflect the resources located in UK waters. Significantly increased access to raw materials would, in turn, have the potential to contribute towards the rejuvenation of coastal communities.

Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed any of these priorities? What might be the consequences of a deal which does not meet these priorities?

13. Covid-19 has underlined the importance of the EU market for shellfish and demersal species as an important component of the hospitality, restaurant and catering markets, which have been very badly impacted by the pandemic and associated lockdowns.
14. However, it has not materially affected the UK fishing industry's or the UK Government's aspirations to operate like any other independent coastal state, which the NFFO welcomes. It does, nonetheless, underline the reasons why the EU is seeking to link market access with an EU/UK fisheries agreement. No such linkage exists in any other EU/coastal state fisheries deal and likewise the UK and EU should have separate and unlinked fisheries and trade agreements.

To what extent did the UK Government consult the industry before publishing its negotiating aims? How well does what the Government has published meet the needs of different parts of the UK fisheries industry? What are your views on the EU's negotiating mandate and draft legal text?

15. There has been extensive discussion between government departments and the UK fishing industry, including the NFFO, prior to the publication of the UK's negotiating aims. These have taken place at ministerial and departmental level but also through consultations in the ports. As a result, there is close alignment between the UK fishing industry's aspirations and the Government's policy objectives.
16. The EU's draft legal text reflects the interests of those few member states who benefit from the current unbalanced arrangements. The EU is pursuing a fisheries deal with the UK which incorporates the following key aspects:
 - Automatic access for EU fleets to fish in UK waters
 - Status quo on quota shares
 - UK to follow Common Fisheries Policy rules as far as possible
 - A long-term agreement solidifying EU advantages
 - No free trade agreement with the UK without a long-term agreement on EU terms.

It is clear from recent press reports that the European Commission itself thinks that the EU's position is an unreasonable, maximalist position which is unachievable. It will, however, require movement in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament to deliver a new mandate. The EU's only major lever with regard to fisheries is to withhold a trade agreement. This would undoubtedly hurt the UK but would also create serious difficulties in a number of member states.

17. The NFFO believes that a deal between the UK and the EU is possible, which:
 - Respects the UK's sovereignty as a coastal state
 - Accepts UK's right to participate in annual fisheries negotiations as an independent party
 - Upholds the precepts of sustainable fishing
 - Grants access to EU fleets to fish in UK waters outside the 12 mile limit

- Delivers a new quota sharing arrangement centred on a scientific understanding of the fish and shellfish resources in each respective Exclusive Economic Zone
- Maintains access to the UK single market for UK fisheries products.

How is the UK Government keeping the UK fisheries industry informed of developments in the negotiations? Has the sector been given the opportunity to comment on any of the UK draft legal texts? On which aspects of a future fisheries agreement are the UK and EU's aims farthest apart? Where do their positions align? On which areas does each side have the most leverage? Is there a workable compromise between the UK and EU's positions and, if so, what is it? What trade-offs must each side make? How might different resolutions to these trade-offs affect different parts of the UK and EU fisheries industries? If you see room for the EU's position on fisheries to move towards that of the UK, which Member States might support that change and why?

18. The NFFO, as the principle representative body for fishermen in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, has been in constant direct dialogue with officials and ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and, prior to dissolution, the Department for Exiting the European Union.
19. In addition, the NFFO is a member of a wider DEFRA stakeholder group, the External Advisory Group, which meets monthly. The NFFO has also hosted meetings in the ports and at central locations through which Government has been exposed to the opinions of people working directly in the UK fishing industry.
20. We did not have advanced sight of the UK Government's draft legal text and read it only when it was published. However, there were no surprises. We supported it and it closely aligned with our previous understanding of the UK positions.
21. The respective UK and EU negotiating positions and the space in which a compromise might be reached without surrendering the UK's core objectives is described above. Agreement between the UK and EU on the high-level principles of a science-based fisheries policy and sustainable fisheries management should not be difficult, although it can be expected that the UK will resist any attempt to import Common Fisheries Policy prescriptive micromanagement into a bilateral agreement.
22. At present, a wide gap exists between the UK and EU on access, quota shares, and governance. France is by far the major beneficiary from Relative Stability and is likely to resist change most. Although the EU member states have shown admirable solidarity to date, we believe that faced with the potential loss of access to fish in UK waters, other fishing member states are likely to compromise to secure a deal. The UK's leverage lies in the fact that EU vessels fish around six times as much in UK waters as UK vessels fish in EU waters. The EU's leverage lies in the threat to withhold an agreement on trade unless it includes a deal on fisheries on the EU's terms.

