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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, as well as fixing for 2023 and 2024 such fishing opportunities for certain deep-sea fish stocks
- Comments from Latvia

Delegations will find in the Annex written comments from Latvia on the above-mentioned document.

Latvia's comments regarding the Proposal for a Council Regulation fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, as well as fixing for 2023 and 2024 such fishing opportunities for certain deep-sea fish stocks

Latvia thanks European Commission and the Presidency for their work on the Council Regulation fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in EU waters and, for EU vessels, in certain non-EU waters but wishes again to draw the attention to the long term standing unsolved problem regarding snow crab fisheries in the Svalbard area.

Latvia indicates that from 2017 until this time, it has not been possible for the Member States to use the snow crab fishing opportunities granted to Svalbard area. These fishing opportunities, their availability and, above all, the ability to realize them from the beginning of the fishing year are very important for Latvia, therefore, Latvia encourage the Commission to use all necessary instruments, means and administrative power to ensure that the Member States could fully use their snow crab fishing opportunities provided by the regulation. The simple inclusion of these fishing opportunities in the next year's quota regulation without ensuring the possibility to utilize them by the Member States could be misleading to the relevant stake holders and fisheries administrations as the previous experiences have already shown it.

Therefore, it is particularly important for Latvia to see the Commission's real action to ensure the possibility for use of the fishing rights in Svalbard as soon as possible, taking into account that so far, the solution has not been searched and found.

Concerning the number of fishing licences Latvia invites to set the fishing opportunities in Svalbard area at the same level as in previous years, i.e. for Latvia it would be 11 fishing vessels licenses. It would be consistent with EU position (supported by several diplomatic notes presented to Norway) on the Member States rights on Svalbard snow crab fishery and in that way respect previous EU decisions taken in the last years.

Latvia also invites to set as soon as possible the real fishing opportunities for all other species which at this stage contains *pm*.

At the same time, Latvia would like to reserve the rights to send in additional written commentaries regarding eel fisheries as the new rules are still evaluated by our scientists.