



news



MOST DIFFICULT FISHERIES COUNCIL YIELDS SOME POSITIVE RESULTS

This year's negotiations at the EU Fisheries Council were probably the most daunting ever faced by the countries looking to achieve enough fish quotas to keep their fleets in business. The usual preliminary business which would have paved the way and prepared the ground for finalising the details did not happen this year. The annual fisheries talks between the EU and Norway and between the EU, Norway, Faroes and Iceland were beset with intransigence and breakdowns which had a huge knock-on effect on the business of agreeing quotas for 2013.

Pelagic Quotas 2013

Due to the lack of bi-lateral agreement at the recent EU/Norway negotiations in Bergen, vessels targeting mackerel, blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring will not know how they stand until into 2013. Previously in 2009, when faced with a similar situation, a level of 65 per cent of the previous year's mackerel TAC was set at the December Fisheries Council as an interim TAC – thankfully this time the provisional quota for these species is sufficient to allow Ireland to prosecute both fisheries at the beginning of the year. It is expected that there will ultimately be at least a 15 per cent reduction in the mackerel TAC for 2013. The

provisional allocation of 51,067 tonnes (see table below) amounts to approximately 90 per cent of the final quota which Ireland will receive for 2013. The normal uptake at the start of the year for mackerel is in the region of 80 per cent uptake, so this provisional allocation will not cause a problem.

It is very important that we receive 100 per cent of our blue whiting allocation at the start of the year as our fishery for blue whiting is over a very limited time period of six weeks from the start of February to mid-March. The welcome 63 per cent increase in blue whiting quota is also a provisional allocation for 2013. However, this again should not cause a

problem as it is quite close to the final allocation that Ireland will receive having transferred an amount that is normal to balance the transfers of quotas between EU and Norway.

In relation to North West herring a 65 per cent reduction has been agreed in accordance (see table) with a Management Plan developed by the Irish fishing industry supported by the Pelagic RAC and confirmed by the STECF. Had the plan not been adopted there would have been a zero TAC for this stock. Regarding horse mackerel, the Council agreed with the Commission proposal to follow the management plan rather than erroneous ICES scientific advice which was based

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SPECIES	ICES Area	PELAGIC STOCKS		
		Quota 2012 (t)	Quota 2013 (t)	Diff %
Mackerel ¹	VI, VII	68,089	51,067	-25%
H. Mackerel ²	Ila, IVa, VI, VIIa-c, VIIe-k, VIIIa,b,e	40,803	40,284	-1%
H. Mackerel	IVb, IVc, and VIId	1,216	1,019	-16%
Blue Whiting ³	I, II,III, IV,V, VI, VII, VIII a,b,d,e XII,XIV	8,030	13,105	63%
Herring ⁴	I, II	4,810	3,574	-26%
Herring	VIaN	3,459	4,151	20%
Herring	VIaS, VIIbc	3,861	1,364	-65%
Herring	VIIa	1,237	1,300	5%
Herring	VII ghjk	18,236	14,864	-18%
Tuna ⁵	north.atl	3,896	2371	-39%
Argentines	III, IV	7	7	0%
Argentines	V, VI, VII	305	305	0%
Boarfish	VI, VII,VIII	56,666	56,666	0%
Total		210,615	190,077	na

Footnotes for 2013 pelagic quotas

1. Provisional quota subject to EU and Norway bilateral agreement. Of which 20,547 tonnes may be fished from January 1- February 15 and September 1- December 31, 2013 in EU waters of ICES division IVa.
2. 5 per cent of this quota fished in areas II & IVa. before 30 June may be attributed to IVb, IVc & VIId. Advance notification necessary. 5per cent fished in VIId. Up to 5 per cent by-catches of boarfish, haddock, whiting and mackerel counted against the horse mackerel quota.
3. Provisional quota subject to EU and Norway bilateral agreement.
4. Provisional quota subject to EU and Norway bi-lateral agreement.
5. Maximum 50 licences Ireland.



SPECIES	ICES Area	AREA VI WHITEFISH STOCKS		
		Quota 2012 (t)	Quota 2013 (t)	Diff %
Cod ¹	VIa	0	0	0%
Cod	VIb	17	16	-6%
Megrim	VI	439	439	0%
Monkfish	VI	518	492	-5%
Haddock ²	Vb VIa	984	690	-30%
Haddock	VIb XII XIV	260	78	-70%
Whiting ³	VI	92	87	-5%
Plaice	VI	275	261	-5%
Pollock	VI	56	56	0%
Saithe	VI	407	375	-8%
Sole	VI	48	46	-4%
Nephrops	VI	190	226	19%
Total		3,286	2,766	-16%

Footnotes for 2013 whitefish quotas

1. Zero TAC with maximum 1.5 per cent cod retained on board.
2. Haddock by-catch provision removed under emergency measures. By-catch provision also removed in transitional technical measures still to be adopted.

