



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost Regions
The Director

Brussels,
MARE/C1/KH/dsb/Ares(2022)

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for the interest you have expressed in the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. Please rest assured that the Commission takes your concern very seriously.

The importance of the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems is evident in the Deep-Sea Access Regulation¹, which lists preventing significant adverse impacts on vulnerable ecosystems within the framework of deep-sea fishing as one of its core objectives. The regulation also includes measures aiming at reducing encounters with vulnerable marine ecosystems. Furthermore, it empowers the European Commission to adopt implementing acts determining the existing deep-sea fishing areas and establishing a list of areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to occur or are likely to occur. The implementing acts would ensure that vessels fishing for deep-sea stocks restrict their fishing to existing deep-sea fishing areas and would protect vulnerable marine ecosystems by closing zones in EU deep waters to all bottom gears where vulnerable marine ecosystems occur, or are likely to occur.

The draft Commission proposal for such an implementing act was submitted to the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture on 28 June, composed of representatives of each EU Member State. Following the committee vote, the European Commission is allowed to adopt the measure.

Prior to the adoption, however, the European Commission has to notify the draft measures to the United Kingdom in line with the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This notification has taken place and the United Kingdom was given two months until the beginning of September 2022 to provide comments or seek clarification.

Following this notification, the European Commission has in the meanwhile adopted this Implementing Act on 15 September.

I hope that I was able to clarify the matter for you.

Yours sincerely,

Fabrizio DONATELLA
Director

¹ REGULATION (EU) 2016/2336 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 December 2016 establishing specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks in the north-east Atlantic and provisions for fishing in international waters of the north-east Atlantic and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002