

EUROPEAN COMMISSION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR
MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost Regions
The Director

Brussels,
Mare.C1/MK/au/Ares(2019)

Rebecca Hubbard E-mail:
Rebecca@ourfish.com

Subject: Petition on ending overfishing

Dear Ms Hubbard,

Thank you for the many e-mails sent to Commissioner Vella dated 11 December 2018 with the request to end overfishing as well as for the formal petition that you handed over to the Director-General of DG MARE, Mr Aguiar Machado, and to the Council Presidency on 17 December, before the start of the AGRIFISH Council. The Commissioner has asked me to respond on his behalf. As this petition was started by your organisation, we reply to you with a request to post our reply on your website in order to inform the petitioners of our answer.

The Commission is fully aware of the importance of the decisions on fishing opportunities in the December Council for a sustainable management of fish stocks. The Council was a particularly challenging one this year as the stakeholders will soon operate under a full landing obligation. I am hence pleased to inform you that the decision taken by the December Council has allowed the EU to further progress towards our goal of MSY by 2020. Taking into account the results of all three fishing opportunities Councils this year, we can now count for 2019 on 59 TACs in line with MSY, out of 80 TACs for which we receive MSY advice. This is a progress compared to 2018¹.

The 59 TACs include 50 TACs decided by EU Member States alone. In this group, all TACs have been established in line with MSY except for seven TACs where ICES advice was for zero catches and where either by-catch only TACs (5 cases) or "sentinel" TACs (2 cases) have been agreed. The EU only TACs set in line with MSY cover an estimated 98,8% of fish that will be landed in the EU in 2019 from the

corresponding stocks.

The other 9 TACs result from the EU/Norway consultations. In these consultations, as in the consultations with Coastal states, the EU strives for a sustainable management of stocks based on scientific advice, but it is only one of the negotiating partners and the results greatly depend on the willingness of third parties to reach a sustainable result.

We believe the above results are a good achievement in the context of the entry into force of the landing obligation and the wider political developments. This is to the benefit of

¹ Last year we had counted 53 TACs in line with MSY, but we had counted four Northern hake TACs

as

one. From now on we prefer to count separate TACs as that is what the Council decides upon.

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Europe's citizens and of the stakeholders themselves as they depend on healthy fish stocks for their livelihood.

The European Commission will do its utmost to continue this positive development also in future years.

Yours sincerely,

Hélène CLARK

