



## DEBATE PACK

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# Future UK fisheries policy

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This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 27 February 2018 at 2.30pm on future UK fisheries policy. The debate will be opened by Scott Mann MP.

For further information, see also Commons Library Briefing Paper on [The UK Fishing Industry](#).

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Summary

There were 4,000 businesses in the fishing industry in 2016. These businesses employed 24,000 people and contributed £1.4 billion to the UK economy in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA – a measure similar to GDP). The fish processing and preserving part of the industry employed more people than the fishing part of the industry – 15,000 compared with 8,000. But the processing industry was less significant in terms of overall economic output and involved fewer businesses. Further details on the fisheries industry and fisheries statistics are available in Commons Library Briefing on the [UK fisheries Industry](#), published December 2017.

## Common Fisheries Policy

Fisheries in the UK and EU are currently managed under the [Common Fisheries Policy \(CFP\)](#), which aims to ensure that fishing is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, whilst allowing fair competition between fishers. The [European Commission's aim](#) is that that between 2015 and 2020 catch limits should be set that are sustainable and maintain fish stocks in the long term. Under the CFP, every year, the European Commission proposes a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for each commercial species for each area within the EU 200-mile limit. TACs are then shared between EU countries in the form of national quotas. The TACs for each area are agreed by the Council of Ministers at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, based on scientific advice on sustainable catch levels. The Postnote on [UK Fisheries Management](#) provides further detail of how fishing quotas are currently set and managed at EU and UK level.

## A Fisheries Bill

The UK Government has made clear that new legislation will be required to replace the Commons Fisheries Policy, setting out how the UK will manage its fisheries within its 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). A Fisheries Bill was announced in the [2017 Queen's Speech](#), which would "enable the UK to control access to its waters and set UK fishing quotas once it has left the EU." A [Defra press release](#) announcing the Bill stated that during 2017 there would be a period of engagement with the devolved administrations, industry and the public with the aim of delivering the best outcome for the UK industry.

## Brexit transition

There is ongoing debate amongst [stakeholders](#) about when the UK should leave the CFP, and whether it should be included in a Brexit transition period. [Recent](#) reports suggest that the EU position is that it should be included, and that the UK would not be able to participate in an official capacity in any quota setting during that period. There are also a range of views on to what degree the current quota allocation and management approach should be changed, as set out in the [UK Fisheries Industry](#) debate pack. Any changes will have to take into account the UK commitments under the [United Nations Convention on](#)

[the Law of the Sea](#) and how it applies to the sharing of fisheries resources.

A White Paper was expected to precede the Bill but has not yet been published. Defra's [25 Year Environment Plan](#), published in February 2018, provided some detail of the Government's aims for a sustainable fisheries policy after Brexit, based on a natural capital approach, which allows for sustainable fisheries, whilst protecting and enhancing the marine environment.

## 2. News items

[Call for “backbone” in Brexit battle over fisheries control](#)

Calum Ross

Press & Journal, 22 February 2018

[Cornish fishermen fear catch in Brexit talks](#)

Joshua Chaffin

Financial Times [subscription], 18 February 2018

[Gove’s fish vision goes swimmingly](#)

John Boothman

The Times [subscription], 4 February 2018

[Dutch urge Gove to spell out post-Brexit fishing industry plans](#)

Daniel Boffey

The Guardian, 30 January 2018

[EU to hold Britain to fishing quotas during Brexit transition](#)

Daniel Boffey and Lisa O’Carroll

The Guardian, 11 January 2018

[Our fishermen should land Brexit benefits](#)

Liam Halligan

Daily Telegraph, 2 December 2017

[Britain seeks to take back control in Brexit fisheries fight](#)

Michael Acton

Financial Times [subscription], 28 November 2017

[UK fisherman expect a post-Brexit bonanza - but there's a catch: What Brexit gives with one hand, it can also take away. EU fishermen want Brussels to use its trump card - access to the essential EU market - in negotiations on how to divvy up the seas](#)

