Council of the European Union

Brussels, 30 January 2024
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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973 and (EU) 2019/472 as regards the targets for fixing fishing opportunities - Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Delegations will find attached the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the above-mentioned proposal.

OPINION

European Economic and Social Committee

Targets for fixing fishing opportunities

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Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973 and (EU) 2019/472 as regards the targets for fixing fishing opportunities

COM(2023) 771 final - 2023/0449 (COD)

NAT/923

Rapporteur-General: **Panagiotis GKOFAS**

Referral	Council, 13/12/2023
Legal basis	Article 43(2) and 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
Section responsible	Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment
Adopted at plenary	17/1/2024
Plenary session No	584
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	178/0/4

1. **EESC position**

1.1 The objective of the legislative proposal is to amend the multiannual plans for certain stocks fished in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and the Western Waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, in order to ensure the consistency of the rules governing the fixing of yearly fishing opportunities by the Council.

1.2 All three multiannual plans contain a so-called "5% rule", which provides that fishing opportunities shall be fixed in such a way as to ensure that there is less than a 5% probability of the spawning stock biomass falling to the point below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

1.3 However, under certain circumstances relating to the status of a given fish stock and the short-term forecast for its biomass development, the application of the 5% rule may mean that fishing opportunities cannot be set and the targeted fishery must be suspended, with potentially severe socioeconomic implications.

1.4 Therefore, the EESC agrees with the proposal to delete the 5% rule in these three multiannual plans. This amendment serves the purpose of implementing a more coherent and consistent approach on the fixing of fishing opportunities, which will allow for an environmental and socioeconomic balance to be achieved in equal terms.

1.5 It is important to underline that no administrative, institutional or budgetary impact has been foreseen after the implementation of this clause. Additionally, no negative impact has been foreseen for economic stakeholders, SMEs, research, audit or digitalisation processes.

Brussels, 17 January 2024.

Oliver RÖPKE

The president of the European Economic and Social Committee