

Agreed record of fisheries consultations between the European Union, Norway and the United Kingdom for 2023

9 December 2022

- 1 A European Union Delegation headed by Mr Erik LINDEBO, a Norwegian Delegation headed by Ms Ann Kristin WESTBERG and a United Kingdom Delegation headed by Mr Colin FAULKNER met in the period from 3rd to 4th November in Oslo, from 21st to 24th November in Brussels, and on 2nd and 6th December via videoconference, to consult on mutual fisheries relations including the management of shared stocks for 2023.
- 2 The Heads of Delegations agreed to recommend to their respective authorities the fishery arrangements for 2023 as outlined in this Agreed Record, including Annexes I to X and Tables 1, 2 and 3.
- 3 The Delegations underlined their determination to cooperate, in their mutual interest, in securing continued responsible fisheries and ensuring the long-term sustainability and optimum utilisation of shared stocks.
- 4 The Parties took note of the progress made in consulting on a trilateral framework agreement, which will be the basis for their future cooperation to ensure the long-term sustainability and optimum use of their shared stocks. The Parties confirmed their ambition that that agreement should enter into force in good time before the annual consultations for 2024.
- 5 The Delegations agreed that the scope of this Agreed Record should be the stocks occurring within the areas under the jurisdiction of all three Parties.
- 6 The Delegations noted that certain arrangements between the Parties, including but not limited to arrangements for access to waters, quota transfers, licencing of vessels and other conditions for fishing in the respective zones of fisheries jurisdiction, may be regulated by bilateral arrangements.
- 7 The Delegations agreed to exchange information relevant to stocks within the scope of this Agreed Record on a timely, efficient and transparent basis: for example, information relating to quota transfers, access arrangements, catches, and any relevant management measures. The Delegations further noted the benefits of continued close collaboration and information exchange.

- 8 The Delegations agreed that management measures and sharing of stocks as per Table 1 are without prejudice to possible future arrangements between the Parties.
- 9 In that context, the Norwegian Delegation signalled their intention to invite in due course the other Parties to consultations with a view to revisit and review the sharing keys for some of these stocks.
- 10 The Delegations agreed to hold an intersessional meeting in late May-early June in 2023 to review progress on the actions set out in this Agreed Record. They agreed that they would use that opportunity to establish a TAC for sprat in ICES Division 3.a and Subarea 4.

11 **Jointly managed stocks**

- 11.1 The Delegations agreed, as an ad hoc approach for 2023, to consider cod, haddock, herring, plaice, saithe and whiting to be jointly managed stocks. Each Party's share of each stock for 2023 is shown in Table 1.
- 11.2 The Delegations acknowledged that, although all Parties have introduced legislation that prohibits most forms of discarding of fish, discards remain a serious problem and may be contributing to the current poor condition of some stocks.
- 11.3 The Delegations agreed to work towards improving exploitation patterns and reducing unwanted catches and discards through the use of technical measures to improve the selectivity of fishing gear; closed seasons and areas; as well as any other appropriate measures. They acknowledged the usefulness of complementary technical measures to achieve those objectives.
- 11.4 The Delegations agreed to apply the inter-annual quota flexibility (IAF) scheme shown in Annex II. For 2023, the IAF scheme will apply to haddock, herring, plaice, saithe and whiting.
- 11.5 In light of the de minimis and high survivability exemptions contained in its landing obligation, the EU Delegation informed the UK Delegation and the Norwegian Delegation of its intention to continue in 2023 to adjust from the EU quotas the estimated amounts of the discards.
- 11.6 In light of the de minimis and high survivability exemptions contained in its landing obligation, the UK Delegation informed the EU Delegation and the Norwegian Delegation of its intention to continue in 2023 to adjust from the UK quotas the estimated amounts of the discards.

