



Dublin, 30 January 2017

Subject: Annual report on the implementation of the landing obligation

Ref.: Ares(2016) 6600479 24/11/216

Dear Mr Donatella,

The NWWAC welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the annual report on the implementation of the Landing Obligation (LO) as this is one of the most important topics in the workplan of the NWWAC. The detailed English questionnaire aimed at member states and producer organisations forms a good basis for analysis, but to avoid duplication the AC has concentrated on the effects of implementation of the landing obligation from a regional perspective.

It is noted that 2016 was the first year of experience with the initial phase of the landing obligation in North Western Waters, and it is early days yet to be able to create an overview of the regional consequences of the regulation, and of the different national implementation schemes. The AC has prepared advice on this topic in the past year (see Annex 1) regarding specific regional examples.

With reference to the advice the NWWAC has prepared for the NWW Member States Group preparing the Joint Recommendation for 2018 (Annex 1, Item 8), the following points are pertinent to the questions in your letter:

- NWWAC members noted that differences in regulatory measures between adjacent areas (North Sea, Bay of Biscay) created problems in the understanding of the implementation of the LO;
- Not all NWW Member States have updated all of their catch documentation processes, which causes problems for the accurate recording of catches. It is vital that the implementation of catch documentation is harmonised across Member States, to ensure optimal implementation and that novel methods for data collection, which are simple, quick and easy to use, (e.g. the use of mobile phone technology) are developed to assist data collection for the LO without any additional costs for the industry;
- The Belgian beam trawl fisheries encountered a choke situation when the low bycatch quota for sole in 7.hjk ran out and the area was effectively closed. This caused displacement of effort of this fleet, which caused problems in the areas where vessels were displaced to;
- The collection of undersized catches is still under development with few, if any, options or facilities in place in ports;
- Some NWWAC members had difficulty in accessing EMFF program funding, which caused delays in the studies needed to improve the implementation of the LO.



In 2016, the NWWAC has monitored the NWW Member States Group's development of joint recommendations for the discard plan for 2017. The NWWAC appreciates the improved cooperation between all parties and hopes that the lessons learned from this process will continue to lead to an efficient and productive dialogue with the NWW Member States Group and the Commission in 2017 and thereafter.

The Advisory Council is committed to report the experience of members with the implementation process to the Commission, as soon as there is more information available to do so.

Yours sincerely,



Emiel Brouckaert  
Chairman  
Executive Committee

## Annex 1

NWWAC advice on the Landing Obligation provided to the EC and Member States in 2015 and 2016.

1	<a href="#">NWWAC Answer to NWW Member State request for Advice on the Landing Obligation (1)</a>	18/12/2015
2	<a href="#">NWWAC Answer on the EC Annual Report on the implementation of the Landing Obligation</a>	29/01/2016
3	<a href="#">NWWAC Answer to NWW Member State request for Advice on the Landing Obligation (2)</a>	29/02/2016
4	<a href="#">NWWAC Advice on the implementation of the demersal Landing Obligation in 2017</a>	13/05/2016
5	<a href="#">NWWAC Request for the scientific evaluation of alternative management strategies for marginal bycatch quota species under the Landing Obligation</a>	21/06/2016
6	<a href="#">Initial response of the NWWAC to the Control Expert Group report on Recommended measures to achieve compliance with the landing obligation in demersal fisheries in North Western EU Waters</a>	23/08/2016
7	<a href="#">NWWAC recommendations on the report of the NWW MS Control Expert Group</a>	02/12/2016
8	<a href="#">NWWAC Advice on the implementation of the demersal Landing Obligation in 2018</a>	31/01/2017