How much progress has been made so far in negotiations on fisheries? What effect has the Covid-19 pandemic had on the negotiations? Can an agreement be ratified by 1 July? What happens if nothing has been agreed by this date?

23. Our impression is that a wide gap between the UK and the EU remains on fisheries. Covid-19 has caused a slight delay to the timetable for the negotiations. Following a short hiatus, negotiations have recommenced through the use of online conference facilities. It is possible that the lack of face-to-face discussions has limited the negotiators abilities to discuss options off-line and informally, a key characteristic of how fisheries deals are brokered by the EU.
24. It is unlikely, in our view, that a deal on fisheries will be struck by the end of June. If one is not agreed by October, for example, arrangements will have to be made to begin negotiations for a stand-alone fisheries agreement for 2021, covering Total Allowable Catches, quota shares, access arrangements, with a UK/EU framework agreement following in due course. Negotiations with other coastal states for 2021 will also have to proceed, irrespective of whether the UK and EU have reached agreement, in order to have fisheries arrangements in place for 1st January 2021.

What evidence is there that the UK and EU have considered how any agreement will be monitored and enforced? What preparatory work is needed to ensure the UK can monitor and enforce any agreement? To what extent will such enforcement require cooperation with the EU and other nations to be effective?

25. The UK, as an EU member state, always had responsibility for control and monitoring of fishing activity in UK waters. This fleet and aircraft capability has been enhanced in recent months. In recent years, the monitoring of fishing activities has also been greatly strengthened by technologies such as satellite monitoring and electronic logbooks. In any event, the EU's own illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing legislation carries heavy penalties for infringements carried out in the waters of a third country. Any serious transgressions would mean the cancellation of authorisations, for the vessel concerned, to fish in UK waters by the UK authorities, and we suppose by the EU too. This is a heavy disincentive to illegal fishing in UK waters, whether for commercial gain or as a political gesture.
26. On the issue of whether enforcement requires cooperation between the EU and UK in order to be effective, the NFFO believe that cooperation and data sharing between UK and EU authorities would be desirable but is not essential.

Are the EU's fisheries agreements with countries such as Norway and Iceland suitable models for any deal with the UK? How does the deal the EU is proposing with the UK differ from such existing agreements? Is the EU correct to argue that annual negotiations with the UK would be impractical? How might a system of annual negotiation work?

27. The EU's fisheries agreement with Norway is an extremely relevant model for a future fisheries agreement between the UK and the EU. Both Norway and the UK have fisheries that are contiguous with the EU and a number of shared stocks. The elements of the EU/Norway agreement are as follows:
- Shares stocks are managed through annual fisheries agreements
 - Total allowable catches are set annually on the basis of ICES science

- Quota shares are based on zonal attachment
- Access arrangements agreed annually; if there is no agreement, the parties have no automatic right of access to fish in each other's waters
- Quota exchanges take place where mutually desirable, these are balanced using cod equivalents
- The parties have regulatory autonomy in their respective Exclusive Economic Zones, and cooperation and common measures takes place where considered desirable by both parties
- The EU/Norway fisheries agreement has persisted over 40 years.

28. The annual negotiation model is well established and is the normal vehicle for coastal states to manage shared stocks, flexibly and effectively. It is the Common Fisheries Policy, which we believe to be over-centralised and cumbersome, and has always had the potential to generate adverse unintended consequences, that is aberrant and an obstacle to modern flexible and adaptive fisheries management.

29. The EU's principal counterargument has been to emphasise that the number of stocks involved in a future UK/EU fisheries agreement would far exceed the relatively few stocks jointly managed by the EU. There is indeed a difference in scale, but not one that would justify sticking with the Common Fisheries Policy arrangements.

30. A focus on key fisheries, stocks, phasing and long-term management plans, which the UK Government's Fisheries Bill makes provisions for, means that annual agreements could manage shared fisheries, certainly no worse than the Common Fisheries Policy.

How would a system based on zonal attachment differ from one based on relative stability? What steps must the UK Government and other stakeholders take to put such a system in place? How long might this take? What fisheries agreements does the UK also need to reach with other European countries such as Norway and Iceland? How much progress has been made to date? How would these agreements interact with any future UK/EU agreement?