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on achieving MSY. Had the Council chosen to follow this flawed route rather than the management plan the sustainability and stability that the management plan has delivered over the last number of years would have been jeopardised.

For boarfish there was a roll-over of the 2012 TAC even though an increase was expected. However, there may be an upward revision in 2013 as the joint statement by the Council and the Commission notes that the Pelagic Regional Advisory Council has developed a multiannual plan for the management of the boarfish stock and go on to say, "If the relevant scientific bodies deem this plan to be precautionary then it can be followed and an in-year revision of the TAC undertaken if necessary."

The overall Northern albacore tuna TAC was rolled over but the Irish quota is showing a 41 per cent reduction due to the fact that Ireland had a very successful fishery in 2011 and 2012 which saw Ireland utilise the entire quota it had carried forward from previous years and so for 2013 we are operating on the actual quota.

Whitefish Quotas 2013

Coming to these negotiations we were facing a very difficult prospect. The EU Commission proposed drastic cuts – 55 per cent in haddock quota in the Celtic Sea, 32 per cent in hake, 20 per cent in monkfish, 48 per cent in haddock and 40 per cent in egrim in the North West and 12 per cent in prawn quota - which were severe in the extreme. Altogether, there were plans to substantially reduce quota for almost 30 different fish stocks which would impact the Irish catching sector and its ancillary activities.

The 15 per cent reduction in haddock quota in the Celtic Sea, while better than the proposed 55 per cent, is still inexplicable and a serious reflection on the inadequate management strategies which ignore evidence of abundant stock well above safe harvesting levels and drive the discard problem, rather than lessen it. The original Commission proposals of a 32 per cent reduction for hake and a 40 per cent reduction for megrim in Area VI and 20 per cent in Area VII are less severe than expected with roll-overs for both in both Areas. However, the 5 per cent reduction for monk quotas in both Area VI and VII are disappointing considering the united European industry view of the abundance of both of these stocks on the ground, but are an improvement on the Commission's original proposal for a 20 per cent reduction. An industry/science partnership approach is urgently required for both these stocks.

Nephrops was one of the key whitefish stocks for the Industry going into these negotiations; the very welcome increase in Nephrops quota is as a direct result of the Irish Industry's partnership with the Marine Institute which carried out two separate types of surveys for Nephrops during 2012 (see "Two Surveys on Porcupine Nephrops Yield Positive Results" page three) but this could also have been extended to removal of the Porcupine quota restriction completely.

The Fisheries Council has agreed to freeze the cod effort instead of the possible automatic 25 per cent reduction which is welcomed.

Deepwater Quotas 2013

Ireland does not have a direct interest in deepwater quotas but notes increases in this area will have a positive impact on the "swapping" value regarding other species.

Finally, a word of thanks to Minister Coveney and his team, BIM, the Marine Institute and to all the officials involved in bringing this Fisheries Council to a reasonably satisfactory conclusion.

AREA VII WHITEFISH STOCKS

SPECIES	ICES Area	Quota 2012 (t)	Quota 2013 (t)	Diff %
Cod	VIIa	251	188	-25%
Cod	VII b-k	1,459	1,479	1%
Megrim ⁴	VII	2,878	2,878	0%
Monkfish ⁵	VII	2,325	2,209	-5%
Haddock ⁶	VII b-k	3,699	3,144	-15%
Haddock	VIIa	542	515	-5%
Whiting	VIIb-k	5,298	6,812	29%
Plaice	VIIa	1,063	1,063	0%
Plaice	VII bc	62	63	2%
Plaice	VII fg	197	197	0%
Plaice	VII hjk	77	61	-21%
Pollock	VII	1,030	1,030	0%
Saithe	VII	1,516	1,491	-2%
Sole	VIIa	68	58	-15%
Sole	VII bc	37	36	-3%
Sole	VII fg	33	34	3%
Sole	VII hjk	190	181	-5%
Nephrops ⁷	VII	8025	8,507	6%
Total		28,802	29,995	4%

