

**European Association of Fish Producers Organisations**  
**Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche**



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Ms Charlina VITCHEVA  
Director-General  
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
European Commission 1049 BRUSSELS  
Belgium

EAPO21-15

Oostende, 16 February 2021

Dear Ms. Vitcheva,

**Subject: Coastal States negotiations with the UK and Norway**

The bilateral and trilateral negotiations with the UK and Norway are taking place at the moment. Following Brexit, these negotiations are now the most important ones for European fisheries, critically defining 2021 for dozens of fish stocks and fishing communities depending on them. These negotiations have become increasingly complicated because of the extensive number of stocks covered, the economic importance of the species and the novel nature of the talks with the UK as an independent coastal State. The priorities of these negotiations are manifold.

Firstly, timeliness. In order not to stop all activities, provisional (unilateral) quotas have been put in place for the first 3 months of 2021. The fisheries sector is now concerned that negotiations might last for a long time and might not allow for TACs to be agreed and implemented before the deadline of the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021. This would bring EU fishing activity to a standstill in areas relying heavily on shared stocks, jeopardising the viability of the activity. Therefore, EAPO calls on the Commission to prepare in time for setting unilaterally additional fishing opportunities for the remainder of 2021 in case the negotiations do not allow to reach an agreement in time.

Secondly, the management measures agreed to by the UK will need to be science-based, non-discriminatory and proportionate to the management objective pursued. And, surely, must go through a consultation phase with stakeholders before implementation.

Thirdly, the EU-Norway negotiations must result in a bilateral agreement including quotas and access for fishers to be able to continue their usual activity.

Furthermore, the unilateral decision by Norway to decrease the share for the EU in the Svalbard cod quota for 2021 is unacceptable. As explained in our previous letter of January 11, 2021<sup>1</sup>, this move has no legal basis under international law and the Svalbard Paris Treaty. If left unchallenged, it will cost

<sup>1</sup> EAPO 21-07 <http://eapo.com/UserFiles/EAPO21-07%20EUROPECHE-EAPO-ENAFa%20letter%20to%20President%20VDL%20on%20Svalbard%20cod.pdf>

the EU fishing industry €800 million over the next 20 years. The EU must seek to retain their quota allocation based on historical track records in the Svalbard zone.

We trust that the Commission is working to prepare for any contingency plan needed and strives to have all these points taken into account in the negotiations.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Visser', with the name 'P. VISSER' printed in a smaller font directly below it.

Pim Visser

President of EAPO