Agreed Record of Fisheries Consultations on 21 May 2025 between the European Union, Norway, and the United Kingdom

21 May 2025

1. A European Union Delegation, headed by Mael LE DRAST, a Norwegian Delegation, headed by Ann Kristin WESTBERG, and a United Kingdom Delegation, headed by Imogen CESSFORD, met in London on 21 May to consult on mutual fisheries relations for sprat in International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Division 3a, Subarea 4 and Division 2a for the fishing season from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

2. The Delegations agreed to recommend to their respective authorities the following fishery arrangements for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, as outlined in this Agreed Record. Accordingly, where this Agreed Record refers to the Delegations (or the Parties) having agreed on a matter, it should be read as an agreement to recommend to the Delegations' respective authorities to implement the arrangements in this Agreed Record.

3. The Delegations agreed to rollover the method to distribute the ICES single stock advice, which results in an allocation of 18.3% of the overall advice as the basis for setting the TAC for the Skagerrak/Kattegat.

4. The United Kingdom Delegation recalled that it had not been party to that 2020 decision on allocation. The UK noted its preference for using an allocation method which more accurately reflects the spatial distribution of the resource but noted that this had not been adopted in advance of setting the TAC in 2025.

5. The Norwegian Delegation agreed with the UK Delegation that, as a principle, allocation methods should reflect the spatial distribution of fish stocks.

6. The European Union Delegation recalled its general position that allocation methods should continue to be based on historic fishing rights.

7. The Delegations noted that ICES released the advice on sprat in Division 3a and Subarea 4 (Skagerrak, Kattegat and North Sea) on 30 April 2025. Based on its Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) approach, ICES advises that catches in the Skagerrak, Kattegat and North Sea for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 should be no more than 236 114 tonnes. This represents an increase in 214% compared to advice for the 2024/2025 fishing season.

8. The Delegations noted the ecological significance of forage fish species and that their function and role should be considered when setting fishing opportunities, guided by the best available scientific advice.

9. The Delegations agreed to apply a split of the TAC between the Skagerrak and Kattegat and the North Sea which would allocate 18.3% of the TAC to the Skagerrak and Kattegat.

10. The Delegations consequently agreed to establish a TAC for sprat in ICES Division 3.a (Skagerrak and Kattegat) of 43 209 tonnes and in ICES Subarea 4 of 192 905 tonnes for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

11. The European Union Delegation notified other Delegations of its intention to rollover the provisions allowing for the transfer of EU quotas from waters of ICES division 3a to United Kingdom and European Union waters of division 2a and subarea 4, as laid out in Annex 1, Table 4 of the Written Record of fisheries consultations between the United Kingdom and the European Union for 2025, signed on 6 December 2024.

12. The Delegations agreed to work to increase the quality of the scientific advice for sprat in ICES Division 3a and Subarea 4, both in the short and longer term. For the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, should surveys undertaken later in 2025 indicate that there may be a significant change in the stock abundance, Delegations will consult further ahead of the annual consultations for 2026 to 2027.

21 May 2025

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For the European Union Delegation

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