AREA VI, VII AND OTHER WHITEFISH STOCKS

SPECIES	ICES Area	Quota 2012 (t)	Quota 2013 (t)	Diff %
Cod ⁸	I,II	244	0	0%
Hake ⁹	VI, VII	1,704	1,704	0%
Redfish	International waters V, XII, XIV	1	1	0%
Ling ¹⁰	VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII, XIV	591	591	0%
Blue Ling	II, IV, International Waters	4	4	0%
Blue Ling ¹¹	Vb,VI, VII	6	6	0%
Tusk	V, VI, VII	17	20	18%
Greenland Halibut	Ila, IV, VI	2	16	700%
Snow Crab	Greenland Waters	62	31	-50%
Porbeagle	I, II, III, IV, V, IV, VIII, IX, X, XII, XIV	0	0	0%
Skate & Rays ¹²	VI, VIIa-c, & e-k	1,294	1,165	-10%
Spur Dogs	I, II, III, IV, V, IV, VIII, XII, XIV	0	0	0%
Basking Shark	EU Waters	0	0	0%
Total		3,925	3,538	Not Applicable

Footnotes for 2013 whitefish quotas

- Whiting by-catch provision no longer exists after December 31, 2012. By-catch provision also removed in transitional technical measures still to be adopted.
- 1per cent additional quota to Member States participating in fully documented fisheries.
- 5 per cent monkfish in Area VII may be fished in area VIIa,b,d,e. 1 per cent additional quota to Member States participating in fully documented fisheries.
- 5 per cent additional quota to Member States participating in fully documented fisheries.
- Only 653 tonnes of nephrops quota may be fished in porcupine functional unit 16. Closure period reduced to one month, May 1-31, 2013.
- No quota issued as it is dependant on EU and Norway bi-lateral agreement.
- No more than 184 tonnes hake VI & VII may be fished in ICES area VIII a,b,d,e. 1 per cent additional quota to Member States participating in fully documented fisheries.
- Provisional quota subject to EU and Norway bi-lateral negotiations.
- Provisional quota subject to EU and Norway bi-lateral negotiations.
- Separate reporting of seven species of ray and prohibits catches of three species of skate and one species of ray. 5 per cent may be fished in waters in Area VIII.



DEEPWATER STOCKS

SPECIES	ICES Area	Quota 2012 (t)	Quota 2013 (t)	Diff %	Quota 2014	%Diff2
Black Scabbard	V, VI, VII, XII	62	87	40%	105	69%
Roundnose Grenadier	Vb, VI, VII	165	292	77%	292	77%
Roundnose Grenadier	VIII, IX, X, XII, XIV	6	5	-17%	4	-33%
Orange Roughy	VI	0	0	0%	0	0%
Orange Roughy	VII	0	0	0%	0	0%
Orange Roughy	I, II, III, IV, V, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIV	0	0	0%	0	0%
Red Seabream	VI, VII, VIII	6	5	-17%	5	-17%
Alfonsinos	I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII, XIV	10	10	0%	9	-10%
Forkbeards	V, VI, VII	260	260	0%	260	0%
Deep Sea Sharks	V, VI, VII, IX	0	0	0%	0	0%
Deep Sea Sharks	XII	0	0	0%	0	0%
TOTALS		509	659	29%	675	33%

Progress Made on Two Key Elements of CFP Reform

The CFP depends on a number of underlying mechanisms to function effectively. Any changes to the CFP must be reflected first and foremost at this "nuts and bolts" level if the reformed CFP is to achieve the overarching ambitions outlined in the Green Paper of 2009.

1. Common Organisation of the Market (CMO)

Principle among such support systems is the Common Organisation of the Market (CMO). In July 2011 the EU Commission adopted a legislative proposal to replace the current Regulation, which has since been the subject of consultation and amendment. The new Regulation must be agreed by both the Fisheries Council and the European Parliament under the process of co-decision. A general approach was reached by the Council under the Danish presidency in June 2012 and the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament voted almost unanimously in September to accept the report compiled under the direction of MEP Struan Stevenson. Further progress on finalising the new CMO is anticipated during the first half of 2013 under the Irish Presidency.

The future role and objectives of producer organisations (POs) is a major focus of the proposal with emphasis on enabling POs to play a more meaningful role in the day-to-day management of fisheries under a more regionalised system. The historical role of POs in ensuring realistic prices for their members needs to be extended to management of member's activities and thereby have a more effective presence in the market. The economic viability of POs must be strengthened and transnational partnerships encouraged. POs should have responsibility for preparing production and marketing plans and setting and implementing marketing standards within a basic framework set by the European Commission. The POs should also have a well-defined role in any strategy aimed at

reducing discards.

