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To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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Delegations will find attached document C(2026) 7015 final.

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EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

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COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../...

of 8.10.2026

amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources of the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland, Irish Sea and the Channel

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE DELEGATED ACT

The progressive elimination of discards in all EU fisheries is a key objective of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)¹. Certain demersal fisheries have been subject to a landing obligation since 1 January 2016 and as of 1 January 2019 this applies to all catches of species subject to catch limits in the North-Western Waters. The CFP Regulation also provides for increased regionalisation, to ensure that the rules are adapted to the specific characteristics of each fishery and sea basin.

Regulation (EU) 2019/1241² establishes the framework of technical measures to help the EU achieve the CFP objectives of fishing at maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels, reducing unwanted catches and eliminating discards, while contributing to the achievement of good environmental status as set out in Directive 2008/56/EC³. Such technical measures should contribute to protect juveniles and spawning aggregations of marine species through the use of selective gear. Annex VI to Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 establishes regional technical measures for the North Western Waters.

Article 15(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 empowers the Commission to adopt delegated acts to amend, supplement, repeal or derogate from the technical measures set out in the Annexes in accordance with Article 29 of that Regulation and Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013

Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 provides that Member States with a direct management interest may submit joint recommendations to achieve the objectives of the relevant EU conservation measures, multiannual plans or specific discard plans.

In accordance with Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, the Member States of the North Western Waters (Belgium, Ireland, Spain, France and the Netherlands), who have a direct management interest in the relevant fisheries in the North Western Waters stocks of cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea that are below the limit reference point for spawning stock biomass (B_{lim}), submitted to the Commission a joint recommendation on 30 April 2021, proposing remedial measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea and additional selectivity measures aiming to reduce gadoid by-catches in the Irish Sea as well as specific technical measures in the West of Scotland. That joint recommendation was implemented through Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2324⁴ and subsequently updated and prolonged four times, most recently by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/2193⁵.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>).

² Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1380/2013, (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973, (EU) 2019/472 and (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2549/2000, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005 (OJ L 198, 25.07.2019, p. 105, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1241/oj>).

³ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) (OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj>).

⁴ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2324 of 23 August 2021 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards technical measures for certain

In view of the concerning state of fish stocks in the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the Channel, remedial measures for stocks with biomass levels below B_{lim} , as provided for in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2019/472⁶, are necessary to ensure that the stock or functional unit concerned can return to levels above those capable of producing MSY as soon as possible.

The technical measures adopted under Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/2193 will expire on 31 December 2026. On 19 June 2026, the Member States of the North Western Waters therefore submitted a new joint recommendation to the Commission proposing to extend the application of and enhance the existing remedial measures for vulnerable gadoids in the Celtic Sea and the Irish Sea, and to introduce additional measures for sole and plaice in the Channel. Additionally, they also requested that the measures for the West of Scotland be prolonged until 31 December 2027.

A number of additional measures for the Celtic Sea, Irish Sea and Channel were agreed upon during the annual consultations on fishing opportunities for 2026 with the UK, pursuant to Article 498 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement⁷. The measures were incorporated in Articles 19 and 20 of the Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249⁸ for 2026. The EU and the UK further agreed to assess and review the effectiveness of these joint measures under the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF). The joint recommendation submitted on 19 June 2026 by the Member States of the North Western Waters, incorporated these additional measures.

More specifically, the joint recommendation proposes for the Celtic Sea retaining the 120 mm cod-end and 110 mm cod-end with 120 mm square-mesh panel for bottom trawls and seines. For the directed Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea, the joint recommendation proposes removing the 200 mm square mesh panel for vessels of less than 12 metres in overall length, the 100 mm cod-end with a 100 mm square mesh panel gear option and the dual cod-end gear option, while adding technical specifications for the remaining gear options. It also proposes removing the requirement to use a raised fishing line for vessels whose catches, weighed before any discards, consist of at least 20 % haddock, in light of the zero-catch advice for haddock and the by-catch only fishery. Furthermore, the joint recommendation proposes limiting the use of a 100 mm cod-end fitted with a 100 mm square mesh panel or a 100 mm T90 cod-end and extension to fisheries in which catches consist of at least 55 % anglerfish, hake or megrim, thereby removing those gear options from fisheries targeting at least 55 % whiting in light of the zero-catch advice for whiting and the by-catch only fishery. For the directed Nephrops fishery in the Irish Sea, the joint recommendation proposes removing the flip-flap trawl gear option and adding technical specifications for the remaining gear options.

demersal and pelagic fisheries in the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the West of Scotland (OJ L 465, 29.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2021/2324/oj).