12 Long-term management plans

- 12.1 The Delegations reaffirmed their commitment to having long-term management plans (LTMP) in place for jointly managed stocks and committed to progressing this work in 2023.
- 12.2 The Delegations agreed that, in taking forward work on LTMPs, they would use their best endeavours to submit to ICES an LTMP evaluation request within three months of the publication of the outcome of a benchmark exercise carried out on a shared stock. They agreed that, in advance of submitting an evaluation request, they would work together with a view to define the management objectives for the LTMP, an initial set of Harvest Control Rules, and stability mechanisms for the evaluation. The delegations also agreed that, when considering their response to an ICES benchmark exercise, they would assess whether an HCR evaluation would suffice or whether they would ask ICES for a full Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE).
- 12.3 The Delegations noted the importance of working collaboratively with ICES throughout the evaluation process as well as the importance of protecting the independence of ICES processes. They agreed that their representatives would jointly facilitate frequent communication with the ICES group conducting the evaluation process. The aim of this collaboration would be to ensure that key management objectives are adequately reflected in the evaluation, that key performance indicators needed for the selection of an LTMS are generated, and that the suite of strategies evaluated have the features and levels of performance desired by managers.;
- 12.4 The Delegations agreed to form an ad hoc sub-group to facilitate the delivery of this work, particularly for cod and saithe which have upcoming benchmarks. The role of the subgroup should include providing recommendations to the head of delegations on the parameters of the ICES requests, and facilitating communication with the ICES working group. However, all decisions will be taken jointly by the heads of delegations.
- 12.5 It was agreed that this subgroup should provide an update of the progress made on the cod LTMP request, following the ICES benchmark exercise, at the intersessional meeting in May/June 2023.

13 Cod

- 13.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2023 should be no more than 26,008 tonnes. This represents an increase of 82% in the advice compared to 2022. ICES estimates that discards and below minimum size (BMS) landings are at 20.3% of total catch (in weight) in 2021. ICES projects discard rates of 15.1% of total catch (by weight) in 2022.

- 13.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea), Division 7.d (Eastern Channel), and Subdivision 20 (Skagerrak) of 26,008 tonnes. This represents an increase of 63% compared to the TAC in 2022.
- 13.3 The resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 21,652 tonnes (83.25%), the TAC for Subdivision 20 is 3,095 tonnes (11.90%), and the TAC for Division 7.d is 1,261 tonnes (4.85%).
- 13.4 The Delegations agreed to continue the closures of spawning grounds as described in Annex IV.
- 13.5 The Norwegian Delegation explained that three areas had been closed in the southeast part of the Norwegian Economic Zone (NEZ) from 7 July to 31 December 2022 in order to protect juveniles and small cod. The aim is to continue such closures in 2023. In addition to the closure of nursery areas, the Norwegian Delegation informed that Real Time Closures can be triggered in the demersal trawl and Danish seine fishery in the NEZ, if the intermixture of juvenile cod, saithe, haddock and whiting exceeds a certain limit. Finally, they explained that if the intermixture of juvenile cod is above the legal limit, vessels are obligated to change fishing ground.
- 13.6 The UK Delegation confirmed that a National Cod Avoidance Plan was still active in UK waters. The plan continues to cover a variety of measures in different areas of UK waters of the North Sea. The measures include restrictions on mesh size on nets, alongside real time closures and real time reporting to protect high abundances of cod of all ages. These are in addition to existing seasonal closures in UK waters for the protection of spawning aggregations of cod.
- 13.7 The EU Delegation explained that, given the lack of recovery and continued high levels of fishing mortality of this important stock, it intends to continue in 2023 the cod avoidance measures introduced in 2020 and 2021. These measures include specific selectivity measures, area closures for protection of spawning aggregations of cod as well as the possibility for member states to introduce National Cod Avoidance Plans. Such plans will be assessed by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries. In addition, the European Union explained that specific actions on control have been undertaken since 2020 including additional efforts on last haul evaluations and the triggering of real time closures and the procedures for the monitoring of these closures.
- 13.8 The Delegations noted the terms of reference for the North Sea Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Working Group (Annex V) which seeks to enhance the control of the cod and cod-related fisheries in the North Sea to ensure compliance with technical measures and catch registration obligations.

14 **Haddock**

- 14.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2023 should be no more than 137,058 tonnes. This represents an increase of 6.5% in the advice compared to 2022. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 37.0% of total catch (in weight) in 2021. ICES projects a combined discards and industrial bycatch rate of 23.3% of total catch (by weight) in 2022.
- 14.2 The Delegations agreed that they would not pursue the full TAC increase implied by the ICES headline advice given that such a large increase could have a detrimental impact on the status of the North Sea cod stock. They therefore agreed that it would not be appropriate to follow the MSY approach.
- 14.3 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea), Subdivision 20 (Skagerrak) and Division 6.a. (West of Scotland) of 68,498 tonnes. This represents an increase of 30% compared to the TAC in 2022.
- 14.4 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 58,402 tonnes (85.26%), the TAC for Subdivision 20 is 3,589 tonnes (5.24%), and the TAC for Division 6.a is 6,507 tonnes (9.50%).