Labelling is a key issue which should be aimed at giving consumers information on the fishery product they buy - date of landing, identifiable fishing zones, locally familiar names and clarity as to frozen and defrosted versus "fresh." Sustainable fishing practices should be rewarded with an eco-label and EU fishermen should not be at a disadvantage compared to non-EU fishermen who are not subject to as stringent controls.

2. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, with a proposed budget of €6.5 billion, subject to overall budget agreement, is the financial basis for the new CFP; it replaces the current European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for the period 2014-2020 and, as initially proposed by the European Commission, would have profound and far-reaching effects on fishing activities and maritime communities in the EU. In common with the CMO, the EMFF is also subject to the co-decision process.

In October, following lengthy negotiations, the Fisheries Council reached a partial agreement which included keeping subsidies for fleet modernisation until 2017. Improvements and innovations for processing fishery products would be supported and there would be incentives for young people to access training and purchase vessels to encourage them into the business. Data collection, particularly improved systems for the compilation, management and transfer of data, the development of science/industry partnerships and improvements in gear selectivity, particularly when they lead to lessening the discard of unwanted fish, would all be eligible for subsidy.

As presently proposed, there would be three per cent financial support for the preparation of production and marketing plans by the Producer

Organisations, but storage aid would be phased out by 2017. Advisory Councils would only be supported to the extent of providing operating costs - they would not be financially enabled to take a more proactive role.

The European Parliament appointed Alain Cadec, MEP, as Rapporteur to provide the Fisheries Committee with a report that would form the basis of agreement with the Council and the EU Commission. This report questions the Commission's initial premise of fleet overcapacity which is the basis for restrictions regarding fleet renewal and modernization, and which could ultimately have serious consequences for smaller operators and isolated fishing communities. In fact, small-scale, coastal fisheries and their supporting infrastructure of small, and in many cases, declining harbours, should receive special attention to enable them to compete and, if necessary, diversify. The Cadec report stresses the necessity to maintain storage aid as this mechanism has been proven to regulate the market and ensure a basic price to producers.

Long-term, sustainable fisheries are the key to the future prosperity of the sector; reliable data, good scientific advice and linked-up thinking from producer to consumer are basic requirements. Institutions such as the Advisory Councils need to be funded to carry out and co-ordinate many of these functions. Likewise, Producer Organisations should be funded to prepare production and marketing plans enabling all levels of the sector to exploit the resources in a rational, sustainable and economically viable manner.

The Fisheries Council and the European Parliament will hopefully arrive at a final agreement during the Irish Presidency of the Council in the first half of 2013.

Two Surveys on Porcupine Nephrops Yield Positive Results

1. Underwater Television (UWTV) Survey

In June the Marine Institute carried out the first UWTV Survey on the 'Porcupine Bank Nephrops grounds' ICES assessment area; Functional Unit 16. This was the culmination of a steadily growing science/industry collaboration in the area.

The survey was multi-disciplinary in nature collecting UWTV, oceanographic and other ecosystem data. The main objective was to estimate the abundance of Nephrops on the Bank which could then be used by ICES to provide catch advice for 2012 to the EC. The distance from shore (~ 120 nautical miles), the exposed nature of the area, the significant water depths involved (330-570m) and the relatively large size of the area (>7100km²) presented significant logistical, technical and survey design challenges. In the end, 47 out of a planned 68 UWTV stations were successfully completed. The bias corrected abundance estimate was 787 million individual Nephrops on the bank. This can be considered a conservative estimate given that the spatial coverage of the southern part of the ground was not complete.

The densities observed were significantly lower than for other grounds around Ireland but the size of individuals caught is much higher. ICES evaluated the results of the survey and increased the advice from 1,100t given in July to 1,800t. More detail of the results of the UWTV survey can be downloaded from the Marine Institute at <http://oar.marine.ie/handle/10793/832>.

2. Irish Fisheries Science Research Partnership (IFSRP) Trawl Survey

Advice from ICES in 2009 was that catches of Nephrops on the Porcupine Bank should be reduced to the lowest possible levels. In consultation both the FIF and Marine Institute acknowledged the poor status of this stock and proposed a closed-area management measure which was accepted by the European Commission and has been implemented every summer from May 1 - July 31, since 2010. During each closure an IFSRP trawl survey has been carried out to monitor the impact of this management approach, both inside and outside the closed area.

