



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D3/mm/mbe/Ares(2020)

Mr E. Brouckaert
NWWAC Chairman
c/o Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Crofton Road
Dun Laoghaire
Ireland
nwwac@bim.ie

Subject: Your request for clarification on current terms of the closed area for conservation of cod in the Irish Sea

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

Thank you very much for your letter of 9 April 2020 (our reference *ARES (2020)2039307*) in which you request clarification on the actual status of the closed area for the conservation of cod in the Irish Sea.

As you note, the closure is described in point 3, Part C of Annex VI of the Technical Measures Regulation¹. The features are the same as in the previous technical measures regulation.

During the closure, no demersal trawl, seine or similar towed net, gillnet, entangling net or trammel net or any fishing gear incorporating hooks shall be allowed.

This same provision envisages the possibility to use demersal trawls provided such trawls are fitted with selective devices that have been assessed by STECF. Such devices should meet the objective of excluding spawning cod from the catches, irrespective of length. To date, STECF has positively advised the use of two selectivity devices as being effective for cod protection. These devices are a sorting grid with 35 mm bar spacing, and a separator trawl (panel) as specified in Council Regulation (EC) No 300/2001.

Article 10 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2239, introduces certain gears using bottom trawls to be used in the entire Irish Sea to reduce the unwanted catches. However, with the exception of the sorting grid, none of the other devices listed have been assessed by STECF in the context of protecting spawning aggregations within the closed area.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1380/2013, (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973, (EU) 2019/472 and (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2549/2000, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005.

Let me thank you for your letter. I invite you to contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

Bernhard FRIESS
Acting Director-General