

EU fishermen call on von der Leyen to protect EU fishing rights from Norway

The sector requests the full cod quota allocation of 24,600 tons in the Fisheries Council of 21-22 March 2022

- press release -

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In a letter sent today by all EU fishing companies active in the cod fishery in the Barents Sea represented by Europêche and ENAFQ, EU fishermen denounced once again the decision taken by Norway to unlawfully appropriate the long-held EU cod quota in Svalbard. Due to the disagreement between the two parties, the EU had to provisionally allocate a partial cod quota to European vessels for 2022. This reduced quota of 4,500 tons will expire at the end of March and a new quota allocation has to be issued. Given the lack of real progress in the bilateral negotiations, the sector calls on von der Leyen to send a clear sign of determination and decide for a unilateral allocation of the full amount that historically corresponds to the EU fleet (19,636 tons), plus 4,964 tons of cod Norway owes from 2021.

For 14 months the EU has been trying to reverse a crisis unilaterally opened by Norway back in December 2020. According to the sector, Norway's attitude illicitly grabbing EU quota shows not only flagrant disdain for international law but also a blatant disrespect for the EU as a partner and an ally.

Diek Parlevliet, President of ENAFQ, declared: *"We fail to understand why Norway can take such an action to attack the rights of the EU in such a blatant manner. We call on our political leadership to send an effective signal of determination to the Norwegian authorities. For that purpose, the EU must fully allocate the quota rights of cod in the Barents Sea. This amount to 24,600 tons, including the 4,964 tons withheld from the EU fleet in 2021. This EU decision should come with the corresponding mechanisms that will ensure that this quota can be properly handled until the situation with Norway is resolved."*

The sector reminds that Norway exports to the EU over 1.3 billion Euro annually in fish products, mostly tariff free, and they have continued to do so. The quantity of quota withheld from the EU only represents 1% of the total Barents Sea cod TAC, and 0.5% of the quota available to Norway, but it amounts to 25% of the EU quota. Also relevant is to point out that half of the withheld quota would automatically be transferred to the Russian Federation as per their bilateral agreements. This was the case in 2021 and it could be the case in 2022 if the situation persists.

Javier Garat, President of Europêche, concluded: *"The action of Norway is not innocent and clearly represents a violation of International Law. It also poses intriguing questions against the background of the Russian aggression against Ukraine since, only a few days ago, the Norwegian Minister of Fisheries stated that Norway is committed to continue its full collaboration with Russia in fisheries management and trade. This means that Russian cod landed, processed and*



sold in Norway can continue to be exported as Norwegian product to the EU. While the US and the UK are respectively closing and restricting its market to Russian seafood products, Norway seems to go in the opposite direction.”

The sector argues that if no seafood related trade actions against Norway is adopted by the EU, the only alternative is to decide for a unilateral allocation of the full amount that the Treaty of Paris and the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement determine for the EU fleet. The fleet calls upon EU decision-makers to take this decision in the Fisheries Council of 21-22 March 2022.

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