

Question for written answer E-003034/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR), Sander Smit (PPE), Ton Diepeveen (Pfe)

Subject: Update on rules for implementation of real-time closures in the North Sea and Skagerrak

Implementing Regulation 724/2010 sets trigger catch levels for undersized cod, haddock, saithe and whiting. This requires real-time closures to be established for the North Sea and Skagerrak. According to Article 51(2) of Regulation 1224/2009, these trigger catch levels are to be calculated on the basis of a sampling methodology adopted by the Commission; they are expressed as a percentage or weight of a particular species compared to the total catch in a haul of the fish concerned. The minimum sample size is 200 kg (Annex I, point 3). This implementing regulation, originally intended to protect vulnerable fish stocks, dates back to 2010 and does not sufficiently take into account current developments in fish stocks. Due to the sharp increase in whiting and haddock, important fishing areas are being closed more frequently. This results in economic harm and forces fishers to move to other areas, causing increased fishing pressure in those areas.

1. Does the Commission intend to update the minimum sample size and weight percentages in Implementing Regulation 724/2010 on the basis of the latest scientific data, and also examine the possibility of removing whiting and haddock from the implementing regulation?
2. Is the Commission prepared to examine whether exceptions can be made for fishing techniques that use demonstrable selectivity devices that minimise the by-catch of the aforementioned species, such as shrimp fishing?

Submitted: 18.12.2024