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PECHE 360

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION amending Regulation (EU) 2024/257 fixing for 2024, 2025 and 2026 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/194 fixing for 2023 and 2024 such fishing opportunities - Exchange of views

I Introduction

1. On 2 September 2024, the Commission submitted a third amendment to Regulation (EU) 2024/257 (the “main TAC and Quota Regulation” for 2024). This proposal included inter alia a final TAC for anchovy in Atlantic Iberian waters for the period of 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 that would replace the provisional TAC currently in force until the end of September.
2. The Working Party on Fisheries Policy examined the proposal at its meetings on 5 and 12 September 2024.
3. On 13 September 2024, the Working Party on Fisheries Policy agreed to a presidency compromise as set out in doc. ST 13271/24, that included certain technical corrections. However, the provisions related to anchovy in Atlantic Iberian waters were not agreed upon and remain an outstanding issue.

4. On 18 September 2024, the Permanent Representatives Committee prepared this item for the exchange of views at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 23 September 2024.

II Outstanding issue: anchovy

5. For anchovy in the Atlantic Iberian waters, ICES¹ published its advice on 21 June 2024². Similarly to recent years, ICES advised a certain catch level for the western component of the stock (8 480 t) and a different catch level for the southern component of the stock (969 t). In the advice, ICES also says that the use of a combined TAC for both components “could lead to the overexploitation of either component” and hence advises to implement management at stock component area level.
6. With this amendment to Regulation (EU) 2024/257, the Commission proposes a definitive TAC for anchovy in Atlantic Iberian waters of 9 449 tonnes which corresponds to a reduction of 54% as compared to the TAC level of the last fishing year. In addition, the Commission proposes to limit the catches of the southern component of the stock to 969 tonnes from 1 October onwards and to prohibit quota exchanges between Member States for that component.
7. Spain, whose local fishing fleet catches anchovy exclusively from the southern component, cannot accept the proposal, mainly for the following reasons:
- the limitation for the southern components even though ICES issues only one advice for anchovy in Atlantic Iberian waters;
 - the socio-economic impact for a fleet that sees its fishing opportunities reduced by 90% as compared to last year without viable alternatives;
 - the immediate closure of the fishery in case more catches had already occurred under the provisional TAC that was set until 30 September 2024;
 - the upcoming benchmarking exercise for the stock concerned that will give updated information on the stock status and distribution.

¹ The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

² <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.25019153.v1>

8. Portugal, whose fishing fleet catches anchovy mainly from the western component, considers the proposed reduction of 54% as too high given the socio-economic impact for their fleet, the state of the stock and available scientific information and supports the view of Spain to wait for the upcoming benchmarking exercise.
9. Several delegations question the prohibition of quota exchanges in the southern component, since the possibility for Member States to engage in quota exchanges is based on the Common Fisheries Policy.

III Conclusion

10. Council is invited to exchange views on the outstanding issue outlined under point II above.
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