

Ministry of Agriculture and Food
78, rue de Varenne
75349 Paris
France

Rue du Trône 60
3ème étage
1050 Bruxelles
Belgique

+32 (0)2 808 34 65
info@clientearth.org
www.clientearth.org

5 December 2019

Subject: Proactive publication of documents relating to 2020 fishing opportunities by the Council of the EU

Dear Didier Guillaume,

We call on your government to urge the Council of the EU to publish the documents related to the adoption of the 2020 Total Allowable Catches (TACs) in the Northeast Atlantic.

The European Ombudsman recently issued a call to action to the Council regarding transparency in the decision-making process leading to the adoption of Total Allowable Catches (TACs) (case 640/2019/FP). Specifically, she recommended that:

"The Council should proactively make public documents related to the adoption of the TAC Regulation at the time they are circulated to Member States or as soon as possible thereafter".

As you know, the negotiations on the Total Allowable Catches in the Northeast Atlantic for 2020 are ongoing in the Council's preparatory bodies. These negotiations are taking place within the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy and, in particular, the 2020 maximum sustainable yield deadline.

Accordingly, the TACs for 2020 are instrumental to achieving the EU's commitment to sustainable fisheries next year and to setting a precedent for every year thereafter. It is therefore more important than ever that all stakeholders - including EU citizens - can exercise their right to participate in the decision-making process leading to the adoption of the 2020 fishing quotas. However, the Ombudsman's findings confirm that past processes leading to the adoption of fishing opportunities have been neither transparent nor participatory. Indeed, environmental organisations did not have timely access to the various options and positions that were being discussed; and the relevant documents were systematically classified as LIMITE.

In this critical context, we have written to the Council to request the implementation of the Ombudsman's recommendation as a matter of urgency. In addition, we are writing to request

that France upholds the EU's commitment to transparency by urging the Council to **make Member States' positions on the Northeast Atlantic negotiations (the so-called "bible" document) publicly available on its documents register, duly tagged with inter-institutional code 2019/0235 (NLE), at the time that it is circulated to Member States.**

We thank you for your kind consideration and remain at your disposition should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Thornton'.

James Thornton
Chief Executive Officer, ClientEarth

CC to Timothée Truelle: timothee.truelle@diplomatie.gouv.fr