



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.C5/CR/vr/Ares(2021)

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

Thank you for your letter of 27 November on “Addressing choke risk in the North Western Waters after exemptions”, prepared by the NWWAC to support the 2021 Fishing Opportunities (FO), and our apologies for the late reply. The end of the year 2020 and the current 2021 have been particularly challenging for the purpose of discussing and setting the FO, in specific for the North Western Waters. As we all know, although the FO 2021 process is not yet finalised, the bulk of the technical discussion have taken place already.

We acknowledge the thorough analysis in the NWWAC advice regarding the potential choking problems, notably the analysis per sea basin, with the inclusion of the predicted choke risks in 2021. We understand the challenges of implementing the landing obligation in the North Western Waters, the relevance of the CFP mechanisms to support its implementation, in particular in the context of the highly dynamic demersal mixed fisheries, and in these years with some key stocks with zero advice, and the consequent choking issues that may thereby arise.

The NWWAC advice, and the technical elements therein included, particularly the analysis on the choke species, have been taken into account while preparing the EU position in these FO 2021 consultations. This is also an important analysis to support discussion related with Landing Obligation exemptions.

While we acknowledge the quality of the work done by the NWWAC, we would be grateful, in case similar pieces of advice are provided to the Commission, if the excel tables could be provided in a more user-friendly format that would facilitate their consultation. We note in addition that this analysis is based on 2015-2016 data. As there has been many changes implemented since then (in particular on the landing obligation

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and on technical measures), we suggest to use, in the possible extent, more recent data when preparing this important endeavour for the years to come.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation, in particular on these specific issues related to the mitigation of choke risks in the North Western Waters.

Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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