Nigel Hunt

The Independent, 19 September 2017

[Overfishing of North Sea may reduce after MEPs vote on fishing quotas; Defra welcomes European vote which aims to secure long-term sustainability of North Sea fish stocks](#)

Fiona Harvey

The Guardian, 15 September 2017

[Fisheries revival 'could scupper Scottish independence dream'](#)

Ted Brocklebank

Daily Telegraph, 15 August 2017

## 3. Press releases

### **Scottish Fishermen's Federation Backbone needed as negotiations with EU on fisheries begin 21 February 2018**

Responding to a government document setting out the UK's legal position on the transition or implementation period today Bertie Armstrong, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said:

It is very encouraging that the UK government has rejected the EU's proposals and intends that we become a fully functioning Coastal State from 29th March 2019.

With that should come control over 100 per cent of our stocks and access to our waters, the starting point for the UK to begin restoring its proud status as an independent fishing nation like Norway instead of being compelled to give away 60 per cent of our fish.

However, there is clearly a long way to go, and real political backbone will be required in the negotiations with Brussels to ensure that the only palatable outcome for the fishing industry and our coastal communities is achieved.

### **National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations Ten reasons why fishing should not be part of a transitional deal with the EU 5 February 2018**

As the cabinet debates the UK's detailed positions on Brexit, the NFFO spells out why fishing should not be artificially tied to a transitional deal with the EU on trade.

1. Logically, fisheries jurisdiction, access rights and quota shares should be dealt separately with trade arrangements when the UK's legal status on fisheries changes on 29th March 2019. Norway for example, maintains access to the EU single market under specific agreed arrangements but it manages the fisheries within its own EEZ and enters into annual agreements on the management shared stocks and quota exchanges as an independent coastal state.

2. If the UK accepts that fishing should be part of a 21 month transitional period on the terms specified by the EU (status quo on access and quota shares), it will be because it has again, as in 1973, decided that fishing is expendable and that other, trade issues take priority, despite its new legal status as an independent coastal state

3. Once the principle that the status quo on quota shares and access has been conceded for a transitional deal, it is patently obvious that the EU will use the same tactics and leverage when the UK seeks to negotiate a long-term trade deal with the EU. Fishing will again be a sacrificed pawn, irrespective of its legal status as an independent coastal state

4. It is clear that at the point that the UK leaves the EU, in March 2019, UK ministers and UK officials will no longer be party to decisions within any of the European institutions, including those which set quotas and make other rules on EU fisheries. It is an extreme understatement to say that it would be completely prejudicial to the interests of the UK fishing industry to tie us into fisheries management decisions (as part of the *aquis communautaire*) in which the UK are mere rule-takers.
5. After the UK leaves the EU, the EU's EEZ will amount to less than 20% of the North Sea and around 50% of Western Waters. It stretches credibility to understand, in those circumstances, why the UK would subject itself to intrusive control or constraints on its ability to negotiate freely as an independent coastal state, either as part of a transitional period, or a longer-term trade deal.
6. As an independent coastal state the UK would be expected to take its seat in international fisheries negotiations, including those with Norway, other coastal states and the EU. Even the European Commission recognises that separate, bespoke arrangements will be required to include the EU in the decisions when setting TACs in the annual year end negotiations. There is no legal, or fisheries management reason, why the UK should accept any precondition or artificial constraint on its right to negotiate the best deal that it can, including on access arrangements and quota shares. (Clearly a one off, stand-alone arrangements for fishing in 2019 might be necessary given that the UK leaves a quarter of the way through the fishing year.)
7. A clear alternative is available. That is that, from autumn of 2019, the UK will negotiate with those countries with which it shares stocks, on an annual basis, as an independent coastal state, without any preconditions or artificial constraints. The UK is constrained by the UN Law of the Sea, to act responsibly and fairly towards those countries with which it shares stocks.
8. It is of course understood that the EU27 have just outlined their shopping list, insofar as a transitional period is concerned and that the negotiations have not yet begun. But it should be understood what they are asking for: despite the UK's new status as an independent coastal state, it is the continuation of an asymmetrical and exploitative arrangement with the UK, which vast swathes of the UK population, as well as the fishing industry, consider to be grossly unfair and a distortion of a relationship which should bring reciprocal benefits. A 4:1 ratio of the value of fish caught by EU fleets in UK waters by comparison with the value of fish caught by UK vessels in EU waters, does not represent reciprocity, it equals exploitation.
9. A transitional arrangement on trade arrangements is important to give time to businesses in the UK, and in the EU 27, time to adapt to the new realities that will emerge after the UK leaves the EU. On fisheries management, however, it is possible to move smoothly and seamlessly into a pattern of annual (bilateral or trilateral) international agreements with the countries with which we share stocks, to replace the CFP's decision-making processes. That is what should happen and