In 2012 the Porcupine Nephrops Survey was carried out aboard the *FV Shauna Ann* from July 13-30, with the Marine Institute putting one scientist and one trawl specialist aboard. Sampling was such that results are directly comparable with ICES-based sampling and showed increases in catch from 2010 and 2011 respectively. Mean size in the catches is an important aspect; the 2012 survey showed mean carapace length for male Nephrops was up marginally from 2011, whereas females remained largely the same. In 2010-2011, on average, the ratio of males to females by weight stayed around 4.5:1. In 2012 however, the ratio appeared to more than double in favour of females producing an average ratio of ten females to each male.

Data from these surveys have been instrumental not only in establishing baseline data for this important stock, but also in highlighting the significant difference in catch rates inside and outside the closed area. The Marine Institute would like to extend its thanks for the support and collaboration of all participants on these surveys.

MSO Publishes New Fishing Vessel Logbooks

Owners and Skippers of Irish Fishing vessels of 25GT and upwards are required under the Merchant Shipping Acts to enter into an agreement with their Crew (a Crew Agreement) and to maintain a Log for the vessel, (an Official Logbook), for the duration of each Crew Agreement.

During 2012, the existing Fishing Vessel Logbook was updated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports with assistance from the Federation of Irish Fishermen (FIF) and the Irish Fishermen's Organisation (IFO).

The purpose of the update was to make the Crew Agreement and Official Logbook a more user friendly document, while highlighting the statutory requirements and obligations of both Fishing Vessel owners and Skippers. The newly published Fishing Vessel Logbook titled 'Crew Agreement, List of Crew and Official Logbook of a Fishing Vessel of 25 Tons Tonnage or Upwards,' has been published and compliance is required from January 1, 2013.

The new Logbook is divided into five sections as follows:

- A - Instructions
- B - Particulars of Fishing Vessel and Period of Crew Agreement
- C - Crew Agreement
- D - List of Crew
- E - Official Logbook

To assist vessel owners and skippers with compliance, the following three annexes are attached to the Logbook:

- Annex 1 - Fishing Vessel Manning Requirements
- Annex 2 - Muster and Drill Requirements
- Annex 3 - Equipment Testing Requirements

Two copies of the Logbook will be distributed to vessel owners, one for each of the periods January 1-June 30, 2013 and July 1-December 31, 2013.

Logbooks for 2014 will be distributed during 2013, when the first completed Logbook (i.e. for the period January 1-June 30, 2013) has been completed and returned to the Mercantile Marine Office. Logbooks should be returned within 48 hours of completion e.g. by July 2, 2013 for first Logbook.

Additional Logbooks can be sought from/queries can be addressed to: Mercantile Marine Office, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Ph: + 353 (0)1 6783480. Email: mmo@dttas.ie



Editorial

by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



It doesn't get any easier! And this year's Fisheries Council, which finished up at 5.30am on Thursday morning, lived up to its expected billing as being very tough. The lead-up to the Council signalled that it was going to be difficult, with the Commission's proposals recommending huge reductions in some key Irish whitefish stocks such as haddock, hake, megrim, nephrops and monkfish. This difficulty was further exacerbated by the lack of a bi-lateral agreement between EU and Norway, and the Coastal States agreement on blue whiting and Atlanto Scandia herring in advance of the Council.

From an Irish perspective it was a mixed bag. Some of the more draconian and unjustifiable cuts in whitefish stocks were reversed, including a very necessary six per cent increase in the nephrops quota (see table page two). The original Commission proposal for a 55 per cent reduction in haddock was reduced to 15 per cent. This is still disappointing, particularly given that stock size is ten times in excess of the safe biological limit for this stock. This highlights that the current system of managing haddock is totally inadequate and it is regrettable that Council did not follow the industry's proposal that the quota should be increased to reflect the enormous size of the stock, but more importantly to avoid the discarding of mature, marketable fish. This seems to be contrary to the stated position of the Council and Commission on eliminating discards. The reversal, and in certain cases, the increases, negotiated by Minister Coveney, have secured 2013 fishing opportunities for the whitefish sector, and avoided the significant reduction in income and the loss of full- and part-time jobs that the proposed Commission's cuts would have delivered.

