



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

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

**Subject: TAC and quota-based options for addressing the challenges of the Landing Obligation**

*Your ref.: Advice ref. 11-1718 of 3 October 2018*

Dear Mr. Wichmann,

Thank you very much for your recommendation on TAC and quota-based options for addressing the challenges of the Landing Obligation. I have read the recommendations of the North Sea Advisory Council with great interest.

We share your views on a cautious and transparent use of the ranges of  $F_{MSY}$ . Upper ranges should only be used in those cases where all the conditions from the North Sea plan are fulfilled and where this is really necessary. We also share your views that the removal of stocks from TAC management and the use of footnotes should not be done without due consideration and scientific evaluation of the potential impacts and that adequate measures should be put in place that would prevent stocks from being exploited above  $F_{msy}$  objective.

One of the key tools provided by the Basic Regulation concerning the landing obligation and the related issue of choke species is inter-species flexibility. In some instances, it appears that Member States are not using this tool to its full potential. The Commission supports the use of inter-species flexibility taking into account the possible risks and impacts mentioned in your advice. Collaboration and specific guidelines established by the Member States will indeed contribute to its successful application.

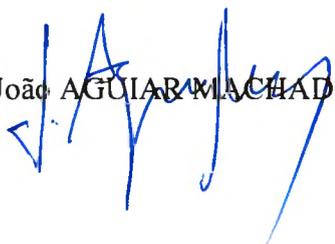
I would like to encourage stakeholders and Member States to make use of this and other instruments where applicable, with all the necessary caution, before asking for alternative solutions to choke situations.

Let me assure you that we are looking into all of the choke issues that you highlight in the annex of your advice and that we are working on solutions to these problems, where

appropriate and necessary, in the context of the EU-Norway consultations and in the discussions with Member States ahead of the December Council.

Let me end by referring to my letter to you of 11 October 2018 on the implementation of the landing obligation and thank you once again for your recommendations. Should you have any questions on this reply, do not hesitate to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273).

Yours sincerely,

  
João AGUIAR-MACHADO

C.c.: Ms. Veits, Roller, Kirchner, Vaigauskaite, Colson, de Diego  
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