the transitional arrangements should apply only to the trade regime. There is only one reason why the EU would resist that pragmatic solution and that is that the EU benefits from the current asymmetrical arrangements and seeks to find ways to keep them. If the UK seriously wishes to shift to the status of an independent coastal state, with the advantages that that it will have to grasp the nettle. And there is no advantage to deferring that decision.

10. Fisheries jurisdiction and fisheries negotiations were artificially and cynically bound into the CFP in 1973 to the UK's systematic and lasting disadvantage. Not unnaturally, the EU 27 would like to continue that exploitative relationship because it works heavily to their advantage. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take a different and better path and there is a heavy responsibility on our government not to drop the ball at this crucial point in history.

### **Scottish Fishermen's Federation**

#### **Industry welcomes positive stance from ministers on CFP exit**

**4 February 2018**

Scottish fishermen's leaders today welcomed commitments by UK government ministers to leaving the Common Fisheries Policy in March 2019.

In media comments, environment secretary Michael Gove and home secretary Amber Rudd explicitly raised the issue of Brexit providing a great opportunity for a better deal for fishing communities.

In an interview with *The Sunday Times*, Mr Gove said the UK should leave the unpopular CFP in March 2019, and not at the end of any transition period.

The prime minister is crystal clear; the moment we leave, we become an independent coastal state. I and my colleagues are clear; we will have continuing good relations with our European partners, but we will decided access and quotas.

Mr Gove also welcomed the Scottish Fishermen's Federation proposal of a nine-month bridge from March to December 2019 to fit in with international fisheries negotiations.

Meanwhile Ms Rudd told the BBC's *Andrew Marr Show*:

In my constituency in Hastings, we hate the Common Fisheries Policy. It has not been good for the communities. We would like to make sure that the fishermen, all through our coastal communities, get a better deal.

SFF chief executive Bertie Armstrong said:

Becoming a coastal state on day one in order that we can negotiate the best deal could make a real economic difference to our coastal communities.

So we welcome these acknowledgements from within the UK government of the logic and practical sense of the position that we have been arguing and fighting for.

There is the realisation of the sea of opportunity that exists from exiting the CFP – but it can only work if we get out on day one. There is no other way.

## **National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations**

### **Commission publishes its negotiation positions on fisheries: NFFO Executive reaffirms its Brexit positions**

**23 January 2018**

The European Commission has recently presented its positions on fisheries to the EU 27 member states, in preparation for the opening of Round 2 Brexit negotiations in Brussels.

The Commission statement is [here](#).

As an opening position, in advance of the negotiations that will take place over the next 10 months, there are few surprises. Before Christmas, the Commission signalled that it would not be fighting to retain formal jurisdiction over UK waters. That is a realistic recognition of the UK’s new legal status, under the *UN Law of the Sea*, after the UK concludes the process of leaving the EU. However, in this new position statement, the Commission signals that it will insist on the status quo for quota shares and access arrangements, at least during any transition or implementation period; and will also press for the UK to be tied umbilically to the CFP for the foreseeable future. For the most part, the UK would become a rule-taker, rather than a participant in the rule-making process and most certainly the UK’s status would certainly not reflect the proportion of fisheries resources in its waters. The Commission intends to use trade as the lever to secure these objectives.

