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[REDACTED]
By email: [REDACTED]

Our ref: EIR2025/13500
18 July 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: EU fishing rights

Thank you for your request for information of 20 June 2025 about EU fishing rights. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

All analysis of the economic cost of the decision taken on 19th June 2025 in the Fisheries subcommittee of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation agreement to extend EU fishing rights in UK waters from 2026 to 2038.

At the UK-EU summit on 19 June 2025 a new fisheries access agreement was announced to follow the end of the adjustment period under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and to last for 12 years. As the new arrangements provide for full access at levels consistent with those levels provided for during the fisheries adjustment period, there are no identified annual economic impacts relative to the years 2021-2025.

Defra undertook analysis on the impact of changing EU fishing rights in UK waters. Supporting information is provided in the following documents:

- Annex C, an extract of an annex to a submission which was sent to Defra's Secretary of State and Minister Zeichner on 19 February 2025. Only the information relevant to your request has been extracted. The information summarises EU activity in UK waters and the potential economic impacts of reducing EU vessels access to UK waters.
- Annex D, slides produced by Defra analysts in February 2025. The slides include summarised data on EU fishing activity in UK waters and a cost benefit analysis of various EU fishing rights in UK waters, relative to the years 2021-2025. These were used to inform the information presented in Annex C.

- Annex E, the Marine Management Organisation's best estimate figures to Defra's queries on EU vessels in the UK 6-12 nautical mile zone. The note includes all the caveats and assumptions made in producing the estimates. These were used to inform the information presented in Annex D.
- Annex F, which is the covering email to Annex E. It summarises the key points from the data, as well as the key caveats.

After careful consideration we have decided that the names and contact details of junior staff in the Annexes should be withheld under regulations 12(3) and 13(1) and (2A) of the EIRs as the information constitutes personal data relating to persons other than you. These regulations exempt personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would breach any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We consider that disclosure of this information is likely to breach the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner. Disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data because the junior staff involved would not reasonably expect their names, roles and contact details to be disclosed in relation to this request for information, and equally the senior members of staff would not reasonably expect their contact details to be disclosed in relation to this request.

We have also decided that some of the information in Annex D should be withheld under the exception at regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to material which, if released, would adversely affect international relations. The exception is engaged in this instance as it relates to the disclosure of matters concerning negotiations with international bodies.

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. In considering the exception we have also applied a presumption in favour of disclosure, as required by regulation 12(2) of the EIRs.

Regulation 12(5)(a) – International Relations

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of the information as it would provide transparency to the public on our work with the EU in relation to fishing.

However, on the other hand, there is a stronger public interest in withholding the information where release of this information would undermine our ability to engage and work with international bodies in the future. In addition, releasing this information could affect the progress of discussions with international bodies in relation to fishing, significantly hampering the UK's ability to protect and promote its interests. There is an overwhelming public interest in not releasing information that could allow the government's negotiating strategies to be understood or inferred. There is also a strong public interest in protecting information which may relate to, or inform, the government's negotiating positions. The public interest in openness of government is therefore outweighed by the substantial interest in the government being able to successfully pursue the UK's national interests abroad.

Therefore, we have concluded that in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld.

Information disclosed in response to this EIRs request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Team

InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Vanessa Drury Head of Information Rights via email at InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk and they will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted using the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>