



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director General

Brussels,
MARE/D3 ADV ARES(2018)

Mr Niels Wichmann
NSAC Chairman
Office 17, Aberdeen Business
Centre
Willowbank Road
Aberdeen, AB116YG Scotland
The United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Wichmann,

I would like to take this opportunity to write to you as Chair of the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) on our co-operation in 2018 on the implementation of the landing obligation.

Let me start by stressing that the Commission greatly appreciates the work, which the NSAC has put into the "choke species" analysis ahead of the implementation of the landing obligation. The work between your AC, the Scheveningen Group and the Commission has been very important in identifying "choke situations" in the North Sea as well as possible solutions for them. There are indeed a number of outstanding challenges to implementing the landing obligation. Our objective is to work with you further to find solutions on specific stocks on a case-by-case basis.

I would like to repeat the request made by my colleagues at the meeting with the NSAC on 1 February in Brussels, which you also attended. It would be important for DG MARE to receive an updated list of possible concrete choke cases for the North Sea in 2019, a proposal from the stakeholders in the NSAC as to how such choke situations can be avoided for 2019 and a list of the technical and avoidance measures for improved selectivity that were already undertaken by the stakeholders and the Member States administrations for these particular choke cases. This would greatly facilitate our common work to find solutions.

I would like to reassure you that we are aware of the worries of the stakeholders as to final stage of implementing the landing obligation. Let me hence recall what the Commission said throughout the process of negotiating the reformed CFP: we understand that the landing obligation represents a big change as to how we manage fisheries in Europe so far. We need to work together to address the choke situations you identify so that we can make the landing obligation work for us all. At the same time, I would also like to reiterate that it is important to ensure that the landing obligation is effectively implemented at sea: there is increasing evidence that compliance with the landing obligation remains low and this can seriously damage the reputation of our fisheries. This is something that we all want to avoid.

I look forward to working with you further on this in 2018 and thank you again for the important work you and the NSAC have undertaken so far. I invite you to take contact with Pascale Colson, as coordinator of the ACs (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273) should you have any questions on this letter.

Yours sincerely,



João AGUIAR MACHADO