31. Zonal attachment is a system of allocation based on a scientific assessment of the resources located in each other's respective Exclusive Economic Zones. Relative Stability is a formula based on historic catches from the 1970s and early 1980s. Relative Stability enshrines the UK's structural disadvantage built into the Common Fisheries Policy. The most egregious quota shares based on Relative Stability are:

- Channel Cod: UK share 9%; French Share 84%
- Celtic Sea Haddock: UK Share 10%; French Share 66%

32. Over the years the European Commission has made several attempts to move to a more rational basis for allocating quotas but, since the 2016 UK EU membership referendum, has reverted to support for the status quo for obvious reasons. In recent years, the impact of warming sea-water temperatures and changing patterns of fish distribution has amplified the mismatch between fishing opportunities and who catches the fish. It is also worth mentioning that stocks covered by North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission are mainly

located in UK waters. The only basis for an EU share in these stocks is historic access – Relative Stability.

33. The UK has developed a model of zonal attachment and has, in its White Paper, published examples of the magnitude of the changes it would bring. We understand that bi-lateral draft fisheries agreements with Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland are well advanced. Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands have no difficulty with the concept of zonal attachment or with the annual fisheries agreement mechanism. These would be high-level framework agreements and the substance of annual fisheries agreement would be dealt with during annual negotiations each autumn, as now.

How important is access to the EU market for the UK fisheries industry? What additional customs, regulatory and sanitary/phytosanitary barriers might the UK fisheries industry face under any future relationship with the EU? How might these barriers be reduced? What barriers would exist if no trade deal is reached before the UK leaves the Transition Period?

34. The EU single market is important for the UK fishing industry, although the degree of reliance depends very much on the species concerned. Mackerel, for example, is not sold to any great extent into the EU, but whitefish is more dependant and shellfish is very dependent.
35. Despite the importance of the EU market for shellfish, markets in the Far East for shellfish, particularly crab and whelk, have developed rapidly in recent years and domestic consumption of fish and shellfish have been encouraged by direct sales in response to the Covid-19 health emergency. Nonetheless, the EU remains the key market destination for UK shellfish stocks, including langoustine, crab and scallops.
36. The degree to which access to the EU market for UK fisheries products will change will reflect the content of any trade deal negotiated and the place of fisheries products within it. In the absence of a trade deal, trade in fisheries products would take place on WTO most favoured nation terms. This would mean tariffs in the range 8%-15%. As a third country trading into the EU under WTO terms, some fish and shellfish products would have to comply with sanitary and phytosanitary checks and controls and export health certification.
37. Trade in fisheries products under a new UK/EU agreement would obviously reflect the terms and ambition of that deal. There are businesses in the supply chain on both sides of the channel dependent on this trade and history suggests, for example with the re-establishment of the trade in fisheries products after the Cod Wars with Iceland, that if there is money to be made, those businesses will quickly adapt to any new trading conditions. This is not to minimise the potential for short-term disruption. Fresh and live fish and shellfish trade is particularly vulnerable to delays at the border and this could impact heavily on individual businesses and the vessels supplying these businesses.
38. Non-tariff barriers to trade could be significant and it is clear that businesses in the supply chain are preparing for significant adaptations in order to trade with the EU. Some dislocation could be expected if there was no agreement but prior to the Covid-19 pandemic it would

be reasonable to assume that the global economy would probably provide an outlet for any additional output although possibly at reduced profitability.

39. We are now facing a global recession that, in some sectors, is likely to last for 3 – 5 years. Unemployment has risen, disposable income is reduced, discretionary purchases are likely to be reduced and savings are likely to rise. A vigorous campaign to encourage the UK population to consume more of the fish UK vessels actually catch as opposed to what it imports is an obvious mitigating measure. The emphasis on a greener economy may help consumer willingness to accept fish as a more expensive, but less harmful, source of protein rather than meat products.

What obligations concerning fisheries does the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol place on the UK, EU and EU member states and their respective industries? What elements of the Protocol's implementation concerning fisheries remain to be decided by the Joint Committee or are otherwise unclear, for example: the conditions under which fisheries and aquaculture products landed by NI vessels will be exempt from EU duties? How might these issues be resolved?

40. The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol (hereafter referred to as the Protocol) does not extend to the territorial waters of the United Kingdom. Therefore, at the end of the transition period within Northern Ireland's maritime zone regulations currently applied under the Common Fisheries Policy shall be replaced by UK regulations, just as they will be throughout the United Kingdom's Exclusive Economic Zone.
41. Similarly, at the end of the transition period, British registered fishing vessels based in Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom's fishing fleet, subject to UK fisheries policy within the UK's fisheries zone and harvesting UK quota allocations.
42. There remain outstanding questions as to how seafood from UK fishing vessels, including those based in Northern Ireland, will be treated when landed in Northern Ireland fishing ports. A strict interpretation of the Protocol suggests such seafood could be subject to tariffs. However, we are advised this is not the intention and discussions within the UK Government and with the Joint Committee are ongoing to devise a work around that would resolve this anomaly; in other words, seafood landed by UK registered fishing vessels into their home ports in Northern Ireland would not be subject to tariffs.
43. The Protocol is specifically designed to avoid border checks on the island of Ireland, especially those around trade between Northern Ireland and the EU's Single Market. Another outstanding question is what, if any, quantitative restrictions might be imposed by the EU upon imports of seafood from Northern Ireland into the Single Market? There has been no mention of quantitative restrictions upon other goods, so why would such constraints be imposed upon seafood?
44. Nevertheless, under the previous backstop proposals there was mention of such quantitative restrictions or a cap on the volume of seafood exported from Northern Ireland into the Single Market. From the EU's perspective this was designed to avoid Northern Ireland being used as a 'back door' by other UK seafood producers to access the Single