⁵ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/2193 of 8 August 2025 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the prolongation of technical measures for certain demersal and pelagic fisheries in the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the West of Scotland (OJ L, 2025/2193, 29.10.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/2193/oj).

⁶ Regulation (EU) 2019/472 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for stocks fished in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulations (EU) 2016/1139 and (EU) 2018/973, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007 and (EC) No 1300/2008 (OJ L 83, 25.03.2019, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/472/oj>).

⁷ OJ L 149 30.04.2021, p. 10, ELI: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_international/2021/689\(1\)/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_international/2021/689(1)/oj).

⁸ Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249 of 26 January 2026 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 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) 2025/202 (OJ L, 2026/249, 30.1.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/249/oj>).

As regards the Channel, in addition to the existing selectivity measures applicable to directed fisheries, the joint recommendation proposes requiring otter trawls and seines associated with high by-catches of vulnerable gadoid species (cod, haddock, whiting or saithe) to use a cod-end with a mesh size of 100 mm in ICES division 7e. It also proposes requiring beam trawls, otter trawls and seines targeting sole and plaice to use a cod-end with a mesh size of 90 mm in ICES divisions 7d and 7e.

As regards the West of Scotland, the joint recommendation proposes extending the applicable measures. As regards the restrictions applicable to fishing with bottom trawls and seines in ICES divisions 7b, 7c and 7g to 7k, the joint recommendation proposes extending the applicable measures while clarifying that the minimum cod-end mesh size applies without prejudice to the cod-end mesh size requirements applicable to the directed Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea.

2. CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO THE ADOPTION OF THE ACT

For the purpose of implementing the regionalised approach, the Member States of the North Western Waters submitted on 19 June 2026 a new joint recommendation proposing specific technical measures for the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea, West of Scotland and the Channel.

The measures retained have previously been assessed by the STECF⁹ in its plenary meeting of 6 to 10 July 2020 as being compatible with the objectives and conditions set out in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241. In its plenary meeting of 6 to 10 July 2026, the STECF¹⁰ assessed the joint recommendation and concluded that each of the measures proposed in the joint recommendation submitted on 19 June 2026 appear to have the potential to offer equivalent or better selectivity characteristics compared to the baseline gears specified in Part B of Annex VI of Regulation (EC) 2019/1241.

On the basis of the STECF¹⁰ advice, that concluded that the proposed measures offer equivalent or improved selectivity compared to the baseline measures specified in Part B of Annex VI of Regulation (EC) 2019/1241, the Commission considers that the requirements of Article 15(4) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 are fulfilled.

The Expert Group for Fisheries and Aquaculture was consulted on 26 August 2026.

3. LEGAL ELEMENTS OF THE DELEGATED ACT

The main aim of the delegated act is to extend the validity of the specific technical measures currently in place and adopt additional technical measures, in order to facilitate implementation of the landing obligation, contribute to the elimination of discards and reduce the level of unwanted catches through improved selectivity. The Regulation specifies the species and fisheries to which the specific technical measures would apply.

Legal basis

Article 15(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241. All these actions aim to contribute to the conservation of fishing resources in the sea basin, as proposed in a joint recommendation

⁹ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – 64th Plenary Report (PLEN-20-02). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-21081-8, doi:10.2760/325560, JRC121501. ELI: <https://op.europa.eu/publication-detail/-/publication/a630a5bee58-11ea-991b-01aa75ed71a1>

¹⁰ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – 82nd Plenary report (STECF-PLEN-26-02), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2026, JRC. ELI: https://stecf.ec.europa.eu/reports/stecf-library_en

submitted by the Members States with a direct management interest in those areas, in order to amend Annex VI to Regulation (EU) 2019/1241.

