

Brussels, 20 February 2026  
(OR. en)

6562/26

LIMITE

PECHE 59

**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 23 February 2026  
Rigorous defence of EU fisheries essential in pivotal Coastal States mackerel consultations  
- Information from Ireland, supported by Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

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**“Rigorous defence of EU fisheries essential in pivotal Coastal States mackerel consultations”**

**AOB item from Ireland, supported by Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden at the AgriFish Council of 23 February 2026**

Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden recall that four Coastal States agreed on a Total Allowable Catch and sharing arrangements for mackerel in December 2025. At AgriFish Council on 26 January, Member States expressed their regret that these Coastal States chose to exclude the European Union from the discussions. Furthermore, Member States urged the Commission to give this matter high priority and to take immediate action.

The actions of third countries have significantly contributed to the poor condition of the mackerel stock, which in turn has damaged the EU’s seafood sector economically.

Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden regret the continued absence of a Coastal States sharing arrangement for mackerel and that more urgency has not been given to setting a Total Allowable Catch for mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic for 2026.

Given that fishing opportunities for mackerel, as set in the provisional TAC, are extremely low and that the EU's mackerel fishery season is already upon us, the negative economic impacts for the EU fleet will deepen if a satisfactory conclusion of the Coastal States negotiations incorporating EU interests cannot be found.

The EU will participate in Coastal States consultations on 5 and 6 March 2026. Ireland Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden recognise the efforts of Commissioner Kadis to date and express their support for him and his team in these critical and timely negotiations. We look forward to a positive outcome that addresses the EU's needs in terms of a fair comprehensive sharing arrangement, and the setting of the TAC that allows for the recovery of the stock while providing a level playing field for our fishermen and women.

Recalling the seasonal nature of our mackerel fisheries, EU fishermen and women will rely upon the Commission taking prompt steps ahead of March AgriFish Council to ensure that optimal use can be made of the EU quota in 2026.

Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden recall that the Commissioner has already acknowledged, at AgriFish Council, the urgency of this issue and we urge the Commissioner to take the necessary steps to protect our stock and our industry and secure a successful outcome for EU Fishermen and women in the coming weeks.