15 **Herring**

- 15.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2023 in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, and eastern English Channel should be no more than 414,886 tonnes. This represents a decrease of 22% in the advice compared to 2022, but only a decrease of 5.6% compared to the TAC for 2022.
- 15.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 for the A fleet of 396,556 tonnes. This is a decrease of 7.3% compared to 2022.
- 15.3 They also agreed that bycatches of herring in other fisheries (the B fleet) would be limited to 7,716 tonnes in 2023. This is a decrease of 5.6% compared to 2022.
- 15.4 The Delegations also noted that the TACs for the C and D fleets in Skagerrak are to be set out in the EU-Norway bilateral agreement on the regulation of fisheries in the Skagerrak and Kattegat for 2023. The Delegations further noted that that agreement set out the TACs for the C and D fleets, which respectively should not exceed 23,250 tonnes and 6,659 tonnes.
- 15.5 The Delegations noted that combined levels of the A, B, C and D fleet TACs/allowances are MSY compliant for North Sea autumn-spawning herring. This assumes that any transfers from the C-fleet in division 3a to subarea 4 are limited to no more than that portion of C-fleet TAC that is considered to be North

Sea autumn spawning herring in 3a, taking into account recently-observed mixing rates in 3a (average for 2019-2021: 0.355 being North Sea autumn-spawning herring).

- 15.6 The Delegations noted that ICES has advised a zero catch of WBSS herring since 2019. They also noted the decision by the European Union to establish a TAC for 2023 of 788 tonnes for WBSS herring in Subareas 22-24 exclusively used for bycatch in the Baltic Sea.
- 15.7 The Delegations welcomed the report of the working Group on herring, which terms of reference were set out in Annex III of the Agreed Record of fisheries consultations for 2022. The Working Group's findings were presented during the opening plenary session of a meeting held in Brussels on 6th and 7th October 2022. They noted that this report presents a well written and comprehensive overview of the development of the herring distribution, fisheries, management approaches and challenges. The WG stopped short of suggesting new management models for exploitation of NSAS herring as this was considered a task for managers.
- 15.8 The Norwegian Delegation stated that in their view the current management regime with its multi-fleet structure is outdated and referred to their statements in the Agreed Record for 2022 for further explanation. They also underlined that they had agreed to the various herring quotas in the expectation that a new, revised management regime for herring would be introduced for 2024 and onwards. They also indicated their strong preference for a single-fleet structure management system, in which incidental juvenile by-catches of the stock in other fisheries are minimised to the maximum extent possible and counted against quota.
- 15.9 The United Kingdom Delegation noted its dissatisfaction with the current multi-fleet management structures and arrangements which exacerbate sustainability challenges for the stock, and result in the UK being disadvantaged as part of the annual TAC-setting process. It asserted its strong preference for a single-fleet structure management system, in which incidental juvenile by-catches of the stock in other fisheries are minimised to the maximum extent possible.
- 15.10 The European Union Delegation referred to its statement in paragraph 15.9 of the Agreed Record of fisheries consultations for 2022. It expressed its readiness to consider different management regimes for herring. It is the view of the EU Delegation that changes in the management regime must not impact the relative shares of the Parties, be as effective and stringent on reducing incidental juvenile bycatches in other fisheries as the B and D fleets TACs used by the EU, and consider the intermixing of Western Baltic and North Sea herring stocks.
- 15.11 The Delegations agreed to meet early in 2023 to continue the revision of the current management regime and to finalise this work before October 2023.

15.12 The Delegations agreed to send a request to ICES about evaluation of a new harvest control rule for herring. The request is attached in Annex X.

16 **Plaice**

16.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2023 should be no more than 150,705 tonnes. This represents an increase of 5.8% in the advice compared to 2022. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 51.1% of total catch (in weight) in 2021, and ICES projects discard rates of 42.6% of total catch (by weight) in 2022.

16.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Subdivision 20 (Skagerrak) of 150,705 tonnes. This is an increase of 5.8% compared to 2022.

16.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 132,922 tonnes (88.20%) and the TAC for Subdivision 20 is 17,783 tonnes (11.80%).

17 **Saithe**

17.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach, catches in 2023 should be no more than 58,912 tonnes. This represents an increase of 18.7% compared to the advice for 2022. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 1.6% of total catch (in weight) in 2021. ICES projects discard rates of 3.8% of total catch (by weight) in 2022.

