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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Updates to Commission proposal for a Council Regulation fixing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Baltic Sea for 2026 and amending Regulation (EU) 2025/202 as regards certain fishing opportunities in other waters (COM (2025) 458 final) - Commission services non-paper **on amendments in relation to Norway pout**

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned document, as received from the European Commission services.

COMMISSION SERVICES NON-PAPER

24 October 2025

This document serves as a basis for discussion at the Working Party on Fisheries Policy.
It cannot in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the Commission.
It is intended solely for those to whom it is addressed

Updates to Commission proposal for a Council Regulation fixing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Baltic Sea for 2026 and amending Regulation (EU) 2025/202 as regards certain fishing opportunities in other waters (COM (2025) 458 final)

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1. Amendments in relation to Norway pout

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Council Regulation (EU) 2025/202[1] fixes total allowable catches ('TACs') for Norway pout (*Trisopterus esmarkii)* in: (i) International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) division 3a (Skagerrak-Kattegat); and (ii) United Kingdom and Union waters of ICES subarea 4 and United Kingdom waters of ICES division 2a (North Sea), for the period from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026.

Norway pout in those areas is a stock jointly managed with the United Kingdom, listed in Annex 35 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 part ('TCA')[2]. For that TAC, the fishing season runs from 1 November to 31 October of the following year. On 10 October 2025, ICES published its advice for Norway pout in ICES subarea 4 and division 3a for the upcoming fishing season[3] and according to the advice, the catches from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026 should be zero tonnes.

On 20 October 2025, the Union and the United Kingdom held bilateral consultations on the level of that TAC for the period from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026, pursuant to Article 498(2) of the TCA. The Union participated in those consultations on the basis of specifications to the Union position endorsed by the Council on 14 October 2025, pursuant to Article 2 of Council Decision (EU) 2021/1875[4].

The Union and the United Kingdom noted the ICES zero-catch advice for that stock for the period from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026. However, they also noted that if the TAC for Norway pout were set at zero, the obligation to land all catches, including by-catches from that stock in mixed fisheries, would give rise to the phenomenon of 'choke species'[5] in the fisheries targeting cod, haddock, whiting and herring in ICES zones 2a, 3a and 4. The Union and the United Kingdom, therefore, agreed to set a by-catch TAC for Norway pout in the Skagerrak-Kattegat and in the North Sea for those other fisheries targeting cod, haddock, whiting and herring at the level of 400 tonnes. That level approximately corresponds to the levels of recent unavoidable by-catches in those other fisheries. That outcome was documented in the Written Record of fisheries consultations, signed by the Heads of Delegation of the Union and the United Kingdom on 24 October 2025.

It is therefore proposed to implement the outcome of those consultations in Union law by setting a by-catch TAC for Norway pout in the Skagerrak-Kattegat and the North Sea for the period from 1

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1 Council Regulation (EU) 2025/202 of 30 January 2025 fixing for 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) 2024/257 as regards fishing opportunities for 2025 (OJ L, 2025/202, 31.1.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/202/oj).

2 OJ L 149, 30.4.2021, p. 10, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1875/oj.

3 https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.27202770.v1.

4 Council Decision (EU) 2021/1875 of 22 October 2021 concerning the position to be adopted on behalf of the Union in the annual consultations with the United Kingdom to agree on total allowable catches (OJ L 378, 26.10.2021, p. 6, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1875/oj).

5 'Choke species' are species with a lack of quota that can cause one or more fishing vessels to stop fishing even if they still have quota for other species.

November 2025 to 31 October 2026, pursuant to Article 16(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013[6], in conjunction with Article 2(1) and (5), points (c) and (f), of that Regulation.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RECITALS

Recital (20) is replaced by the following:

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(20) The Union and the United Kingdom held bilateral consultations on 20 October 2025 on the TAC for Norway pout in ICES division 3a (Skagerrak-Kattegat), United Kingdom and Union waters of ICES subarea 4 and United Kingdom waters of ICES division 2a (North Sea) for the period from 1 November 2025 until 31 October 2026. Those consultations were held pursuant to Article 498(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 part (‘TCA’)[7]. The Union participated in those consultations on the basis of specifications to the Union position endorsed by the Council on 14 October 2025, pursuant to Article 2 of Council Decision (EU) 2021/1875[8]. The Union and the United Kingdom agreed on a TAC based on the ICES advice for Norway pout in in ICES subarea 4 and division 3a for that period published on 10 October 2025. The outcome of the consultation was documented in the Written Record, which was signed by the Heads of Delegation of the Union and the United Kingdom on 24 October 2025. The TAC for the period from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026 should therefore be fixed at the level set out in that Written Record.

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6 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, pp. 22–61; ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj).

7 OJ L 149, 30.4.2021, p. 10, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1875/oj.

8 Council Decision (EU) 2021/1875 of 22 October 2021 concerning the position to be adopted on behalf of the Union in the annual consultations with the United Kingdom to agree on total allowable catches (OJ L 378, 26.10.2021, p. 6, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1875/oj).

AMENDMENTS TO THE ARTICLE

Article 14(1) is replaced by the following:

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(1) In Annex IA, Part B, Table 122 is replaced by the following:

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			Table	**122**	
Species:	Norway pout and associated by-catches *Trisopterus esmarkii*			Zone:	3a; United Kingdom and Union waters of 4; United Kingdom waters of 2a (NOP/2A3A4.)
Year	**2025**		**2026**		Analytical TAC
Denmark	299, 722	(1)(2)(3)	299,722	(4) (2)(3)	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply
Germany	0, 057	(1)(2)(3)	0,057	(4) (2)(3)	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply
Netherlands	0, 221	(1)(2)(3)	0,221	(4) (2)(3)	
Union	300	(1)(2)(3)	300	(4) (2)(3)	
United Kingdom	100	(1)(2)	100	(4) (2)	
TAC	400	(1)	400	(4)	

(1) May only be fished from 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025.

(2) Exclusively for bycatches. No direct fisheries for Norway pout are permitted under this quota.

(3) By-catch quota may be fished in 3a, United Kingdom and European Union waters of 4; United Kingdom waters of 2a only.

(4) May only be fished from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026.

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