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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Unilateral management measures for fisheries introduced by the United Kingdom (UK)  
*- Information from the Danish delegation on behalf of the Danish and Swedish delegations*

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Delegations will find attached an information note by the Danish delegation on behalf of the Danish and Swedish delegations on the above-mentioned subject with a view to the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 26 February 2024, where it will be presented under "Any Other Business".

## **Unilateral management measures for fisheries introduced by the United Kingdom (UK)**

### *Information from the Danish delegation on behalf of the Danish and Swedish delegations*

The UK has since Brexit, notably during the recent year launched several consultations on various management measures with implications for the EU fleet. More of these management measures are now entering into force. The cooperation between the UK and the EU is based on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

A guiding principle for maintaining close bilateral relations on fisheries matters is that conservation and management measures are based on the best and most updated scientific advice, principally that provided by ICES, in order to foster long-term sustainability and optimum utilisation for shared stocks. Furthermore, sharing of data and scientifically based documentation of possible effects of management measures are important parts of a trustful cooperation that benefits both parties. To this end, management measures with wide implications for large fleet segments should be non-discriminatory and proportionate.

On 8 February 2024 the UK notified its decision to prohibit the fishing of sandeel in English waters of ICES area 4 (North Sea) and in all Scottish waters for vessels of any nationality as of 26 March 2024. Coming into effect, this means that EU vessels will be deprived of the possibility to fish sandeel in UK waters in 2024 and the years to come. These are yet new examples of UK initiatives on unilateral management measures with severe consequences for the EU catch sector and processing industry.

The decision by the UK and Scottish authorities will have serious economic consequences for the Danish and Swedish fishing sector and processing industry. The total value of Danish and Swedish landings of sandeel in UK waters between 2017 and 2022 amounts to more than 20,7 million EUR on average per year not including the (derivative) negative effects for the processing and aquaculture industries.

It shall be noted that the EU and the UK shares for sandeel (in all management areas) according to the TCA were 97.9 % to the EU and 2.1 % to the UK in 2020 and will be 96.8 % to the EU and 3.2 % to the UK in 2025. Furthermore, the UK has decided not to allocate their share of sandeel to UK vessels in recent years, meaning that this unilateral UK measure will have no economic consequences for UK vessels.

The new unilateral measures taken by the UK emphasize the need for the EU to take a common stand in order to avoid a de facto erosion of the fishing rights and access arrangements entailed in the TCA. In this light, we encourage the Commission to – without undue delay - carefully consider the best strategic options for the EU vis-à-vis the UK with the aim of safeguarding current and future EU fishing possibilities in and access to UK waters, while fully involving Member States. Finally, Denmark and Sweden urge the Commission to finalize a legal assessment of whether the recent unilateral measures taken by the UK are in conflict with the provisions in the TCA as soon as possible.

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