



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 10 December 2018
(OR. en)

15445/18

LIMITE

PECHE 536

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 7 December 2018

To: Delegations

Subject: Working Party on Internal and External Fisheries Policy:

I. Western Waters MAP

II. Main TACs

III. Main TACs - Landing obligation and unavoidable by-catches of possible choke species

IV. EU-Faroe Islands Annual Consultations for 2019 (Brussels, 11-12 December 2018)

V. Western Mediterranean MAP

DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (15.03.2019)

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II. Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION fixing for 2019 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters

– Continuation of examination

1. The Working Party continued the examination of the proposal in particular the content of the Commission non paper as set out in doc. 15052/18. The Working Party also examined the revised bible ¹.
2. Delegations entered scrutiny reservations as for the content of the non-paper, in particular on how to allocate the reserve of 87t foreseen for Bluefin tuna and made additional remarks for inclusion in the revised version of the bible.

¹ Doc. 14385/1/18 REV 1 + ADD 1 REV 1 + ADD 2 REV 1.

3. The Presidency concluded that the Working Party had examined the "bible", informed delegations that a revised version would be issued shortly and announced that the Working Party would revert to this item at its next session.

III. Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION fixing for 2019 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters - Landing obligation and unavoidable by-catches of possible choke species

– Examination of Presidency non-paper

1. The Presidency presented a non-paper² as the basis for a discussion on the choke risk raised by Member States for a number of stocks, in connection with the full implementation of the landing obligation as from 1 January 2019.
2. NL summarised the outcome of discussions held amongst Member States active in the North-Western Waters, in preparation for the Council's decisions on TACs and quotas for 2019.

He indicated that the discussions were aimed in particular at ensuring that the Commission's proposed bycatch TAC – presented for the first time in 2019 for five stocks– is given a form that is acceptable to all Member States, as well as to enable access to the bycatch for those that have no quotas for the stocks concerned, whilst respecting relative stability. He added that an agreement in principle had been reached on a temporary arrangement to be applied in January 2019 in cases where existing instruments are not sufficient, though a significant amount of work remained and the Member States involved had not yet taken a definitive view.

² WK 15065/2018

3. The Commission representative welcomed this positive development and the constructive approach taken by the Member States, emphasising that the direction taken in the discussions was compatible with its proposal. He said the arrangement would have to prove its worth throughout the year, delivering the necessary quotas to the Member States that need them to cover for unavoidable bycatches, whilst remaining legally sound and ensuring a level playing-field for operators. The Commission would continue to work closely with the Member States concerned with a view to establishing a mechanism that could be reviewed and renewed every year.
4. ES, BE, IE, FR, UK, LV, DE, DK, SE, PT and EE intervened in the exchange of views that followed, expressing mostly satisfaction at the progress made. Those that had not been directly involved emphasised the precedent that would likely be set for other waters, and therefore highlighted the need for the Working Party to be kept abreast of developments.
5. The Presidency noted that the arrangement found would be valid initially for one year, whilst conventional instruments for addressing choke situations, such as inter-area flexibility, would remain available. She emphasised that work was still ongoing, and that it was not for the Working Party to draw preliminary conclusions at this stage.

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