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amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources of the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland, Irish Sea and the Channel

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1380/2013, (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973, (EU) 2019/472 and (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2549/2000, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005¹, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 lays down specific provisions regarding technical measures at regional level for Union waters in the North Western waters. That Regulation was amended by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2324² as regards remedial measures to reduce by-catch of cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea and additional selectivity measures aiming to reduce gadoid by-catches in the Irish Sea. ,
- (2) Those measures, which were last amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/2193³, expire on 31 December 2026.
- (3) By a joint recommendation submitted on 19 June 2026, Belgium, Ireland, Spain, France, and the Netherlands (the ‘North Western Waters Member States’), having a direct fisheries management interest in the North Western waters, requested a prolongation of those technical measures until 31 December 2027 , with certain amendments and suggested specific measures to support the recovery of certain stocks in critical condition in the Channel.
- (4) As regards the Celtic Sea, the joint recommendation proposes retaining two gear options for bottom trawls and seines operating in Union waters of ICES division 7g, the part of ICES division 7h situated north of latitude 49°30' N, and the part of ICES division 7j situated north of latitude 49°30' N and east of longitude 11° W, while

¹ OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1241/oj>.

² Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2324 of 23 August 2021 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards technical measures for certain demersal and pelagic fisheries in the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the West of Scotland (OJ L 465, 29.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2021/2324/oj).

³ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/2193 of 8 August 2025 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the prolongation of technical measures for certain demersal and pelagic fisheries in the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the West of Scotland (OJ L, 2025/2193, 29.10.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/2193/oj).

removing the 100 mm T90 cod-end gear option identified previously by the STECF⁴ as the least selective. The recommendation proposes also a number of modifications of gear options concerning directed Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea and in the Irish Sea to reduce by-catches of vulnerable gadoid species.

- (5) As regards the Channel, the joint recommendation proposes measures to reduce catches of undersized plaice and sole and by-catches of cod, whiting, haddock and saithe.
- (6) As regards the West of Scotland, the joint recommendation proposes extending the measures applicable in ICES division 6a and in ICES division 5b to Union waters situated east of 12° W.
- (7) As regards the Celtic Sea, the joint recommendation proposes retaining the existing restrictions applicable to fishing with bottom trawls and seines in ICES divisions 7b, 7c and 7g to 7k, while clarifying that the minimum cod-end mesh size applies without prejudice to the cod-end mesh size requirements applicable to the directed Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea.
- (8) The Pelagic Advisory Council and the North Western Waters Advisory Council were consulted on the joint recommendation in June 2026.
- (9) The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) assessed the joint recommendation and the evidence presented by Member States concerned at its plenary session on 6 to 10 July 2026. The STECF⁵ concluded that each of the measures proposed in the joint recommendation appear to have the potential to offer equivalent or better selectivity characteristics compared to the baseline gears specified in Part B of Annex VI of Regulation (EC) 2019/1241. The measures retained have previously been assessed by the STECF in its plenary meeting of 6 to 10 July 2020 as being compatible with the objectives and conditions set out in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241. Although the STECF in its plenary meeting of 6 to 10 July 2026 reiterated its reluctance to introduce conditions in relation to catch composition, it concludes for the newly introduced catch composition conditions that the increase in codend mesh size from 80 mm to 90 mm has the potential to offer equivalent or improved selectivity compared to the baseline gears, especially for small/juvenile sole and gadoids. Those measures should therefore be included in this Regulation.
- (10) The Expert Group on Fisheries and Aquaculture was also consulted on 26 August 2026.
- (11) Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 should therefore be amended accordingly.
- (12) The measures provided for by this Regulation applicable to Union waters are in pursuit of the objectives set out in Article 494(1) and (2) of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part⁶ and have regard to the principles referred to in Article 494(3)

⁴ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – 64th Plenary Report (PLEN-20-02). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-21081-8, doi:10.2760/325560, JRC121501. ELI: <https://op.europa.eu/publication-detail/-/publication/a630a5bee58-11ea-991b-01aa75ed71a1>

⁵ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – 82nd Plenary report (STECF-PLEN-26-02), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2026, JRC. ELI: https://stecf.ec.europa.eu/reports/stecf-library_en

⁶ OJ L 149 30.04.2021, p. 10, ELI: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/689\(1\)/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/689(1)/oj).

of that agreement. They are without prejudice to any measures applicable in waters of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

- (13) As the measures provided for in this Regulation have a direct impact on the planning of the fishing season of Union vessels and on related economic activities, this Regulation should enter into force as soon as possible. Since the measures to be prolonged expire on 31 December 2026, this Regulation should apply with effect from 1 January 2027 in order to ensure legal continuity,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Annex VI to Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 is amended in accordance with the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from 1 January 2027 until 31 December 2027.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 8.10.2026

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN