



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Brussels, 03 June 2021

WK 7330/2021 INIT

LIMITE

PECHE

WORKING PAPER

This is a paper intended for a specific community of recipients. Handling and further distribution are under the sole responsibility of community members.

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Commission letter to Norway on Mackerel

Delegations will find attached a note on the above-mentioned subject, as received from the European Commission services.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels, 1 June 2021
MARE.C.1/MK/ds/Ares(2021)

Dear Elizabeth,

The Commission services have learnt from information in the press that Norway has decided to set fishing opportunities for mackerel for 2021 for the Norwegian industry at 35% of the mackerel TAC agreed at the coastal States consultations in 2021. This corresponds to a 55% increase of the Norwegian share compared to the 2014 ad-hoc sharing arrangement, which allocated 22.5% of the TAC to Norway. In tonnage, this would mean an increase from 191 843 tonnes to 298 299 tonnes, i.e. additional 106 456 tonnes. We understand that this decision would replace the one that was notified to NEAFC on 30 April and is therefore the final quota unilaterally decided by Norway for 2021.

On behalf of my Commissioner, I need to inform you that he strongly regrets this decision. It will endanger the sustainability of the most important shared pelagic stock in the North East Atlantic. I also regret that we had to discover this decision through the press and that there was no prior communication to us. This action by Norway is **contrary to the requirements for cooperation among Coastal States, as set out in UNCLOS**, and to earlier positions of Norway on the mackerel and more generally the coastal States stocks.

We regret that the Chair of the coastal States consultations for mackerel in 2020 was not in a position to call for a meeting of the Heads of Delegation to discuss further the issue of sharing for 2021 and beyond, based on the 2014 sharing arrangement.

Norway's actions are not what we expect in a constructive cooperation between reliable partners. I regret to state that recently Norway has undertaken a number of steps that the European Union deems to go against international law and that are undermining the interests of the European Union. The decision on mackerel is yet another example, and sends a disturbing signal at a time when we need to promote stability in the North East Atlantic, and when we are preparing the negotiations for a new bilateral framework agreement.

Ms Elisabeth N Gabrielsen
Acting Director General
Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
Elisabeth-Norgard.Gabrielsen@nfd.dep.no

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111
Office: J-99 05/014 - Tel. direct line +32 229-50483

You will understand that in this context the European Union will need to take some time to reflect on the nature of our cooperation on fisheries matters.

I remain available for any clarification and exchange on the matter and I hope we can soon engage again in constructive discussions, which have until recently guided our bilateral relation. On our side, we consider it crucial that we invest in remaining predictable and cooperating partners.

Yours sincerely,



Charlina VITCHEVA