AT A GLANCE

Requested by the PECH Committee

Study in Focus

Impacts of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement on fisheries and aquaculture in the EU: Fishing opportunities aspects

See the full study

The **Common Fisheries Policy** aims at achieving sustainable exploitation of marine resources. One of the main tools of this policy is the annual identification of the **Total Allowable Catches (TACs)**, which are the annually fixed catch limits for most of commercial stocks. The TACs are divided among the EU Member States according to an agreed key, the so-called 'relative stability'. Each Member State has a constant percentage for each TAC, which allows calculation of the **national quota in tonnes**, and represents the **fishing opportunities** for the respective Member State. The Brexit negotiations have resulted in an agreement on 105 shared stocks and related TACs, of which the UK share was raised for 84 TACs. The quota transfers are defined in the Annex 35 of the **EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)**. Article 500 of the TCA also establishes provisions governing the issuance of fishing authorisations to EU vessels for accessing the waters under the sovereignty of the UK.

The study

With a view to the potential development of **fishing opportunities** in the short (2021) and long term (2025), this research assesses the projected impacts of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) for the EU fishing industry.

This EU-wide analysis is complemented with **two case studies** on the Netherlands and France.

Main observations

The fleet of the EU-27 catches approximately **1.3 million tonnes** of fish worth **EUR 1.6 billion** under TACs shared with the UK. Compared to 2019, the **TCA results in a reduction of** fishing opportunities for EU-27 in 2021 by **66 400 tonnes** and 2025 by **110 900 tonnes**. The corresponding values are estimated at respectively **EUR 108.4 million** and **EUR 178.6 million**. The real impact of these reductions depends on the **level of utilisation** of the quota and on the level of TACs fixed to respond to stock conservation objectives. The most direct effects will be experienced by the **pelagic** fleets of **Ireland, France and the Netherlands** due to reduction of EU-27 share in TACs of **mackerel and herring**. The TACs of these species are almost fully utilised. Reductions of the fishing opportunities of most **demersal** species, e.g. **anglerfish or sole**, will have much less direct effect because of low utilisation of the TACs. **Swaps** with the UK are expected to continue without major obstacles.

The **UK committed itself to sustainable exploitation** for fishing activities within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

France and Germany have initiated support to their fishing sectors under the arrangements foreseen by the **Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR)**. According to information available, other EU Member States significantly impacted by the Brexit are still in the process of preparation of their respective support programmes.

Access this note

Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies
Responsible: Jacques LECARTE, Marcus BREUER
Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union
PE 699.616 - February 2022

EN

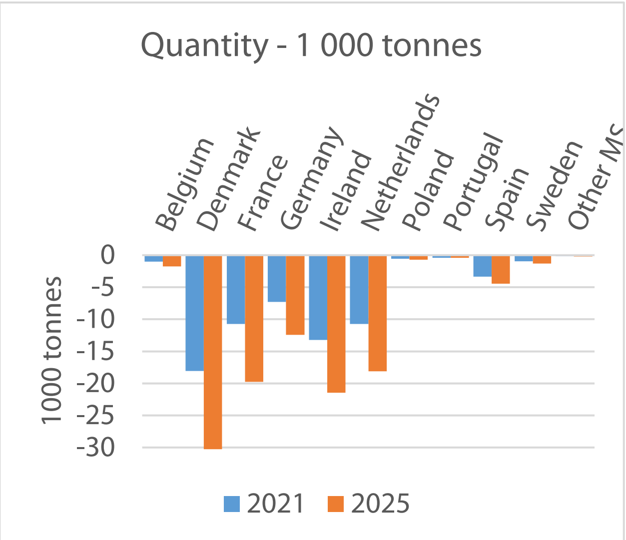
Case study of the Netherlands

The impact of the reduction of the TACs on the Dutch **demersal fleet** will be relatively limited in the short term, because the **quota** for plaice and sole **have not been fully utilised** in recent years; on the long term it may become more difficult, as this segment is heavily dependent on access to the UK EEZ. Conversely, the **pelagic fleet** operates mostly outside the UK EEZ; and as the Dutch pelagic **quota have been fully utilised**, the reduction of EU shares in pelagic TACs would imply a real loss of annual turn-over fort the Dutch pelagic segment of about **EUR 5.4 million** in 2021 and **EUR 3.6 million** in 2025.

Case study of France

The TCA reduces French **fishing opportunities** on shared stocks in UK waters by 15% (16 000 tonnes). However, adjustment of TACs to ensure the conservation of the stocks may amplify or partly offset the effects of the quota transfers under the TCA. A key issue reported was the **legal insecurity** governing the issuance of fishing authorisations for French vessels to access the 6-12 mile zone of the UK and the waters adjacent to the Bailiwicks of Guernsey and Jersey. The late adoption of the TCA in 2020 prevented the implementation of **quota swaps** between France and EU Member States and between France and the UK. This resulted in **fishing restrictions** being imposed on certain fishing vessels during the first half of 2021.

Figures: Projected losses of fishing opportunities in 2021 and 2025 compared to 2019, by Member State



Sources: Author's calculations based on TCA, quota allocations and JRC/STECF (2021).

Key areas for EU action

1. The involvement of the relevant **Advisory Councils** in the annual negotiations should be clarified and established; a **detailed road map** for the annual fisheries consultations should be drawn up.

2. The possibility to obtain **fishing authorisations for replacement vessels should be extended** for access to the waters adjacent to the Bailiwicks of Guernsey and Jersey.

3. Now as the **Brexit Adjustment Reserve** (BAR) is in force, more EU Member States should be encouraged to **develop national compensation plans** for their respective fishing sectors, with the compensation plans implemented already by Germany and France being potential examples to draw on.

Conclusions

The following issues are still of concern to the EU fishing sector:

– The quota transfers established by the TCA for stocks covered by its Annex 35 will lead to a **reduction of catches** of (almost) fully utilised quota by about **24 700 tonnes** in **2021** and **55 800 tonnes** in **2025.** The respective values are **EUR 30 million** and **EUR 51 million.** The **most affected** Member States are **Ireland** and the **Netherlands, Denmark**. However, the impacts of the quota transfers established by the TCA will depend to a large extent on the levels of TACs set by the two parties to ensure the conservation of stocks.

– **Conditions of access** to the **UK territorial waters** (6-12 mile zone), of particular importance to France and Belgium, and to the waters adjacent to the Bailiwicks of **Guernsey** and **Jersey** of particular importance to France.

– **Duration of TAC negotiations** and bilateral agreements with other coastal states. The timely achievement of an agreement is essential for a regular continuation of the fishing operations.

– **Uncertainty about the continuation** of administrative arrangements in 2022, including establishment of list of vessels made it possible to fish in the UK EEZ and quota swaps between the UK and the EU.

– **Lack of clarity** about the functioning of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries and the extent to which the European Commission will engage in consultations with EU Member States or representatives of the sector through their national representations or through the relevant Advisory Committees.

The present note is based on the study for the Workshop on impacts of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement on fisheries and aquaculture in the EU: Fishing opportunities aspects, authored by: F&S: Benoît CAILLART; MR&A: Pavel SALZ
Publication: February 2022. © Image on page 1 used under the licence from Adobe Stock
Contact: Poldep-cohesion@ep.europa.eu; Further information: www.research4committees.blog/pech. Follow us: @PolicyPECH
This document is available at: www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses