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E-003929/2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(9.1.2026)

The Commission shares the deep concern about the state of key North-East Atlantic pelagic stocks, particularly mackerel, and the serious threats this poses not only to the sustainability of these fisheries but also to the livelihoods of thousands of fishers and coastal communities across the EU.

Unilateral quota increases by certain coastal States continue to push mackerel catches above scientifically advised levels in a situation where the EU maintains a responsible and stable fishing level in compliance with its international obligations. The arrangement signed on 15 December 2025 by the United Kingdom, Norway, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands risks exacerbating the state of the stock, considering that it sets a total allowable catch which is 72% higher than the headline advice issued by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) for 2026.

The Commission remains committed to work towards the objective of agreeing on the total allowable catch for 2026, a comprehensive sharing arrangement and other long term management measures while assessing the compatibility of recent developments with international law. The Commission will continue to address this matter with the other Parties, while working closely with Member States and the sector to identify constructive and sustainable approaches protecting the stocks and supporting their long-term rebuilding.

The Commission is committed to direct engagement with all stakeholders, and the recent visit of the Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans to Irish coastal communities is but one example of that commitment.