17.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 in ICES Subareas 4 (North Sea) and 6 (Rockall and West of Scotland), and Division 3.a. (Skagerrak and Kattegat) of 58,912 tonnes. This is an increase of 18.7% compared to the TAC for 2022.

17.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 and Division 3.a is 53,374 tonnes (90.60%), and the TAC for Subarea 6.a is 5,538 tonnes (9.40%).

18 **Whiting**

18.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2023 should be no more than 110,172 tonnes. This represents an increase of 25% compared to the advice for 2022. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 44.1% of total catch (in weight) in 2021, and ICES projects discard rates of 36.7% of total catch (by weight) in 2022.

18.2 The Delegations agreed that they would not pursue the full TAC increase implied by the ICES headline advice given that such a large increase could have a

detrimental impact on the status of the North Sea cod stock. They therefore agreed that it would not be appropriate to follow the MSY approach.

- 18.3 The Delegations discussed the methodology for the split of whiting TACs between the ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7.d. They agreed that from the 2023 TAC year onwards, Parties would allocate 80.23% of the whiting TAC to ICES subarea 4, and 19.77% to ICES Division 7.d. The Parties used as the basis for this calculation the mean between two different methodologies to set the new fixed allocation. The first methodology looked at a mean total catch split between 2017-2021 between subarea 4 and Division 7.d and the second used the mean actual TAC split over 2019-2023 (using, as the value for 2023, what the TAC split would have been, had the previous methodology been applied).
- 18.4 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Division 7.d (Eastern Channel) of 42,744 tonnes. This is an increase of 30% compared to 2022.
- 18.5 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 34,294 tonnes (80.23%), and the TAC for Division 7.d is 8,450 tonnes (19.77%).

19 Other shared stocks (not jointly managed)

- 19.1 The Delegations agreed during the fisheries consultations for 2021 that there are several stocks not covered in Table 1 that, based on their migration pattern, are shared stocks and consequently should be jointly managed. This includes inter alia hake, anglerfish and Norway pout.
- 19.2 The Delegations agreed during the fisheries consultations for 2022 to establish a Working Group of experts to collect and collate data on the distribution of hake in the Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, the Northern Bay of Biscay and adjacent waters. A representative from the Working Group presented their preliminary results. The Delegations took note of the progress in the work of the group and agreed to continue in 2023 the Terms of Reference of the Working Group as set out in Annex VII. The Working Group should finalise its report in time to be presented at the intersessional meeting.
- 19.3 The Delegations agreed during the fisheries consultations for 2022 to establish a Working Group of experts to collect data on Norway pout in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a (North Sea, Skagerrak, and Kattegat) and adjacent waters. The terms of reference for the Working Group are set out in Annex VIII. The Delegations noted that the group had been established and they looked forward to the finalisation of its report by 1 November 2023.
- 19.4 The Delegations agreed to establish a Working Group of experts to collect data on the distribution of Anglerfish species in Subarea 4 and 6, and in Division 3.a.

The terms of reference for the Working Group are set out in Annex VIII. The delegations agreed to meet in the first quarter of 2023 to begin the necessary preparatory work to deliver the actions set out in the terms of reference. The UK offered to host such a preparatory meeting.

20 **Catch information**

20.1 Catch information was submitted by all Parties and is included in Table 2. The Delegations agreed to continue to work together in 2023 to refine this process.

21 **Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures for joint stocks**

21.1 The Delegations noted that for a comprehensive management regime, efficient and trustworthy MCS measures are crucial, and that strategic and operative MCS cooperation between the inspections services of the Parties is a prerequisite to improve compliance and to achieve a level playing field. Hence, the Delegations welcomed initiatives to improve dialogue and exchange experience between the inspection services to increase the general understanding of the Parties' MCS regimes.

21.2 The Delegations also referred to the 'Stand Alone Agreement' signed November 2022 (Agreed Record of Conclusions of Fisheries Consultations between Norway, the European Union, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and the United Kingdom on Control Measures for Pelagic Stocks in the North East Atlantic) where the parties agreed to apply the arrangements outlined in that Agreed Record at the latest from 1 January 2026.

21.3 In the Agreed Record the Parties agreed to apply the Terms of Reference for a CS MCS WG for 2023 and 2024. The Delegations agreed that monitoring, control and surveillance of the joint stock North Sea herring is covered by any relevant measures concluded for the four species covered by the coastal State agreements.

21.4 The Delegations referred to the decision in 2018 by the EU and Norway to establish a Working Group on MCS of Fisheries on Joint Stocks in the North Sea (NS MCS WG) under the terms of reference outlined in Annex V. They also agreed the revised work plan for 2019-2024 outlined in Annex VI.

21.5 The Delegations noted the work of the NS MCS WG in 2022, including a meeting in Bergen on 5-6 April 2022 hosted by Norway, a Seminar for inspectors hosted by the EU and organised by the European Fisheries Control Agency, and some exchanges of inspectors between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

21.6 The European Union noted the need to clarify the procedures for some of the tasks of the working group.

22 **Electronic exchange of vessel data**

22.1 The Delegations noted the ongoing implementation in the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) of electronic exchange of vessel position data and fishing activity based on the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and electronic business (UN/CEFACT) Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (FLUX) International Standard.

22.2 The Delegations agreed to seek harmonised arrangements on an electronic notification and authorisation scheme and agreed to establish the Working Group of experts on Notification and Authorisation of Fishing Vessels outlined in Annex IX.

9 December 2022

For the European Union Delegation

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Conditions for fisheries by the parties in 2023

I. Joint stocks

1. The Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for the stocks mentioned in Table 1 for 2023 shall be as indicated in that table. If ICES make new scientific recommendations, the Parties will review these TACs.
2. The TACs referred to in paragraph 1 shall be divided between the Parties as indicated in Table 1.
3. Each Party shall inform the other Parties of allocations granted to a third country for fishing of the stocks referred to in Table 1.
4. The Parties shall supply each other with monthly catch statistics for fishing on the stocks referred to in Table 1 by their own vessels. Communication of these statistics for the preceding month shall take place at the latest on the last day of each month.

II. Fishery regulations

1. The Parties will inform each other of their respective fishery regulations applicable in the North Sea.
2. A Party intending to introduce or amend fishery regulations applicable to vessels of the other Parties shall duly inform the other Parties of such intentions.

Inter-annual quota flexibility

The inter-annual quota flexibility scheme applicable to the jointly managed stocks discussed during these consultations shall be terminated if:

- The spawning stock biomass is estimated to be below the precautionary reference point B_{pa} in the TAC year and the fishing mortality is estimated to be above the precautionary reference point F_{pa} in the intermediate year; or
- the SSB is estimated to be below B_{pa} in both the TAC year and the year thereafter.

Each Party may transfer unutilised quota from the TAC year to be caught in the following year. Each Party may transfer up to 10% of its total quota allocation. This quantity cannot be transferred further in subsequent years.

Each Party may authorise fishing by its vessels beyond its total quota allocation for the TAC year by up to 10%. The quantity fished beyond the allocated quota shall be deducted from the Party's allocation for the year after the TAC year.

The Delegations agreed that in order to ensure transparency in the operation of inter-annual quota flexibility, more detailed information on catch utilisation shall be exchanged.

To note, the TAC year is the year for which the agreed TAC applies, and the intermediate year is the year prior to the TAC year.

Seasonal area closures to protect spawning cod

The following areas in the table below will be closed for all gears excluding pelagic gears (purse seine and trawl), for the identified time period:

Time limited closures

No	Area name	Coordinates	Time period	Additional comment
1	Stanhope ground	60° 10N - 02° 00E 60° 10N - 02° 45E 60° 25N - 01° 45E 60° 25N - 02° 00E	01 January to 30 April	
2	Long Hole	59° 07.35N - 0° 31.04W 59° 03.60N - 0° 22.25W 58° 59.35N - 0° 17.85W 58° 56.00N - 0° 11.01W 58° 56.60N - 0° 08.85W 58° 59.86N - 0° 15.65W 59° 03.50N - 0° 20.00W 59° 08.15N - 0° 29.07W	01 January to 31 March	
3	Coral edge	58° 51.70N - 03° 26.70E 58° 40.66N - 03° 34.60E 58° 24 00N - 03° 12.40E 58° 24 00N - 02° 55.00E 58° 35 65N - 02° 56.30E	01 January to 28 February	
4	Papa Bank	59° 56N - 03° 08W 59° 56N - 02° 45W 59° 35N - 03° 15W 59° 35N - 03° 35W	01 January to 15 March	