The principles of *equal access* and *relative stability* have worked very well for the EU fleets - and to the systematic disadvantage of the UK for over forty years - by comparison with the deal that would have been available to us as an independent coastal state. It is no surprise that the EU will try to cling on to this state of affairs for as long as possible. This new document provides an indication of how they will try to achieve this.

#### *Direct Conflict*

The Commission’s position brings the EU into direct conflict with the aspirations of the UK fishing industry, which see the UK’s new legal status after March 2019, as a stepping stone to the normal advantages that accompany the status of an independent coastal state: quota shares that broadly reflect the resources in its EEZ; access arrangements for non-UK vessels only when there is a balancing benefit for the UK; and the ability to determine the shape of the management system to which the UK fleet is subject.

The Commission's plan is to block any shift in this direction by insisting that access to the EU market, on anything other than WTO rules, would not be available, unless the UK sacrifices its fishing industry, which would continue to be subject to the whole body of EU rules past, present and future.

Clearly, the Commission's plan for the future relationship between the EU and UK on fisheries is to try to keep the UK tied into an asymmetric, essentially exploitative relationship, with the EU as the dominant party, dictating the all the terms. This approach would not be acceptable in West Africa. Why would it be acceptable here? The UK would have to be bent self-harm to accept such a deal. After Brexit, the EU will control only around 20% of the sea area in the North Sea and in Western Waters about 50%. How could it be fair, realistic, or rational to expect the UK to accept such terms?

So, there are no surprises in the Commission's stance. It is an opening negotiating position and it is to be expected that opening statement in negotiations present unachievable, maximalist, positions. We have every reason to expect that our ministers will stoutly resist. It would not just be the fishing industry that would punish the government electorally for leading it to expect a better future, only to have the promise snatched away and replaced with bitter frustration. Anything that looks like tying the UK into the present arrangements in the form of a CFP-lite, would be denounced by the fishing industry and its allies as an unacceptable betrayal - because it would be an unacceptable betrayal.

There is an expectation across the fishing industry that we will see a significant step forward on day one as we leave the EU, with a clear step-wise plan to take us to enjoy the full fruits of our status as an independent coastal state.

Against this background, the NFFO Executive Committee, which met recently in York, has reaffirmed its objectives as the UK leaves the EU.

NFFO Chief Executive, Barrie Deas, said:

As we enter this next crucial phase in the withdrawal negotiations, there is much speculation on what the implementation/transition phase will mean and, as is usual with these kind of talks, postures are being struck in advance.

Our Executive Committee thought it important to restate our Brexit objectives and to make clear that it is against these that any deal will be judged by the UK fishing industry.

Our objectives are:

- 1 That the UK should, from the point of departure from the EU, have the status of an independent coastal state, with jurisdiction over the fisheries within its Exclusive Economic Zone; along with an independent seat at the table when decisions on fisheries on shared stocks are made.
- 2 That the UK's quotas of shared stocks should broadly reflect the resources that are located within UK waters
- 3 That a 12mile exclusive limit should apply to safeguard to provide adequate protection for our coastal fisheries

4 That access for non-UK vessels to fish within the UK EEZ should be subject to negotiation and should bring balancing benefits to the UK

5 That there should be scope and flexibility for the UK to shape and tailor its domestic fisheries management arrangements to fit with its own fleets

6 That the UK should seek as unimpeded access to EU markets as possible

These are our objectives and it is against these that progress will be measured and judged as we enter this next phase in the negotiations. We think that it is positive that the Commission's negotiating position recognises that bespoke arrangements will be needed to reflect the UK's new legal status after March 2019; and that the EU will no longer have jurisdiction over fisheries in UK waters. This is a welcome sign that there is an awareness that the world is changing and the UK will be an independent coastal state under international law from the point of departure.

