



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE C1-D3/CA-PCO/vr-mb/Ares (2020)

Mr Emiel Brouckaert
Chair of the Executive Committee
North Western Waters Advisory
Council
info@nwwac.ie

**Subject: Remedial measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea (Art. 13
Council Regulation (EU) 2020/123)**

Dear Mr Brouckaert,

I am writing to you regarding your letter dated 8 May 2020, addressed to my predecessor Bernhard Friess, in which you informed us of your concerns regarding the remedial measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea. You expressed the worries of the “Industry” members of the NWWAC, which asked for the postponement of the measures due to the Covid-19 situation. You also indicated that the members of the “Other Interest Group” did not support any delay to occur for those measures to apply. Understandably, it was not possible for the NWWAC to agree on a compromise position on this topic and I welcome your efforts for nevertheless trying to do so.

I am pleased to inform you that the European Commission has proposed an amendment to article 13 of the Fishing Opportunities Regulation (EU) 2020/123 and that the Council agreed to this amendment that should enter into force in the course of June. This amendment will allow vessels equipped with mesh sizes of 100 mm and 160 mm square mesh panel to keep using this equipment beyond 1 June and until the end of the year 2020. The European Commission based its proposal on the positive assessment of this mesh size undertaken by STECF in its April report. STECF indeed estimated that the mesh size 100 mm and 160 mm square mesh panel was the most effective for the protection of whiting. However, it could not pronounce itself on its effect on cod and therefore the European Commission insisted that this mesh size is used in combination with the “raised fishing line” which is the most selective gear for cod avoidance.

Furthermore, I would like to inform you that the European Commission has requested the Member States of the North Western Waters Group to come up with a joint recommendation transposing the remedial measures for the Celtic sea via the regionalisation process. This joint recommendation has been received in May and will be transmitted to the STECF for a thorough review. I will keep you informed on the future development on this matter in due course.

Should you have any further questions on this reply, we invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the ACs (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273).

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

