



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director General

Brussels,
MARE D3 (ARES)

North Western Waters Advisory
Council
Mr. Emiel Brouckaert
Chair of the Executive Committee
BIM, PO Box 12
Crofton Road,
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin
Ireland

Subject: Management measures for the *Nephrops* stock in the Porcupine Bank (FU16) for 2017

Your reference: NWWAC advice of 26 October 2017

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

Thank you for your letter of 26 October concerning the *Nephrops* fishery and its management measures. Let me first of all apologize for our late reply to your advice.

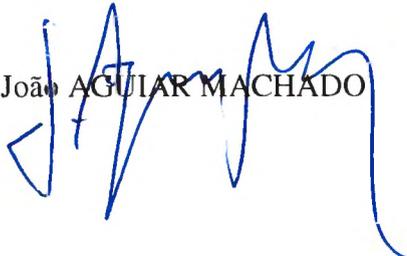
At its meeting on 11 and 12 December, the Council decided that there should be no overall change in the management arrangements for this functional unit (FU) in 2018. The Council decided to keep both the sub-TAC for the Porcupine Bank (FU16) and the closed period. Council furthermore adopted a 12 % reduction in the TAC-level for the FU16, following the ICES advice. As ICES considers that discards are negligible for the FU16, the total catch advice was adopted for this functional unit.

While the advice for 2017 was for a very big increase (+68 %), this year a reduction by 12 % was proposed. ICES mentions that while the stock abundance has declined slightly, it is still above average. In general however we need to ensure that the *Nephrops* stock in FU16 is well-managed. Removing the sub-TAC poses the risk that we return to the same unsustainable situation we had in previous years, where vessels fished a high amount of their *Nephrops* quotas in the Porcupine Bank. This is a situation we absolutely need to avoid for the future.

Let me therefore thank you for informing us that the NWWAC has entered a process with the Irish Marine Institute in order to assess whether any new scientific input that would be relevant for the management of *Nephrops* in FU16 is available. We trust that any new information relevant for the stock assessment would be fed into the proper ICES process for peer review. Should this process provide any new information relevant for the current management measures for FU16 we would be happy to receive this information, in order for STECF to assess it.

Let me thank you again for your cooperation and constructive input. I look forward to our continued cooperation and invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator for the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273), should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,


João AGUIAR MACHADO