From a pelagic point of view (see table page one) there was the welcome increase of 63 per cent in blue whiting and the roll-over of the horse mackerel quota. As expected, provisional TACs were set for the 2013 mackerel and blue whiting quotas. Due to a breakdown in the EU/Norway discussions and the Coastal States non-agreement, only preliminary quotas have been set for these species, which means that the full availability of the quota to Irish fishermen will not be given until later in the year. This was a particular cause of concern prior to the Council as it was feared that the allocation would be insufficient to allow these fisheries to be availed of during January and February. It was feared that even if the balance of the quota is issued later in the year, Ireland will lose out as it will not be practical or viable to utilise this quota. However, these fears were allayed at Council with the setting of the allocations at sufficiently high levels. The possibility of a mid-year review for the boarfish TAC affords an opportunity

to try to get the management plan evaluated and to hopefully be in a position to seek an increase for 2013.

In relation to North West herring, a 65 per cent reduction has been agreed in accordance with a Management Plan developed by the Irish fishing industry, supported by the Pelagic RAC and confirmed by the STECF. Had the plan not been adopted there would have been a zero TAC for this stock. The KFO is fully aware of the large abundance of herring on the fishing grounds in VIa South and is very disappointed that the scientific assessment is not reflecting this reality. However, the rebuilding plan is a very necessary initial first step in reflecting the reality observed on the grounds in the scientific assessment, and once again providing a sustainable and profitable fishery.

The High Level Group that delivered the Report on Job Creation for the Killybegs Region to Minister Coveney TD in October 2011 met on November 5, to review progress in each of the five key areas -- seafood, ancillary services, offshore supports, tourism and marine leisure and green-economy/renewable energy -- identified in the report. The Group considered that the jobs targets and timelines, with some modification in certain areas as set out in the report, are still on track for delivery. The Group agreed to set up a local Implementation Group covering these five areas to further enhance delivery on the action items identified within the Report. The High Level Group will continue, as envisaged in the report, to meet on a bi-annual basis to review progress.

The transitional technical conservation measures (see article to right) that have been in place since 2009 and have caused a huge difficulty for our whitefish industry particularly in area VIa, have, for the most part, been resolved with an agreement between the Council and Parliament on new transitional measures. However, the final vote in the Parliament has been deferred due to a long-running dispute between the Parliament and the Fisheries Council on management plans, but I expect that it should be finally voted on in the first two months of next year.

Finally, on behalf of all the KFO staff, I would like to wish all our members a very happy Christmas and prosperous fishing in 2013. I look forward to continue to work with you to address the many challenges that lie ahead, particularly the CPF reform, CMO and new funding proposals for 2014-2020, not to mention the many stock issues, in order to achieve a sustainable and profitable Irish fishing industry.

COUNCIL AND PARLIAMENT AGREE ON TRANSITIONAL TECHNICAL MEASURES

A number of important technical measures of particular significance to fishermen operating in Area VIa expire on December 31, 2012 and the Commission issued a proposal in June 2012 to ensure that transitional technical measures are maintained in place after this date. The proposal is of indeterminate duration and is intended to safeguard existing technical measures until such time as a comprehensive revision of this area can be brought forward under the reformed CFP. Pat 'the Cope' Gallagher, MEP, Rapporteur to the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee presented a report to the Commission with a number of amendments designed to address the concerns of Irish fishermen. The Fisheries Committee voted to accept the report with the most important amendments included. The Fisheries Council indicated it was in agreement with the European Parliament which appeared to clear the way for a speedy ratification. However, the vote in plenary, which was scheduled for November 23, was postponed at the request of Pat 'the Cope' Gallagher due to a long-running dispute between the Fisheries Committee and the Fisheries Council which has repeatedly failed to engage with the Fisheries Committee in areas of co-decision.

The agreed text will be of interest to fishermen in the North West who have been seriously affected by some of the unworkable technical measures in place since 2009:

- the use of gill nets and tangle nets to target haddock and whiting south of 59 degrees North and within the Cod Recovery Area;
- the use of gill nets and tangle nets to target lesser spotted dog-fish within three miles of the coast;
- removal of 30 per cent by-catch provision for whiting, haddock and cod;
- non-Irish vessels will be prohibited from fishing in the "Greencastle Box" -- closed from October to March each year to protect juvenile cod;
- a review of the defined area for Cod Recovery by January 1, 2015, which may lead to complete removal of the line; and
- a review of the defined mesh sizes.

KFO does not see the current delay as a major set-back -- the existing regulation ceases at the end of December -- and KFO is confident the matter will be resolved early in 2013.