ANNEX IX .Report to support the request for by-catches of the following pelagic species: horse mackerel (Trachurus spp.), mackerel (Scomber scombrus), anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus) and boarfish (Caproidae), a combined de minimis for the species up to a maximum of 1% in 2019 ,2020 and 2021, of the total annual catches of these species made by for longliners (codes: LHP, LHM, LLS, LLD) in fisheries in ICES divisions VIII and IX, X and CECAF areas 34.1.1, 34.1.2, 34.2.0.

The request for an exemption for de minimis is based on article 15.c.i), due to difficulties to further increase selectivity in this mixed fishery, and on article 15.c.ii), due to disproportionate costs a total application of the landing obligation would cause in this fishery. The fleet is particularly vulnerable for the risk of commercial catch losses an improvement in selectivity would cause.

The selectivity of longlines and hooks and lines is very difficult to improve as it is already a very selective gear. The main problem this metier have to face when the total landing obligation enters in force in 2019 is the lack of quota to cover a relative small quantities of unwanted catches of these pelagic species. This is more a seasonal problem as the discard rate varies a lot from one season to another. But the lack of flexibility could cause that their activity is choked by this by-catches although the vessels have enough quota of target species available.

Summary

Motive

Although this is a very selective gear, as said before, some pelagic species which can be spatially and temporally abundant can be found in the hooks, especially mackerel and horse mackerel.

Thus, it is very difficult to improve selectivity without causing significant commercial losses.

Taking into account that the amount of unwanted catches is very low this should not be a problem for the stock. The objective to improve selectivity more in this fleet at the moment

seems to be unnecessary moreover if the consequences of doing that could lead this fleet to be unviable economically.

This specificity of longlines, hooks and lines fisheries justifies this exemption request due to how complicate is to improve the selectivity.

In addition to those situations of choke species if the quota for some stocks in to enough or is exhausted, landing application enforcement may generate disproportionate cost due to hold overloading and increase the sorting time on board for the crew. Those arguments justify this de minimis request also for disproportionate costs.

This de minimis request aims to give some flexibility needed for fishermen using longlines hooks and lines to implement the landing obligation in practice.

Definition of the species

All pelagic fish under landing obligation are concerned by this exemption. Pelagic fish inhabit the water column (not near the bottom) of coasts, open oceans, and lake *(National Ocean Service).*

Below, the states of the stocks affected by this exemption, according to ICES:

- Mackerel (subareas 1–8 and 14, and in Division 9.a): ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 550 948 tonnes. The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) is estimated to have increased in the late 2000s and has remained above MSY $B_{trigger}$ since 2008. The fishing mortality (F) has declined from high levels in the mid-2000s, but remains above F_{MSY}. Discarding is known to take place, but is only quantified for part of the fisheries; the proportion of the landings covered cannot be calculated. Partial discard estimates are included in the assessment and overall discarding is assumed negligible.

- Horse-mackerel (Subarea 8 and divisions 2.a, 4.a, 5.b, 6.a, 7.a–c, and 7.e–k): ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 117 070 tonnes. The stock and the fishery are very dependent on occasional high recruitments. Recruitment from 2002 onwards has been low; however, recruitment in the last three years is above the geometric mean (1983–2016). In recent years, SSB has been declining and is currently the lowest observed in the time-series, below MSY $B_{trigger}$. Fishing mortality increased from 2007, but dropped in 2015–2016 and is currently below F_{MSY}.

- Horse-mackerel (Division 9.a (Atlantic Iberian waters)): ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 55 555 tonnes. Fishing mortality has been below FMSY over the whole time-series. The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) has been above MSY $B_{trigger}$ over the whole time-series and has slightly increased in recent years. Recruitment (R) in 2011–2015 has been above the time-series average.

- Anchovy (Subarea 8 (Bay of Biscay)): ICES advises that when the management strategy is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 33 000 tonnes. The spawning–stock biomass (SSB) has been above B_{lim} since 2010. Recruitment and SSB have been well above the historical

average in recent years. The incoming recruitment (age 1) in 2018 is the third highest in the historical series. Harvest rates since the reopening of the fishery in 2010 have been below average.

- Boarfish (subareas 6–8 (Celtic Seas, English Channel, and Bay of Biscay)): ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches should be no more than 21 830 tonnes in each of the years 2018 and 2019. The relative stock biomass was stable until 2009, and then increased in 2010–2012 before declining rapidly in 2013 and 2014. Since 2014, relative biomasses have been stable but lower than previously.

Definition of the management unit

Characteristics of the bottom trawl fishery and its activity

Table 1.1. Métiers included in the SWW discard atlas and their target stocks

Métier	Métier code	Target species		
		Hake	*Nephrops*	Sole
Portuguese métiers				
Polyvalent Portuguese fleet	LLS, GNS_>80mm, GTR_>100mm	S	IXa	
Spanish métiers				
Bottom longline targeting demersal species in Spanish Iberian waters	LLS_DEF_VIIIc_IXa	S		
French métiers				
Bottom longline targeting demersal species in the northern Bay of Biscay	LLS_DEF_LHM_LHP_FIF _VIIIab	N		

Composition of catches, landings and discards

From Spain and France there is no information from observers data in the case of the

Hooks Catches Species	(tonnes)	(%)
ANE	0,000	0,00%
BOC	0,000	0,00%
JAX	516,965	14,17%
MAC	57,275	1,57%
Other species	3.075,281	84,27%
Total	3.649,521	

Lines
Vessels

Species	(tonnes)	(%)
ANE	2	0,18%
BOC	0	0,00%
JAX	317	27,76%
MAC	39	3,42%
Total	1142	

Specifying de minimis volume

Discard volume

As there is not complete data about the exact composition of pelagic species in this fisheries the amount of the de minimis should be calculate based on the Portuguese example and revised in the next years in light of new data registered in the observers programe or through the logbooks.

Safeguards

This de minimis would respond partly in how to implement landing obligation in specific fisheries where it is difficult in a 2019 scenario to implement it. Also this de minimis has its limits and its risks. It is true that the combination of several species can represent a high volume of possible discards. Nevertheless, it will never be more than 1% of the catches concerned.

As said before, volume and composition of catches can be unpredictable and vary from a year to another. It is also important to emphasize that, because of the mixed character of the fisheries it is highly unlikely that only one species would be discarded. This is all the point of a combined de minimis: giving some flexibility needed for fisherman to face the variability of by-catch stocks abundance.

Nevertheless, in order to limit the risk of discarding only one species and because discard rate can be significantly different from a species to another it is propose to put in place safeguard.

Here after is a proposition of safeguards that need to be evaluated and discussed:

According to the discard profile of the fishery (see annexe I), a margin on 25% shall apply. This margin would allow the flexibility needed to face the variability of catches and discards. On the overall discard volume permitted by this exemption, only the proportion calculated (+25%) could be discarded on the overall discard.

Those safeguards should be revised if necessary and according to discard profile that can evolve over the years.

Reference

ICES 2017a.Horse mackerel (Trachurus trachurus) in Subarea 8 and divisions 2.a, 4.a, 5.b, 6.a, 7.a–c, and 7.e–k (the Northeast Atlantic)
http://ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2017/2017/hom.27.2a4a5b6a7a-ce-k8.pdf
ICES 2017b. Mackerel (Scomber scombrus) in subareas 1–8 and 14, and in Division 9.a (the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters)
http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2017/2017/mac.27.nea.pdf
ICES 2017c. Boarfish (Capros aper) in subareas 6–8 (Celtic Seas, English Channel, and Bay of Biscay)
http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2017/2017/boc.27.6-8.pdf

ICES 2017d. Anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus) in Subarea 8 (Bay of Biscay)
http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2017/2017/ane.27.8.pdf
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/pelagic.html