Market. If this approach is repeated under the Protocol any cap should be future proofed and reflect all quota allocations held by Northern Ireland producers.

45. Most seafood (60%) landed into Northern Ireland is exported to GB. The Protocol envisages continued unfettered access of produce, including seafood, from Northern Ireland to GB (west to east). However, some checks are envisaged for seafood moving from GB into Northern Ireland (east to west). This will impact upon seafood producers across GB who currently trade, for example pelagic species and salmon, with customers in the Republic of Ireland where their produce is processed. Likewise, it would also impact upon Northern Ireland vessels that land their seafood into GB ports before it is sent back to Northern Ireland for processing. Similarly, a significant volume of scampi products is sent to Northern Ireland from across the GB for primary processing. In this case all of the scampi product is sent back to GB where it is finished, primarily for consumption in the UK. As with other products, where seafood is solely traded between GB, Northern Ireland and back to GB there should be no additional checks.
46. Neither should we forget that buyers and processors based in the Republic of Ireland depend upon significant volumes of seafood they process being purchased from landings made in Northern Ireland or by British fishing vessels landings directly into Irish ports.
47. Neighbourhood agreements, whilst not the subject of the Protocol, reflect historic fishing patterns around the island of Ireland and are another important part of future fisheries relations between the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland/EU. What is known as the 'Voisinage Agreement' dates back to the 1960s and was recently the subject of tension following Ireland's suspension of the agreement, although this has now been resolved through new Irish domestic legislation.
48. Whilst the Protocol is focused upon trade between Northern Ireland, Ireland and the Single Market, clarification is required where seafood transits through GB on its way to continental Europe. The vast majority of seafood landed into Northern Ireland and destined for Europe uses the GB land bridge. What processes will be in place to verify seafood entering GB from Ireland? Furthermore, what processes will be in place to verify seafood arriving in Europe from Ireland that's has transited through GB?
49. Finally, whilst UK fishermen in Northern Ireland desire frictionless trade with the EU, for them the biggest goal remains a separation from the Common Fisheries Policy and an end to the discrimination this policy brought to all UK fishermen based around the Irish Sea in respect of fishing quota allocations (the Hague Preference). The opportunities more than outweigh the challenges.

If no fisheries agreement is reached by the end of the year, what obligations remain on the UK and EU under international law, for example: access to fishing waters and landing rights? What would be the social and economic consequences if no UK/EU fisheries deal has been reached by the end of the year? How might these vary across different parts of the fisheries industry? How might these effects be mitigated?

50. In the absence of a framework agreement by October, it will be necessary for the parties to negotiate a stand-alone coastal state agreement for 2021. This is not ideal, but neither is it unduly problematic from a UK perspective.
51. The relevant legal framework will be the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As a coastal state, there is a responsibility under this law for the UK to use best endeavours to negotiate an agreement covering Total Allowable Catches, quota shares and access to fish in UK waters. There is no legal requirement to reach agreement.

Would you be concerned about the sustainability of fish stocks if the UK and EU do not manage to reach agreement?

52. Both the UK and the EU remain committed to managing their fisheries sustainably and indeed are legally required to do so by United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We would expect both parties to respect this.
53. The UK fishing industry has been tied into an asymmetric and exploitative arrangement on fisheries with the EU for 40 years. The socio-economic consequences can be seen in many harbours and ports around the UK coast. This is the background to any short-term turbulence which may result from the UK/EU failure to agree to a free-trade agreement. The EU fleets fish around six times as much in UK waters as UK fleets fish in EU waters. Without access to UK waters, around 3000 EU vessels would face displacement at some point during the year. It is something of an understatement to say that this would create serious problems in managing fisheries in the remaining EU waters.
54. It is fair to point out that there are some counter examples where segments of the UK fleet rely on access to EU waters. Loss of access to French scallop grounds are an example where loss of access could lead to an increase in fishing pressure in UK waters.
55. The obvious way to mitigate against this outcome would be to reach agreement on an interim basis for 2021 if a framework agreement is not possible. An agreement will not be possible if the EU holds to its existing negotiating mandate and insists on the status quo in terms of access and quota shares. There are signs, as recently reported in the media, that the Commission recognises that the current EU mandate on fisheries is maximalist and untenable but the member states who would lose out are digging their heels in. Those member states represent a minority within the EU and even in those countries, fishing is not the only economic or political interest.

