



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
FISH PRODUCERS ORGANISATIONS

2 June 2021

Dear Commissioner,

This week the Norwegian minister for Trade & Industry announced to increase for this year the Norwegian share in the TAC for Northeast Atlantic mackerel with 55%. The argument given was the collapse of the negotiations between Norway and the UK for a fisheries agreement for 2021, including reciprocal access arrangements. This decision by the Norwegian government sent a shockwave through the N E Atlantic pelagic world which then provoked decisions by the Faroe and Icelandic governments to also increase their share in the mackerel TAC with similar percentages.

So it seems that at this moment only the EU and the UK stick to their shares in the mackerel TAC as was agreed in 2013 between the then coastal states EU, Norway and Faroe Islands.

The consequence of these reckless decisions by the Norwegian, Faroe and Icelandic governments will be felt by our pelagic fishermen in the years to come as the mackerel stock most probably will not be able to sustain its health by this level of intentional overfishing.

But seen from a legal perspective these decisions go directly against the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and, more in particular, the 1995 UN agreement on the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The UN agreements forbid coastal states to set or increase unilaterally their quota share in a fish stock without any consultation with other coastal states that have an interest in the same fish stock. And that is the situation where we find ourselves in at the moment.

We feel that the EU must react swiftly and decisively to this irresponsible behaviour by having the European Commission activate the instruments available; more in particular the IUU regulation and trade sanctions.

The EU pelagic industry therefore requests an urgent meeting with you to discuss the current situation and the possible response by the EU.

Of course we leave our agendas entirely open for such a meeting and wait for your response.

Yours sincerely

Gerard van Balsfoort
(chair EAPO's Northern Pelagic Working Group)

c.c. DG MARE, Ms Charlina Vitcheva, Fabrizio Donatella, Joost Paardekooper