What would not be acceptable would be, despite that altered legal status, for the UK to succumb to pressure from the EU to tie us into medium or long-term arrangements in which nothing material changes.

## **Scottish Fishermen's Federation**

### **Overwhelming public support for UK taking back control of fishing grounds**

**16 January 2018**

There is powerful public support for the UK taking back control of its fishing grounds when the country leaves the EU in March 2019, or soon afterwards.

A YouGov poll commissioned by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation found that 79% of voters who expressed an opinion believe the country should exit the Common Fisheries Policy right away or following a short bridging period to tie in with the annual round of Coastal States negotiations.

Just 15% said they thought the UK should only regain control of its waters at the end of a two-year transition period and 6% were in favour of remaining in the CFP.

Even among those who voted remain in the EU referendum, 63% favoured an immediate exit for the fishing industry or one after a short bridging period.

Meanwhile 79% of voters firmly believe that the UK should control access to its own waters compared with just 17% who think the country should continue to abide by EU rules.

The poll results come as senior SFF figures attend further talks with the UK Government to discuss fishing post-Brexit.

The industry has been united in lobbying both the UK and Scottish governments for a fast exit from the CFP within nine months of Brexit in March 2019.

Fishermen's representatives are determined to ensure control of UK waters is restored, allowing UK and Scottish governments to negotiate access agreements with other coastal states in the requisite international meetings.

SFF chief executive Bertie Armstrong said:

It is clear that there is overwhelming public support for the UK to regain control of what is after all part of its natural capital – the fish stocks around our shores.

It is pleasing that voters have also been persuaded that it makes sense for us to leave the CFP within the early stages of the transition period. Due to the nature of the annual international fisheries calendar, that is by December 2019.

Whatever people may think about Brexit, there is broad agreement that for our fishing communities there is a Sea of Opportunity ahead and we should get on with making the most of it.

The pollsters asked voters: Following Brexit, when do you think the UK should gain full control over its waters and fisheries resources?

46% favoured immediately after leaving the EU in March 2019 and 16% said after a short bridging period but prior to the end of the two-year transition period. Fewer than 12% said at the end of the transition period, 5% indicated that the UK should not reclaim full control and just under 22% did not know.

When the don't knows were stripped out, the figures were 59%, 20%, 15% and 6% respectively.

The pollsters also asked: Following Brexit, do you think the UK should have full control over how much fish can be caught in UK waters or should continue keeping to rules set out by the EU?

65% favoured full control while 14% said the UK should stick to EU rules. 3% said neither and 18% did not know.

When the don't knows were removed, the figures were 79%, 17% and 4% respectively.

The YouGov poll of 1,631 people was carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January.

## 4. Parliamentary material

### PQs

#### [Fishing Catches](#)

**Asked by: Lord Pearson of Rannoch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the current discard rates for the major fisheries in the UK; and what assessment they have made of the impact on these discard rates of any changes in the level of total allowable catches after Brexit.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Comprehensive data on the discard rates across different EU fisheries, including fisheries of major interest to the United Kingdom, were published in 2014 by the Scheveningen (North Sea) and North Western Waters regional groups of EU Member States, in the 'Discard Atlas of North Sea Fisheries' and the 'Discard Atlas of the North Western Waters Demersal Fisheries', respectively. The reports are available at the links below:

[http://www.nsrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/discardatlas\\_northsea\\_demersalfisheries\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nsrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/discardatlas_northsea_demersalfisheries_2014.pdf)

[http://www.nwwac.org/fileupload/CEFAS\\_Discard%20Atlas%20of%20the%20North%20WesternWaters%20Demersal%20Fisheries\\_15\\_12\\_2014\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nwwac.org/fileupload/CEFAS_Discard%20Atlas%20of%20the%20North%20WesternWaters%20Demersal%20Fisheries_15_12_2014_FINAL.pdf)

From 1 January 2019 all EU fisheries for species subject to catch limits will be covered by the EU landing obligation. Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 2019 and beyond will be based on catch advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), which will reflect the fact that species subject to the landing obligation will no longer be discarded.