June 2020



Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: freucom@parliament.uk Website: www.parliament.uk/freucom

22 May 2020

Barrie Deas
Chief Executive
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

Dear Mr Deas,

The House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union is inquiring into the progress of the negotiations between the UK and the EU. Under normal circumstances, the Committee holds regular oral evidence sessions in Westminster. However, measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus make this difficult.

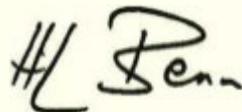
The Committee is keen to gather as much evidence as possible to inform its deliberations so I am writing to you to ask whether you would be willing to help us with our work by making a written submission. We welcome general responses to our [call for evidence](#), which was published on 4 March. We also hope that you would be willing to answer some of the more specific questions set out below on issues that fall within your area of expertise. Submissions need not address every bullet point and can include other matters that you think are relevant to the negotiations and should be drawn to the attention of the Committee.

- What are the UK and EU fisheries industries' priorities for the future relationship negotiations? How do these priorities vary between different parts of the fishing, aquaculture and processing industries and by product, region and nation? Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed any of these priorities? What might be the consequences of a deal which does not meet these priorities?
- To what extent did the UK Government consult the industry before publishing its negotiating aims? How well does what the Government has published meet the needs of different parts of the UK fisheries industry? What are your views on the EU's negotiating mandate and draft legal text?
- How is the UK Government keeping the UK fisheries industry informed of developments in the negotiations? Has the sector been given the opportunity to comment on any of the UK draft legal texts?
- On which aspects of a future fisheries agreement are the UK and EU's aims farthest apart? Where do their positions align? On which areas does each side have the most leverage? Is there a workable compromise between the UK and EU's positions and, if so, what is it? What trade-offs must each side make? How might different resolutions to these trade-offs affect different parts of the UK and EU fisheries industries? If you see room for the EU's position on fisheries to move towards that of the UK, which Member States might support that change and why?
- How much progress has been made so far in negotiations on fisheries? What effect has the Covid-19 pandemic had on the negotiations? Can an agreement be ratified by 1 July? What happens if nothing has been agreed by this date?
- What evidence is there that the UK and EU have considered how any agreement will be monitored and enforced? What preparatory work is needed to ensure the UK can monitor and enforce any agreement? To what extent will such enforcement require cooperation with the EU and other nations to be effective?
- Are the EU's fisheries agreements with countries such as Norway and Iceland suitable models for any deal with the UK? How does the deal the EU is proposing with the UK differ from such existing agreements? Is the EU correct to argue that annual negotiations with the UK would be impractical? How might a system of annual negotiation work?
- How would a system based on zonal attachment differ from one based on relative stability? What steps must the UK Government and other stakeholders take to put such a system in place? How long might this take?
- What fisheries agreements does the UK also need to reach with other European countries such as Norway and Iceland? How much progress has been made to date? How would these agreements interact with any future UK/EU agreement?

- How important is access to the EU market for the UK fisheries industry? What additional customs, regulatory and sanitary/phytosanitary barriers might the UK fisheries industry face under any future relationship with the EU? How might these barriers be reduced? What barriers would exist if no trade deal is reached before the UK leaves the Transition Period?
- What obligations concerning fisheries does the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol place on the UK, EU and EU member states and their respective industries? What elements of the Protocol's implementation concerning fisheries remain to be decided by the Joint Committee or are otherwise unclear, for example: the conditions under which fisheries and aquaculture products landed by NI vessels will be exempt from EU duties? How might these issues be resolved?
- If no fisheries agreement is reached by the end of the year, what obligations remain on the UK and EU under international law, for example: access to fishing waters and landing rights? Would you be concerned about the sustainability of fish stocks if the UK and EU do not manage to reach agreement?
- What would be the social and economic consequences if no UK/EU fisheries deal has been reached by the end of the year? How might these vary across different parts of the fisheries industry? How might these effects be mitigated?

The Committee staff will be happy to discuss the inquiry, any issues raised, or the process for submitting written evidence. You can contact them at freucom@parliament.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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

Hilary Benn
Chair of the Committee