



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

**The Director General**

Brussels,  
D3/NG/2017

Mr Niels Wichmann  
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Willowbank Road  
Aberdeen, AB116YG Scotland  
The United Kingdom

**Subject: Managing Fisheries within the Landing Obligation**

*Your reference: Advice Ref.14-1617*

Dear Mr Wichmann,

Thank you for your letter of 9 October 2017 on managing fisheries within the landing obligation. We highly appreciate this type of input and are pleased to note that the NSAC, being a key stakeholder, is undertaking a detailed analysis of management options to deal with the landing obligation.

We would like to reassure you that a successful implementation of the landing obligation remains a priority for the Commission. Regarding the problem of possible "choke species", I would like to encourage the NSAC to continue its work on identifying concrete problems. Ideally, this should be done in cooperation with the Scheveningen group, as set out in your advice.

Let me also point out that selectivity and avoidance measures as well as adaptations of national quota management systems should have priority. However, if these measures prove to be insufficient, i.e. if no further increases in selectivity and avoidance are possible, additional measures would have to be considered to avoid that typical by-catch species choke fisheries for more valuable target species.

Your advice also raises the question of potentially differentiated management approaches for primary (or targeted) stocks on the one hand and secondary (or by-catch) stocks on the other. As you know, the European Parliament and Council are currently negotiating the North Sea Demersal Multi-annual Plan which sets out the management targets for different groups of stocks in the North Sea. The Commission fully relies on the ability of the co-legislators to agree on an outcome which is in line with the CFP Basic Regulation, allows managing all fish stocks in a sustainable manner and helps to alleviate potential choke issues.

Regarding the issue of prohibited species, I kindly refer you to our reply to your advice on that specific issue.

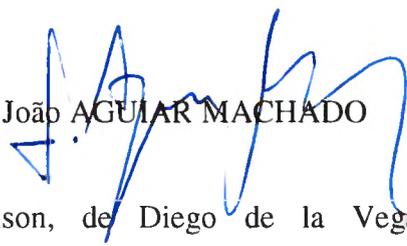
Finally, I've read with interest your very concrete suggestion regarding the replacement of the TACs for deep-sea and semi deep-sea species by bycatch limits. We will examine this potential measure and discuss it with Member States and stakeholders early in 2018 with a view of the fishing opportunities regulation 2019.

DG MARE has been working closely with the NSAC and we hope to continue this productive engagement. In this regard, we hope that the seminar we hosted on November 15, 2017 on the implementation of the landing obligation was for you a good opportunity to discuss how we can collectively address the issues.

Let me thank you again for your cooperation and constructive input. If you have any questions on this reply, you may contact Ms. Pascale Colson ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273).

I look forward to your contribution to the discussions.

Yours sincerely,

  
João AGUIAR MACHADO

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MM. Graham, Reussner