



**Tithe an
Oireachtais**
**Houses of the
Oireachtas**

Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Political Contribution – COM(2015)559: Proposal for a Council Regulation fixing for 2016 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union vessels, in certain non-Union waters.

December 2015

An Comhchoiste um Thalmhaíocht, Bia agus Muir

An Cion Polaitiúil – COM (2015) 559: Togra le haghaidh Rialachán ón gComhairle lena socraítear na deiseanna iascaireachta don bhliain 2016 le haghaidh stoic éisc áirithe agus le haghaidh grúpaí áirithe de stoic éisc, is infheidhme in uiscí an Aontais agus, do shoithí an Aontais, in uiscí áirithe neamh-Aontais.

Nollaig 2015

Political Contribution – COM (2015) 559: Proposal for a Council Regulation fixing for 2016 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union vessels, in certain non-Union waters

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine (the Joint Committee) scrutinised COM (2015) 559 and met with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on 8 December 2015 to discuss the proposal in advance of the AGRIFISH meetings on 14 and 15 December 2015. Following this discussion, the Committee agreed to submit this Political Contribution on the proposal.

The Committee has closely been following developments in the fishing sector in 2015 and has a number of observations on the fishing proposals for 2016:

1. The Joint Committee is disappointed that the draft fishing quotas are not published earlier. A longer lead-in time to the final negotiations in December would allow the Committee to scrutinise the proposals in greater detail and with a wider array of stakeholders.
2. The Joint Committee believes that the cuts to Ireland's quota in the Celtic Sea of monkfish by 12%, cod by 30%, and haddock by 27% are too severe and will result in significant job losses in Ireland. Additionally, ancillary jobs to the fishing sector may in turn be lost. The Committee estimates that around 300 jobs could be lost if the quotas as proposed are finalised.
3. While the Joint Committee acknowledges the need to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) by 2020, it is concerned that significant cuts in quota for Ireland to achieve MSY will cause severe damage to coastal communities both socially and economically.
4. The Joint Committee is concerned that smaller fishing enterprises will lose out to larger, factory ships when the quotas come into force next year. The Committee calls on the European Commission to take special action to ensure that smaller fishing operations are protected in 2016 by assigning a specific quota only for smaller fishing operations.
5. The Joint Committee calls on the European Commission to ensure that all fishing vessels entering Irish waters to fish are required to have their quota checked by the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES) prior to starting fishing in Irish waters.
6. The Joint Committee calls on the European Commission to make it compulsory for larger freezer vessels to carry on board independent fisheries monitoring personnel.

7. The Joint Committee is concerned that each year quotas for Ireland are declining, and calls on the European Commission to assist the Irish fishing industry in the long-term.

The Joint Committee wishes for its views to be taken into account and looks forward to the response to its observations from the European Commission.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Doyle", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Doyle T.D.

Chairman

16 December 2015