

**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]; CLARK  
Helene (MARE); [redacted] (MARE); [redacted] (MARE); [redacted]  
[redacted] (MARE)

**Subject:** FW: Joint Recommendation of the Scheveningen group for a 2018 demersal discard plan: request for additional scientific evidence following the

**Importance:** High

Dear [redacted],

I am writing to you in your position of Chairman of the Scheveningen Group.

A STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) met last week to assess the Joint Recommendations of the various Member States Group and prepare the work for the STECF Plenary of 2 to 6 July.

The EWG issued a number of comments on the Joint Recommendation of the Scheveningen group and I would like to share them with you (see Annex).

In the light of the EWG's report and of the scientific evidence provided by to date, we expect the STECF's Plenary to express reservations as regards the granting of certain exemptions if these data gaps are not being closed.

Please note that the annex list cannot be interpreted as a positive STECF assessment regarding exemption requests for which no data gaps have been identified. Please also note that the tables contain only those exemptions where EWG18-06 considered there were information or data shortfalls that might be corrected by provision of information from the respective Regional Groups in the short term (ie before the STECF July Plenary meeting).

You certainly share my view that it is extremely important that the Scheveningen group provide the additional scientific evidence requested by the STECF well ahead of the Plenary. We share the same objective as we all want to ensure that STECF is able to issue a positive opinion on the proposed measures.

I would kindly ask you to send me the data requested by Monday 25 June, close of business.

Please copy [redacted] and [redacted] and [redacted] in any electronic correspondence on this matter.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Mare.C1 | Fisheries Management Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea | DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries



European Commission

[redacted] | 1049 Brussels | Belgium | p: [redacted] | e: [redacted]

[redacted]

## Annex

### North Sea De Minimis

Exemption	Shortfalls
Bycatches in the brown shrimp fishery in the North Sea	<p>a) No supporting documentation on disproportionate costs of i) separating out small fish and ii) need for extra crew.</p> <p>b) No breakdown of the fleets by Member State and the catch data is only provided as a percentage of the overall catches and not by volume.</p>
Pelagic species under landing obligation for demersal vessels using bottom trawls (OTB, OTT, PTB, TBB) of mesh size 70-99mm (TR2, BT2) in the North Sea (area IV)	<p>a) No supporting information is provided regarding either i) improvements in selectivity being difficult to achieve or ii) on disproportionate costs of handling unwanted catches of pelagic species onboard.</p> <p>b) No catch or fleet information on i) other fisheries involving UK, NL, SE and DK vessels or on ii) beam trawls</p>
Ling ( <i>Molva molva</i> ) for vessels using bottom trawls (OTB, OTT and PTB) > 100mm in the North Sea (area IV)	<p>a) No supporting information is provided on selectivity being difficult to achieve other than referring to the morphology of ling.</p> <p>b) Not clear whether the intention is that this exemption would apply to similar fleets from other MS (see reference to the de minimis volume above). There is reference to DE vessels operating in the fishery but no details are provided.</p>
Bycatch of industrial species for demersal vessels using TR1, TR2 or BT2 in areas IIIa and IV)	<p>a) No supporting documentation other than that the catches are insignificant in the demersal fisheries.</p> <p>b) There is very limited information on the fleets and fisheries to which this exemption is to be applied. Catch data is provided for various DK trawl fleets but there is no indication on the numbers of vessels involved. It is not clear whether this exemption is to apply to the fleets of other MS. There is also a reference to BT2 fisheries but no information is provided on catches or fleets involved.</p>
Whiting caught by beam trawls 80-119mm in the North Sea (area IV)	<p>a) There is only limited evidence to support the assertions that selectivity difficult to achieve and handling small undersized fish involves disproportionate costs</p> <p>b) There is very limited information on the fleets and fisheries to which this</p>

	exemption is to be applied. Catch data is provided for only the NL BT2 fleet. There is no indication on the numbers of vessels involved and only limited catch data is provided. It is not clear whether this exemption is to apply to the fleets of other MS.
Whiting and cod caught using bottom trawls (OTB, < 100mm (TR2) in the North Sea	There is no new information to support widening the scope of the exemption

### North Sea High Survivability

Exemption	Shortfalls
High survival exemption for Nephrops caught by demersal trawls with a cod end larger than 80mm (70mm/35mm)	Lack of clarity in the catch and discard figures used in the request. Regional Group requested to check these figures with UK
High survival exemption for 'undersized' common sole (sole less than MCRS of 24cm) caught by 80-99mm otter trawl gears in ICES area 4c within 6 nautical miles of coasts, albeit outside identified nursery areas	Location of sole nursery grounds has again not been provided. Provision of this material is a condition in the Delegated Act and should be supplied .
By-catch of plaice by vessels using nets in ICES areas 3a and 4	No fishery data provided for the static 'net' categories. Data required to complete the evaluation
High survival exemption for skates and rays caught by all fishing gears in the North Sea (areas 4, 3a and EU waters of 2a)	Very few landings and discards data provided. EWG18-06 recognises these data are sparse and that there are quite a lot of species, however, Regional Group should provide whatever they do have to assist inform the evaluations.
By-catch of plaice by vessels using Danish seine in ICES areas 3a and 4	Lack of information on the air exposure times in the commercial fleet. EWG 18-06 considers this is vital for completing the evaluation
Temporary high survival exemption for plaice below MCRS caught by 80-119mm beam trawl gears (BT2) in ICES area 4	No reasoning for why a three year period is requested for the 'temporary exemption.
By-catch of plaice by vessels using trawl (OTB, PTB) of mesh sizes $\geq 120$ mm in ICES areas 3a and 4 in winter	a) Data on catch and discard quantities inadequate. Regional Group should try to supply catch and discard data for the fleets concerned. b) No information on air exposure times in commercial fleet.
Temporary high survival exemption (2019-2021) for turbot caught by towed gears	No information on the fishery data for the fleets affected by this request. Regional

with a cod end larger than 80mm in ICES  
area 4

Group should provide this information