



Ms. Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General for
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE)
European Commission
Rue Josef II 99
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Dun Laoghaire, 23 December 2021

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Subject: NWWAC advice on management of the whelk fishery in the Channel (ICES 7d and 7e)

Following meetings of its Focus Group on Whelk in October and December 2021, the NWWAC decided to issue this advice on a general framework for managing the whelk fishery in the Channel (ICES 7d and 7e).

The whelk fishery in the Channel is currently in full development and the NWWAC considers that the establishment of a management framework is needed to ensure the conservation of a healthy status of the stock. In EU waters, the fishery is carried out mainly by vessels from three French regions, Normandy, Hauts de France and Brittany, exclusively using pots (FPO) all year round. Pots are usually baited with pieces of shellfish or fish. There are around 260 vessels in the Channel fishing for whelk, mostly under 16 meters, both inside and outside 12 miles. This fishery is subject to specific regulations in each region (licenses, number of traps, spatio-temporal closures, carrying a sorting grid, etc.). In order to be able to decide on an efficient set of measures, the Focus Group collected information on the fishery through a questionnaire which was completed with information on the fishing activities in Normandy, Hauts de France and Brittany.

Therefore, the NWWAC wishes to provide the following recommendations to DG MARE in order to set a management framework for the whelk fisheries in the Channel:

- Maximum vessels length of 16 meters, except for larger vessels that have been historically fishing for whelk in the area (reference period to be defined);
- Use of pots with sorting grid with a minimum spacing of 22mm;
- Electronic positioning systems (VMS) installed on all vessels;
- These measures should apply to fisheries outside 12-mile area.

The NWWAC believes this set of measures would constitute a good starting point for a better management of the whelk fisheries in the Channel, which could be further improved with the introduction of specific technical measures.





We are conscious that such an EU management framework will be restricted to EU waters, but in order to ensure this initiative covers the requirements of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the NWWAC wishes to re-emphasise its willingness to contribute to the work of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries on this topic and other topics in the AC's remit.

We thank you for your attention to this matter that is considered urgent by the NWWAC members having an interest in the Channel. Appreciating the collaboration with the Commission, which is crucial for our work, we are counting on your expeditious follow-up and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Emiel Brouckaert
NWWAC Chairman

