



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
FISH PRODUCERS ORGANISATIONS



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

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PRESS RELEASE

EU fishermen strongly reject Norway's unilateral mackerel quota grab and call for immediate EU action

The EU pelagic fishing industry, organized under the banners of EAPO and Européche, strongly rejects the decision made public yesterday by the Norwegian government to unilaterally increase Norway's share in the mackerel fishery by 55% and is calling on the EU to take immediate action by whatever means to stop it.

Today, Norway decided to go its own way on mackerel by deciding to increase its quota share by 55% from 191,843 tonnes to 298,299 tonnes. The mackerel stock is highly migratory and widely distributed passing through the waters of several coastal states in the Northeast Atlantic. Since 2014, EU, Norway and Faroe Islands have managed to agree on a joint sharing and management arrangement. Unfortunately, Iceland, Russia and Greenland have never been part of this arrangement.

Gerard van Balsfoort, chair of the EU pelagic industry, comments: *"Norway's unilateral increase by 55% of its share in the Northeast Atlantic mackerel fishery is a new low in our fisheries relations and totally undermines the effective management of our shared and widely distributed pelagic stocks. The EU should seriously consider to use its power as the world's largest import market for seafood to take action to stop such reckless and irresponsible behaviour by Norway"*.

Since 1 January this year, the UK has left the EU and became a new and independent coastal state. Everybody knew that this would create new uncertainties for all players in the Northeast Atlantic as the UK had to establish new fisheries relationships with the other coastal states, among them Norway. Until now it has not been possible for the UK to reach a fisheries agreement for 2021 with its direct neighbours Faroe Islands, Norway and the EU. UK's

negotiations with Faroe Islands and Norway have now officially been terminated without an agreement, while negotiations between the UK and EU are still ongoing.

Gerard van Balsfoort concludes that *“it is extremely disappointing that Norway, that markets itself and its seafood products worldwide as the nation with the most prudent and responsible fisheries management system, now has chosen to act in such an irresponsible manner. It seems that Norway has left the path of constructive collaboration with other coastal states. The first signal of this was given already around Christmas last year when Norway unilaterally decided to unlawfully grab part of the Svalbard cod quota allocated to the EU for its own benefit”*.

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