



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director General

Brussels,
MARE D3 ARES(2017)

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: Postponing the proposed increase of the mesh size in Irish Sea
Nephrops fishery**

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2017, where you propose to postpone the increase of the mesh size in the Irish Sea *Nephrops* fishery.

As you will most probably know, the Council at its meeting on 11-12 December 2017 decided not to adopt the proposed technical measures for the *Nephrops* fishery in the Irish Sea. This decision was accepted by the Commission following lengthy discussions with the Member States concerned (IE and UK) who, while remaining very committed to looking into methods to decrease unwanted catches of whiting, also raised the same concerns as pointed out in your letter: that an increase in the mesh size of the cod-end will lead to a considerable loss of marketable *Nephrops*.

The Council did however set out a way forward on this issue, which is very much along the lines of your proposal, as Member States committed to further develop, in partnership with the NWWAC, selectivity measures for the *Nephrops* fishery. The timeline decided was that proposals for further selectivity measures will be submitted by the regional groups of the Member States concerned to the Commission by the end of May 2018.

I am encouraged by your stated commitment to increase selectivity to reduce the unwanted catches of whiting, given the state of the whiting stock in the Irish Sea. As you say yourself, we need to ensure a good conservation status for all stocks in EU waters. I therefore feel assured that given the commitment from both Member States and the NWWAC it will be possible to find an appropriate way forward.

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

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO