



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE D3 ADV (2019)

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: Cod in West of Scotland

Your ref. your recommendation of 10 December 2018

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 10 December 2018 concerning cod in the West of Scotland.

The Commission has considered your recommendations in the context of the setting of **Fishing Opportunities for 2019**. We acknowledge that the full entry into force of the Landing Obligation generates a particular situation for fisheries in the Atlantic and North Sea, and we believe that the agreement reached by the Council on 18 December 2018 will allow us to make progress in ensuring sustainable fisheries in the EU.

For cod in the West of Scotland, Member States decided to follow the Commission proposal to set a zero TAC and agreed on a bycatch allowance of 1735 tonnes for 2019. The agreed figure for cod in the West of Scotland is based on the ICES technical advice on the amount of likely unavoidable by-catches of cod in other economically important fisheries, such as anglerfish and megrim to mention only a few. Let me also note that this TAC was set with a view to reducing unavoidable by-catches further in 2019 and also to continue this path in the future years.

For cod West of Scotland, as well as for the four other zero TAC stocks, the Member States operating in the North-Western Waters have expressed their commitment to prepare a multi-annual by-catch reduction plan, in close cooperation with the North Western Waters Advisory Council. This by-catch reduction plan could contain measures such as the use of more selective gears, area closures, real time closures, avoidance

measures and move-on rules. STECF will assess the effectiveness of the plan. Member States have also agreed to undertake all appropriate control measures to ensure that the by-catches taken are strictly unavoidable and that there are no discards beyond levels allowed by the discard plan.

The Commission welcomes the support of the North Western Waters Advisory Council on these important matters.

Regarding the **ICES inter-benchmark in 2019** for this stock, I can confirm that the Commission will indeed carefully consider the findings of the benchmark.

On **stock boundaries and connectivity**, the Commission is grateful for your information about the prospect of a joint study on cod stocks in some ICES divisions. Regarding the funding through EASME, I confirm that an Advisory Council may actually benefit from other funds in addition to those covering its functioning costs, either under direct management, subject to call for tenders or call for proposals by DG MARE or our executive agency EASME, or under shared management in accordance with national programmes and selection procedures. As suggested in your letter, I invite you to closely follow calls for proposals for projects under direct management available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-opportunities-maritime-affairs-and-fisheries_en, and to submit a proposal, should you consider you might be selected.

I thank you again very much for your valuable contribution and I invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, as 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



c.c.: Ms. Veits, Roller, Kirchner, Colson, Vaigauskaite, Alibert-Deprez, de Diego