



**European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)
(Northern Pelagic Working Group – NPWG)**

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EU pelagic industry calls for a reduced level of mackerel access for Faroe Islands in EU waters

Negotiations will begin on Monday 8 December to discuss the terms of the 2015 bi-lateral fisheries agreement between the European Union and Faroe Islands. The EU pelagic industry is calling upon the European Commission and Member States governments to substantially adjust downwards the reciprocal mackerel access which forms part of this bilateral fisheries agreement.

Gerard van Balsfoort, chairman NPWG of EAPO, said: “The benefit of this agreement is totally skewed in the favour of the Faroe Islands and this must be addressed at the bi-lateral consultations which begin next Monday. The key issue is the level of the mackerel access quota. Faroe Islands were granted a huge increased mackerel share this year on the basis that mackerel is more abundant in their waters. Why do they then require a third of their quota to be fished off the EU waters? The reality is Faroe Islands will catch their full EU access quota this year and not one kilo of the EU’s mackerel quota has been caught in the Faroese zone. This must be addressed now otherwise Faroese vessels will benefit from catching mackerel in EU waters when the fish are in prime condition and in return we get nothing from this arrangement. The share for the Faroe Islands in the new agreement was almost tripled compared to their share in the former agreement and we cannot accept that their access quota is also increased by fivefold”.

When the EU subsequently agreed the 2015 bilateral fisheries agreement with Faroe Islands it came as a big surprise to the EU pelagic industry that Faroe Islands was granted access for a staggering 46,850 tonnes of mackerel to be caught in EU waters. Under the pre 2010 bilateral EU-Faroe Islands fisheries agreements mackerel access for Faroese vessels in EU waters fluctuated between 4,500 and 9,000 tonnes per year.

The bilateral access arrangements between EU and Faroe Islands are decided on an annual basis, which is why the EU pelagic fishing industry wants to reduce reciprocal mackerel access for 2015 to the historical levels mentioned above. Faroe Islands were granted a huge increased mackerel share for 2014 on the basis that mackerel is more abundant in their waters.

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