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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION fixing for 2019 and 2020 the fishing opportunities for Union fishing vessels for certain deep-sea fish stocks

Delegations will find attached written comments by the UK delegation on the above-mentioned document.
Following today’s working group discussion, the UK would like to comment further on the Commission’s proposal to remove the TAC for Black Scabbardfish in union and international waters of 1, 2, 3 and 4 (BSF/1234-).

We note that a proposal has been made to remove the TAC for Black Scabbardfish in ICES areas 1-4 (North Sea and the Skagerrak) because of the low quota uptake and that no targeted fisheries take place.

Black Scabbardfish is considered by ICES as one stock. All the available studies suggest that a single stock migrates through the Northeast Atlantic.

- Assessed area: Subareas 6, 7, 8, and 9, and Divisions 5.b, and 12.b
- Adjacent areas: Subareas 1, 2, 4, 10, and 14, and Divisions 3.a and 5.a

The ICES advised catch is split among areas, based on the recent catch distribution. In the absence of advice from ICES, the Commission has justified their proposal to remove the TAC for Black Scabbardfish in ICES areas 1-4 (North Sea and the Skagerrak) by the low quota uptake. The UK believes a decision to remove a TAC must be underpinned by robust science and that ICES advice be sought before removing the TAC for this stock to ensure that removing the TAC would generate little or no risk of unsustainable exploitation.
We note that the ICES response to the EU request for ICES to provide advice on a revision of the contribution of TACs to fisheries management and stock conservation for selected deep-water stocks does not provide advice on the level of risk to the sustainability of Black Scabbardfish from the removal of the TACs for this species including the TAC for Black Scabbardfish 1, 2, 3, 4 (BSF/1234-).

We would like the Commission to ask ICES for their advice before removing the TAC for this stock to ensure that it would generate little or no risk of unsustainable exploitation.