



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director General

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

Subject: Management strategy for sole in the Eastern Channel (7.d)

Your reference: email of 22 November 2017

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

I would like to thank you very much for your letter dated 22 November 2017 and for providing the Commission with the NWWAC advice on management strategy for sole in ICES 7d for 2018.

Since 2015 the Commission has followed the NWWAC advice for the sustainable management of the stock of sole in ICES 7d as developed by Member States and industry.

Consequently, in its proposal for fishing opportunities for 2018, the Commission has taken into account, in addition to the strategy approach and the ICES advice of 2017, the NWWAC's advice of restricting the variation of the TAC to 15%. This strategy had been evaluated by STECF in 2016, where it was concluded that the addition of the TAC inter-annual constraint to the rule agreed in the 2015 December Council Statement, would not increase biological risks for the stock by 2020.

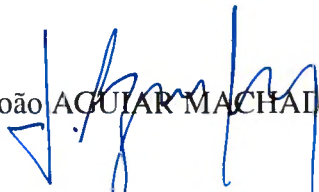
Given the history of the sole stock in 7d and the exemplary effort of the fishing industry and the Member States to improve its condition, the European Commission has decided to propose the 2018 TAC of 2933 tonnes i.e. a 15% increase over the 2017 TAC (pre-top up proposal). This proposal also means that the stock of sole in 7d would be for the first time at the MSY level, which is a very important step forward in the light of the 2020 target. We can only congratulate you for this important achievement which has been possible only thanks to the hard work and investment of the stakeholders.

We will carefully consider your proposal for the negotiations at the December 2017 Fisheries Council. In the longer term, it is important to keep in mind that this stock will

be covered by the multi-annual Western Water Management Plan that we intend to adopt in January 2018.

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

Yours sincerely,


João ACUIAR MACHADO

c.c.: Ms. Veits, Roller, Kirchner, Georgitsi, Colson, de Diego de la Vega