No	Area name	Coordinates	Time period	Additional comment
5	Foula Deeps	60° 17.5N - 01° 45W 60° 11.0N - 01° 45W 60° 11.0N - 02° 10W 60° 20.0N - 02° 00W 60° 20.0N - 01° 50W	01 November to 31 December	
6	Egersund Bank	58° 07.40N - 04° 33.0E 57° 53.00N - 05° 12.0E 57° 40.00N - 05° 10.9E 57° 57.90N - 04° 31.9E	01 January to 31 March	(10 x 25 nm)
7	East of Fair Isle	59° 40N - 01° 23W 59° 40N - 01° 13W 59° 30N - 01° 20W 59° 10N - 01° 20W 59° 10N - 01° 28W 59° 30N - 01° 28W	01 January to 15 March	
8	West Bank	57° 15N - 05° 01E 56° 56N - 05° 00E 56° 56N - 06° 20E 57° 15N - 06° 20E	01 February to 15 March	(18 x 4 nm)
9	Revet	57° 28.43N - 08° 05.66E 57° 27.44N - 08° 07.20E 57° 51.77N - 09° 26.33E 57° 52.88N - 09° 25.00E	01 February to 15 March	(1.5 x 49 nm)
10	Rabarberen	57° 47.00N - 11° 04.00E 57° 43.00N - 11° 04.00E 57° 43.00N - 11° 09.00E 57° 47.00N - 11° 09.00E	01 February to 15 March	East of Skagen (2.7x4 nm)

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) of Fisheries on joint stocks from 2019 to 2024

The objective of the Working Group is to cooperate, exchange information and best practices related to control of joint stocks, in mutual interest of securing continued responsible fisheries and ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable exploitation of the marine living resources for which the Parties are responsible.

The scope of the Working Group is mainly fisheries for cod, haddock, saithe, whiting, plaice and herring in the North Sea.

The MCS Working Group should:

1. Compare existing inspection practices and guidelines with the view to recommend best practices for:
 - Sea inspections (e.g., gear, catch composition, discard ban/landing obligation).
 - Landing inspections.
2. Compare relevant topics with the view to, as appropriate, recommend best practices such as:
 - Weighing requirements, including sampling plans etc.,
 - Logbook, landings, sales documentation, and traceability requirements.
3. Conduct missions (exchange of inspectors) to identify inspection best practices, weighing and documentation practices as appropriate.
4. Consider the need and topics for training or workshops for inspectors taking advantage of other fora or meetings.
5. Exchange experience on other relevant issues such as discard ban/landing obligation, post landing inspections, procedures and practices, including as regards enforcement measures further to the identification of violations.
6. Exchange experience on existing risk assessment methods and consider the possibility to share relevant output data related to risk assessment (identified risks and risk handling).

In addition, the NS MCS WG should also focus on monitoring, inspection and surveillance for the control of the cod and cod-related fisheries in the North Sea to ensure compliance with technical measures and catch registration obligations.

If there are any other relevant issues, which the Working Group believes would result in a more efficient Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of fisheries in the North Sea, the Working Group could explore these as appropriate.

Tentative work plan for the MCS WG North Sea

Task	2019	2020 / 2021	2022	2023	2024
1. Sea Inspections	Compare	-	-	Recommend best practice	-
2. Landing inspections	Compare	-	-	Recommend best practice	-
3. Weighing requirements	-	-	Compare	Recommend best practice	-
4. Logbook, landing, sales data and traceability requirements	-	-	Compare	Recommend best practice	-
5. Training / Workshop as appropriate	Training TBD	Training TBD	Training TBD	Training TBD	Training TBD
6. Exchange inspectors / missions (as appropriate)	Missions TBD	Missions TBD	Missions TBD	Missions TBD	Missions TBD
7. Post Landing Inspections	-	-	Compare	Recommend best practice	-
8. Risk assessment	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic and tactical level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic and tactical level)

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Hake

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the distribution of hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in the Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, the Northern Bay of Biscay and adjacent waters.

The objective of the Working Group is to collect and collate information on the entire geographical distribution of all life stages of hake (Northern stock), based on internationally recognised data collection methods and on the distribution of catches from this stock.

The Working Group shall:

1. Present currently available fishery independent data on the geographical distribution on an annual survey basis for all life stages (biomass and abundance or their appropriate proxies) at the highest level of spatial resolution possible and coded by relevant ICES Areas and national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
2. Describe/Evaluate the quality, coverage and utility of the survey data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space, consistent with standards acceptable to the Working Group, including listing all the scientific surveys which are available for determining the distribution of the stock or which are carried out by the Parties.
3. For each coastal State, present total annual catch data by month and ICES statistical rectangle from 1987-2020, and by the respective zones of national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters as precisely as the data allow since 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
4. Describe the quality, coverage and utility of the catch data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space.
5. Compile the management measures, as provided by fisheries managers, adopted by the Parties for the stock, such as catch limitations and quota schemes (including quota uptake levels), as well as any management measures which would have an impact on such catch limitations.
6. Present a description of the fleet segments involved in the fisheries of the stock by each Party since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of scientific experts from the Coastal States. Managers will provide the Working Group with the necessary material to document the management measures.

