



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director General

Brussels,
MARE/ D3 ADV

Mr. Serge Larzabal
Vice Chair of the SWWAC in
charge of the Secretariat
rue Alphonse Rio, 6
F-56100 Lorient

Subject: **Landing obligation**

Your ref.: *Opinion 119*

Dear Mr; Larzabal,

I would like to thank the Advisory Council for providing its opinion on the implementation of the landing obligation in 2019 and pointing out the challenges it entails as well as listing possible solutions.

The Commission understands that the implementation of full landing obligation will represent a challenge both to fishermen and fisheries management. Therefore, it is important to identify as early as possible potential problems and envisage solutions that could be applied. The opinion of the SWW AC opinion contributes to the work that is being carried out by the SWW Member States Group and by the Commission.

As the Advisory Council rightly pointed out, a number of solutions are specified in the Basic Regulation and, for example, *de minimis* exemptions are allowed in situations where selectivity is difficult to improve or to avoid disproportionate costs of handling unwanted catches. The South Western Waters Member States Group in the joint recommendation included a number of new *de minimis* and high survivability exemptions, which are currently being evaluated by the STECF.

As regards quota allocations among Member States, the Commission will continue encouraging Member States to look into ways of improving and increasing quota swaps, in order to address the issue of choke species. It will certainly require good cooperation and understanding of common challenges among Member States. The Member States should also proceed with certain quota reallocation among fleets to ensure that quota allocations correspond to catch composition in mixed fishery, as required by Article 16(7) of the Basic Regulation.

The Commission will be examining the situations where, due to absence of sufficient quota at Union level, fisheries would have to close prematurely. A removal of the TAC

could be considered, however, that would apply to situations where the management of a particular stock by alternative measures is equally efficient and appropriate.

The use of ranges will be a useful tool of managing mixed fisheries, allowing the fishing opportunities to reflect better the catch composition in mixed fisheries. This is why the Commission included the use of ranges in its Proposal for the Western Waters Multiannual Plan.

The Commission once again would like to thank the Advisory Council for the work it has carried out and will be looking forward to continuous cooperation on this very important issue. I invited you to contact Ms. Pascale Colson, as coordinator of the ACs, (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73) should you need further information on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

Joao AGUIAR MACHADO

c.c.: Ms. Veits, Roller, Kirchner, Georgitsi, Colson, de Diego
Mr. Kisieliuskas