

EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Fifth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries

Friday 21 October 2022

9am to 12:30pm BST / 10am to 13:30pm CEST

London and virtual (UK host)

Minutes of the meeting

Item 1: Opening of the Specialised Committee and adoption of the agenda

The UK, as host, welcomed both Delegations to the fifth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF). The Parties exchanged opening remarks, in which both Parties recognised the good progress achieved this year under the SCF. The UK wished to build on the increased momentum this year, and to strive at the meeting to close agenda items where possible or to clearly identify the outstanding issues for 2023. The EU agreed and noted the importance of the ongoing dialogue between the Parties for the benefit of both respective fleets. The Parties adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting.

Item 2: Celtic Sea technical measures

The Parties recognised the importance of establishing effective technical measures in the Celtic Sea. It was noted that good progress has been made and that this momentum should be maintained, including agreeing a detailed plan for the data collation exercise as soon as possible.

Item 3: Deep sea stocks

Roundnose grenadier

The Parties agreed on the two tabled draft terms of reference to ICES, one a special advisory request on stock characterisation and the other a non-recurrent technical service request on approaches to apportioning the stock advice into the two TAC management areas. The EU will draft a joint letter to ICES on the special advisory request and will share it for the UK to review. The UK will do the same for the non-recurrent technical service request. Both Parties committed to review the advice arising from these requests in 2023 within the SCF, and to take appropriate action.

Item 4: Deep sea stocks

Western red seabream

The EU provided an initial response to the UK's questions on the EU's notified delegated act concerning specific technical measures for red seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) in ICES subareas 6 to 8. Both Parties reaffirmed their commitment to continue discussing the management of this stock in the SCF. The EU informed it would be in a position to inform the SCF regarding the review of the red seabream technical measures in autumn 2023.

Item 5: Review of footnotes

The Parties welcomed the opportunity to start planning this work that both Parties consider should commence as a priority at the start of 2023. The planning of the work, both in terms of substance and expected timelines, should commence before the end of the year or in early January 2023 at the latest. This should then, as appropriate, be supported by an exchange of information on the Parties' use of the footnotes as part of the review.

Item 6: Protocol for notifications under Article 496(3) of the TCA

Both Parties noted the importance of agreeing a protocol for the exchange of notifications. The EU will prepare a draft discussion paper to share with the UK and review together in early 2023.

Item 7: Mechanism for in-year quota swaps

The Parties recalled their earlier commitment in the SCF meeting of 27 April to reflect together on and take forward the appropriate approach to formalising the mechanism for in-year quota swaps. They agreed to work together to identify and agree the best approach to this as soon as possible.

The Parties were of the shared view that the interim arrangements for quota swaps, as previously agreed between the Parties for 2021 and 2022 had operated effectively. The Parties will consider, in the context of the forthcoming annual fisheries consultations, to continue to operate quota swaps in this manner in 2023 pending finalisation of the above mentioned work.

Item 8: Update on fisheries management measures

The EU provided a brief update on the Delegated Regulation under development concerning conservation measures in certain North Sea Natura 2000 sites (Sylter Aussenriff, Borkum-Riffgrund, Doggerbank and Östliche Deutsche Bucht, and in Klaverbank, Friese Front and Centrale Oestergronden), the Delegated Regulations concerning landing obligation exceptions in the North Sea and North Western Waters, as well as the recent Implementing Regulation protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems in the north-east Atlantic.

The UK provided a brief update on its recent byelaws concerning four Marine Protected Area, its call for evidence on 13 MPAs, its recent consultation on five candidate HPMA sites and on the development of Fisheries Management Plans. The Parties exchanged information on these initiatives.

Item 9: Guidelines for setting provisional TACs for Special Stocks

Both Parties noted productive discussions on this topic and agreed to continue technical discussions to develop guidelines. The Parties concluded that no formal agreement on the guidelines was possible ahead of this year's consultations.

Item 10: Mixed fisheries science terms of reference

The Parties agreed on the draft terms of reference tabled by the UK. The UK will draft a joint letter to ICES and will share it for the EU to review before submitting to ICES. The Parties also recognised the need to develop mixed fisheries science for sea basins not currently covered in the ICES scenarios.

Item 11: Skates and rays

An update of the technical meeting on 18 October between the Parties was provided. This will provide context to inform as far as possible the upcoming consultations on the setting of the group TACs in line with the scientific advice for 2023, taking into account the group nature of these TACs.

Item 12: Update on ICES requests

Both Parties noted the significant progress made on joint requests to ICES this year, reflecting the collaborative working between the Parties during the course of the year. With the requests concluded today, a total of nine joint requests have been concluded between the Parties this year, in fulfilment of commitments made in the TCA and in the Written Records of both the 2021 and 2022 EU-UK Annual Consultations:

- turbot and brill, and lemon sole and witch
- plaice (7de)
- whiting (Celtic Sea)
- seabass allocation tool
- stocks with no advice (Celtic Sea saithe, and Western Channel and Bristol Channel herring)
- discard survivability exemptions
- roundnose grenadier special advisory request
- roundnose grenadier non-recurrent request
- Mixed Fisheries science

The Parties committed to discuss these topics in the SCF once ICES provides advice for these requests.

Item 13: Multi-year strategies for shared non-quota stocks

The Parties welcomed recent progress on the development of multi-year strategies for shared non-quota stocks, and a paper setting out a framework on the development of individual multi-year strategies. Development of an initial multi-year strategy for Channel king scallops will commence from the beginning of 2023.

Item 14: Data exchange

Both Parties acknowledged recent discussions on improving the robustness of NQS data exchanges and noted that there are several remaining issues to be resolved as soon as possible.

Item 15: Timing of SCF and WG meetings in 2023

Both Parties noted the value of advanced planning for scheduling the SCF and its Working Group and committed to work together over the remainder of the year or early in 2023 to agree a timetable for SCF and Working Group meetings next year.

Item 16: Any Other Business (AOB)

No items were raised.

Item 17: Closure

[Approved by the Joint Secretariat of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries]

Annex 1: List of participants in the fifth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries

EU delegation (35)

- EU Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries
- EU Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries' Working Group on Fisheries
- European Commission Officials
- European External Action Service Official
- Delegation of the European Union to the UK Official
- Representatives of EU Member States

UK delegation (49)

- UK Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries
- UK Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries' Working Group on Fisheries
- UK Government Officials from DEFRA and Cabinet Office
- UK Government DEFRA Legal Advisors
- Scottish Government Officials
- Northern Ireland Executive Officials
- Welsh Government Officials
- Isle of Man Government Officials
- Government of Jersey Officials
- States of Guernsey Officials
- Marine Management Organisation Officials
- UK Mission to the European Union Officials