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From:	The Irish Parliament
date of receipt:	2 December 2025
To:	The President of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION 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 [12815/25 - COM(2025) 662 final] - Opinion on the application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality

Delegations will find in annex the opinion[1] of the Irish Parliament on the Proposal mentioned above.

[1] The translation(s) of the opinion may be available on the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange website (IPEX) at the following address: https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/document/COM-2025-0662

Tithe an Oireachtais
Houses of the Oireachtas

An Comhchoiste um Iascach agus Gnóthaí Muirí

An Cion Polaitiúil maidir le COM (2025) 662

Nollaig 2025

Joint Committee on Fisheries and Maritime Affairs

Political Contribution on COM (2025) 662

December 2025

34/JCFMA/04

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Introduction

1. The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Fisheries and Maritime Affairs ("the Committee") considers COM (2025) 662[1] to be significantly important to Ireland and the EU.

2. The Committee notes that key levels of Total Allowable Catch are still *pro memoria* in the proposal, pending ongoing negotiations between the EU Commission, the UK, and other Coastal States.

3. In this context the Committee feels strongly that the challenges facing Ireland, both historical and current, should be borne more fully in mind by the Commission as they negotiate with third-party nations on behalf of their Member States.

Scrutiny by the Joint Committee

4. The Committee first considered the proposal at its meeting on 4th November 2025. At this meeting the Committee agreed to write to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to request further information on the proposal.

Decision of the Joint Committee

5. On 18th November 2025, the Committee also agreed to draft a political contribution and to forward a copy to Martin Heydon T.D. Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Timmy Dooley T.D. Minister of State with responsibility for Fisheries, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Roberta Metsola MEP, President of the European Parliament, and to the President of the Council of the European Union.

6. The Committee further agreed that, in the interests of interparliamentary cooperation on EU matters, a copy of this report be forwarded to the appropriate Committee in the National Parliament of each EU Member State and to Ireland's MEPs.

[1] Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION 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

Opinion of the Joint Committee

7. Having considered the proposal in detail, the Committee makes the following observations: -

   a. The Committee considers that the ICES-recommended 70% reduction in Mackerel for 2026 will negatively impact Irish fishers more than those of any other EU state, given this is Ireland's most valuable fishery and given the long-established reliance on that stock created by Ireland's quota share. The Irish mackerel fishery will have reduced from 78,054 metric tonnes in 2020, to a potential 15,000 mt in 2026, resulting in massive contraction in the production and processing sectors.

   b. The Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal to continue extending by-catch only TACs to certain struggling whitefish species, thereby preventing the choking of other key demersal fisheries without harming vulnerable stocks.

   c. In reviewing broader context, the Committee considers that the "Hague Preferences" imply a long-standing recognition that the standard of *relative stability* enshrined in the Common Fisheries Policy is disadvantageous to Ireland and that Ireland is vulnerable to irresponsible fishing by Member States or other parties within its EEZ. The Hague preferences are an integral part of the Fisheries Council, they are a long-standing mechanism that supports the member states most impacted or effected, and as such are separate from the Relative Stability keys. Ireland relies heavily on the Hague Preference, so too does Denmark on the Danish Preference

   d. The Committee notes that Ireland's fisheries sector is uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which agreed transfers of fishing opportunities to the UK after Brexit. The Committee heard one STECF projection estimates Ireland's overall financial loss 2020-24 as €140 million, or 40% of the Union total. The Irish Department of Marine analysis for TCA/Brexit transfers was valued at €215 million of quota to the UK between 2020 and 2025. All EU data analyses rank Ireland as singly the highest loser both in volume, value, or percentage of total quota – Ireland was by far the highest contributor to the deal.

e. The Committee considers that the disproportionate transfer of quota from Member States whose fishing rights overlap with the UK's was not in keeping with *relative stability*.

f. The Committee has heard evidence that following major upgrades since 2018 the standards of fisheries control in Ireland are now exemplary and Ireland is consistently in highest member state for compliance since then, with stocks in their part of the Atlantic performing best in the EU by all sustainability metrics. That being said, other third countries have grossly overfished our shared stocks Countries such as Norway, Iceland and Faroes have overfished by one million metric tonnes inside of 5 years alone.

g. The Committee notes that as the main market to which the non-EU Coastal States import their fish products, the Union is by far the most powerful player when negotiating management of shared stocks. Yet no market measures are under consideration by the EU in order to protect their fisheries from Third Countries gross overfishing of quotas.

Recommendations of the Joint Committee

8. The Committee recommends that the Commission advocate particularly for Ireland in its negotiations with non-EU states, recognising Ireland's outsize contribution to the shared fisheries resource and the Union's duty to defend that resource.

9. The Committee calls on the Commission to reclaim opportunities for Ireland in its negotiations with the UK, thereby upholding the principle of *relative stability* in an equitable way.

10. The Committee recommends that the Commission use the threat of sanctions and other stringent trade measures to protect its Member States, who are already doing all they can to conserve shared stocks, from the practices of third-party states that threaten EU fisheries.

11. The Committee calls on the European Commission to allocate Ireland's fair share of the fish in our waters to our fishing fleets and address the failings in the existing Common Fisheries Policy that facilitate this injustice.



Conor D McGuinness T.D.
Cathaoirleach
Joint Committee on Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
02 December 2025