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Norway pout

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the distribution of Norway pout (*Trisopterus esmarkii*) in Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Division 3.a (Skagerrak and Kattegat) and adjacent waters.

The objective of the Working Group is to collect and collate information on the entire geographical distribution of all life stages of Norway pout, based on internationally recognised data collection methods and on the distribution of catches from this stock.

The Working Group shall:

1. Present currently available fishery independent data on the geographical distribution on an annual survey basis for all life stages (biomass and abundance or their appropriate proxies) by relevant ICES Areas and national fisheries jurisdiction since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
2. Describe/Evaluate the quality, coverage and utility of the survey data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space, consistent with standards acceptable to the Working Group, including listing all the scientific surveys which are available for determining the distribution of the stock or which are carried out by the Parties.
3. For each coastal State, present total annual catch data by month and ICES statistical rectangle from 1987-2021, and by the respective zones of national fisheries jurisdiction as precisely as the data allow since 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
4. Describe the quality, coverage and utility of the catch data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space.
5. Compile the management measures, as provided by fisheries managers, adopted by the Parties for the stock, such as catch limitations and quota schemes (including quota uptake levels), as well as any management measures which would have an impact on such catch limitations.
6. Present a description of the fleet segments involved in the fisheries of the stock by each Party since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of scientific experts from the Coastal States. Managers will provide the Working Group with the necessary material to document the management measures.

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Anglerfish

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the distribution of Anglerfish (*Lophius budegassa*, *Lophius piscatorius*) in subareas 4 and 6, and in Division 3.a (North Sea, Rockall and West of Scotland, Skagerrak and Kattegat).

The objective of the Working Group is to collect and collate information on the entire geographical distribution of all life stages of the two species of Anglerfish, based on internationally recognised data collection methods and on the distribution of catches from this stock.

The Working Group shall:

1. Present currently available fishery independent data on the geographical distribution on an annual survey basis for all life stages (biomass and abundance or their appropriate proxies) at the highest level of spatial resolution possible and coded by relevant ICES Areas and national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
2. Describe/Evaluate the quality, coverage and utility of the survey data for the purposes of assessing the distribution and migration of the stock in time and space, consistent with standards acceptable to the Working Group, including listing all the scientific surveys which are available for determining the distribution of the stock or which are carried out by the Parties.
3. For each coastal State, present total annual catch data by ICES statistical rectangle from 1987-2021, and by the respective zones of national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters as precisely as the data allow since 1987 or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
4. Describe the quality, coverage and utility of the catch data and fishing effort data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space.
5. Compile the management measures, as provided by fisheries managers, adopted by the Parties for the stock, such as catch limitations and quota schemes (including quota uptake levels), as well as any management measures which would have an impact on such catch limitations.
6. Present a description of the fleet segments involved in the fisheries of the stock by each Party since year 1987 or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of scientific experts from the Coastal States. Managers will provide the Working Group with the necessary material to document the management measures.

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on notification and authorisation of fishing vessels for 2023

The Delegations agreed that the Working Group on Notification and Authorisation of fishing vessels should meet before 31 May 2023 under the Terms of Reference described below. After that, the Working Group should meet as appropriate.

The Working Group shall carry out a scoping exercise to seek harmonisation of technical arrangements, procedures and specifications based on the UN/FLUX standard for the exchange between the Parties on how to notify vessels, request and grant fishing authorisations/licences, as well as any other domain identified by the Working Group during the scoping exercise.

The Working Group should submit its report to the Parties well in advance of the annual consultations for 2023.

Joint request to ICES to advise on a long-term management plan for North Sea herring autumn spawners in North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat and eastern English Channel

The European Union, Norway, and the United Kingdom jointly request ICES to advise on the long-term management strategies on North Sea autumn spawners herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d, (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel). A request is provided below.

