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Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(7.3.2025)

While quota shares of jointly managed stocks are stable from this year onwards, as established by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement¹ (TCA) reciprocal access to waters is in principle subject to annual consultations after July 2026. Any such annual consultations must be conducted in good faith and with the objective to ensure a mutually satisfactory balance between the interests of both Parties and should normally result in access being provided at a level reasonably commensurate with each Party's share of the Total Allowable Catches (TACs).

The EU and the United Kingdom have a mutual interest in cooperating in fisheries, working closely within the Specialised Committee on Fisheries and having successfully agreed on annual basis on TACs for jointly managed stocks since 2021. Though access adds a further element to this, in the event of a withdrawal or suspension of access by one Party after July 2026, the relevant provisions of the TCA would apply. Either Party may take compensatory measures commensurate to the economic and societal impact of the change in the level and conditions of access to waters. Such measures may include suspending access to waters and the preferential tariff treatment granted to fisheries products under the TCA.

The Fisheries Heading is an important element of the balanced commitments under the TCA. In the mission letter of the Commissioner responsible for fisheries and oceans², the President of the Commission highlights the importance of fairness and a level playing field for EU operators, while stressing the need to work towards securing stable and predictable access to waters. The Commission is fully committed to defending the EU interests, to ensure long-term stability beyond July 2026.

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2021.149.01.0010.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2021%3A149%3ATO
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² https://commission.europa.eu/document/028ce7d5-e328-4416-8f0d-35c8884acaa8_en