ICES is requested to identify appropriate precautionary combinations in the format of Tables given in its response to the EU, Norway and the United Kingdom request to ICES to evaluate a multi-annual management strategy for herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d, autumn spawners (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel) (her.27.3a47d), using:

- A harvest control rule with a fishing mortality equal to the target F when SSB is at or above $B_{trigger}$
In the case that the SSB is forecast to be less than $B_{trigger}$ at spawning time in the year for which the TAC is to be set, the TAC shall be fixed consistently with a fishing mortality that is given by: $F = F_{target} * SSB / B_{trigger}$
- A range of $B_{trigger}$ from 800 000 to 1 700 000 tonnes with a range of target F s up to F_{Lim}
- For the combinations above explore the following exploitation pattern scenarios:
 1. Recent exploitation pattern (averaged over 2012-2021).
 2. A historic exploitation pattern (averaged over 1998-2007).
 3. Ranges of assumptions for values of F_{0-1} that vary between 0-0.1 independent from recent exploitation patterns for older fish (F_{2+}).
 4. The recent exploitation pattern with $F_{0-1}=0$ from above contrasted with exploitation patterns moved to one year older and one year younger fish (three scenarios).

Long term goals:

- Maximise yield
- Minimising the risk of falling below B_{lim}
- Achieve stability of catches

All alternatives should be evaluated with and without a constraint on the inter-annual variation of TAC . When the rules would lead to a TAC , which deviates by more than 20% below or 25% above the TAC of the preceding year, the Parties shall fix a TAC

that is respectively no more than 20% less or 25% more than the TAC of the preceding year. The TAC constraint shall not apply if the SSB at spawning time in the year for which the TAC is to be set is less or equal to B_{trigger} .

The constraint mechanism shall be tested separately from and in combination with 10% banking and borrowing mechanism. Banking and borrowing should be suspended when SSB is below B_{trigger} .

Evaluation and performance criteria

Each alternative shall be assessed in relation to how it performs in the short term (5 years), medium term (next 10 years) and long term (next 25 years) in relation to:

- $_Average$ SSB
- $_Average$ yield
- $_Indicator$ for year to year variability in SSB and yield
- $_Risk$ of SSB falling below B_{lim}

TABLE 1

2023 Quotas for jointly managed shared stocks in the North Sea

Species	ICES area	TAC	Sharing					
			Norway		EU		UK	
			%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes
Cod	4	21,652	17.00	3,681	37.36	8,089	45.64	9,882
Haddock	4	58,402	23.00	13,432	13.20	7,709	63.80	37,261
Saithe	4, 3.a	53,374	52.00	27,755	36.41	19,433	11.59	6,186
Whiting	4	34,294	10.00	3,429	27.57	9,455	62.43	21,410
Plaice	4	132,922	7.00	9,305	66.53	88,433	26.47	35,184
Herring	4, 7.d	396,556	29.00	115,001	51.40	203,830	19.60	77,725

TABLE 2

2021 catch statistics for jointly managed shared stocks in the North Sea

Species	ICES area	EU catches				Norway catches				UK catches			
		Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total
		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK	
Cod	4	1,130	2,222	890	4,242	12	1,651	-	1,663	15		6,426	6,441
Haddock	4	850	624	1,337	2,811	2	2,215	-	2,217	5		17,328	17,333
Saithe	4, 3a	933	5,356	11,334	17,622	14	20,446	-	20,460	0		8,045	8,045
Whiting	4	1,011	99	784	1,893	-	1,098	-	1,098	50		11,572	11,622
Plaice	4	17,442	3,595	2,336	23,373	-	24	-	24	2,628		2,290	4,918
Herring	4, 7d	27,551	869	148,718	177,138	-	95,059	-	95,059	3	-	69,582	69,585

TABLE 3

2022 Provisional catch statistics for jointly managed shared stocks in the North Sea

Species	ICES area	EU catches ¹				Norway catches ²				UK catches ³			
		Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total
		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK	
Cod	4	673	1,869	535	3,077	15	995	1,128	2,138	17	1,202	4,442	5,661
Haddock	4	961	633	1,503	3,098	-	2,208	296	2,504	120	3,290	18,920	22,330
Saithe	4, 3a	666	3,286	10,757	14,709	47	13,059	7,056	20,162	2	1,041	4,831	5,873
Whiting	4	645	121	616	1,382	-	12	897	909	76	706	8,702	9,484
Plaice	4	10,455	2,616	1,132	14,203	-	15	-	15	2,424	750	960	4,134
Herring	4, 7d	3,249	2,699	166,608	172,556	-	120,857	11,496	132,353	132		77,806	77,938

¹ January – October 2022

² January – November 2022

³ January – 22 November 2022