The UK Government remains fully committed to sustainable fisheries management which will continue when we leave the EU, with TACs set in line with the science and ending the wasteful practice of discarding.

**HL Deb 19 February 2018 | PQ HL5497**

#### [Total Allowable Catches](#)

**Asked by: Lord Pearson of Rannoch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the tonnages of the total allowable catches share-out the UK could expect to claim after Brexit.

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to use zonal attachments to determine internationally agreed total allowable catches of fish after Brexit.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

On leaving the European Union, the UK will become an independent coastal state with responsibility for controlling and managing our Exclusive Economic Zone. This will provide an opportunity to reach new agreements on the sharing of fishing opportunities. On average between 2013 – 2015, other EU Member States' vessels landed around 750,000 tonnes of fish (£575 million revenue) caught in UK waters per year whereas UK vessels landed 100,000 tonnes (£100 million revenue) of fish caught in other Member States' waters per year in the same time period.

We will have international obligations to cooperate with other coastal states over the sustainable management of shared stocks; we remain committed to sustainable fishing. We are looking at a range of data to support consideration of future fishing opportunities, including catches and zonal attachment of stocks in the UK Exclusive Economic Zone.

**HL Deb 19 February 2018 | PQ HL5496; PQ HL5495**

[Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: Mackinlay, Craig**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his policy is on banning the use of electric pulse fishing in UK waters after the UK leaves the EU.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The original ban on fishing methods using electric current in EU legislation was followed by a specific derogation to permit electric pulse beam trawl fishing under certain conditions. Those arrangements are currently under consideration.

We will continue to consider all the scientific evidence to inform our negotiations on the EU approach and to develop the UK's future fisheries regime. The government does have concerns about some of the impacts of pulse trawling.

Whatever the outcome on pulse fishing agreed in EU legislation, once we leave the EU we will decide the terms of access to UK waters. That will give us the ability to ban certain approaches where the latest scientific evidence indicates that is necessary.

**HC Deb 08 February 2018 | PQ126476**

[Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: Lord Watts**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether foreign fishermen will retain access to British quotas after Brexit if they can demonstrate that they are continuing to make an economic contribution to the UK.

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 23 January (HL4649), whether they have taken legal advice on the possibility of Dutch and Spanish fishermen seeking compensation from Her Majesty's Government for the loss of access to British waters after Brexit.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Total allowable catches for quota stocks and historical access to the UK's 6 – 12nm stem from international agreements between coastal states or international bodies which do not generally give rise to any right to compensation for individuals.

Any decision by British fishermen to sell, and to buy, catching 'rights' (licences) to or from other fishermen or companies is a commercial one and one for fishermen alone to make. It is not for government to compensate fishermen for these business decisions.

Case law established the rights of those in other Member States to invest in UK quota shares. In particular, Dutch and Spanish entities are involved in fisheries in the Southern North Sea and South West approaches respectively. To ensure that quota allocated to a Member State benefits it, it can impose "economic link" conditions to ensure benefits through, for example, landings and crew composition.

We are reviewing the economic link condition and associated practices as part of the development of our future fisheries management arrangements after our withdrawal from the EU, and have commissioned a research project in order to support this work. The research project will conclude later this year.

Any amendments we make to the economic link conditions will be to ensure that the seafood sector and the wider UK economy derive maximum benefit from those fishing against UK quotas.

**HL Deb 07 February 2018 | PQ HL5089; PQ HL5087**

[Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: Lord Watts**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the loss of foreign catching rights will have on the British fish processing industry after Brexit.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

On leaving the EU, the UK will become an independent coastal state with responsibility for controlling and managing our Exclusive Economic

Zone. This will provide an opportunity to reach new agreements on access and quota arrangements.

To meet consumer choice and demand, the vast majority of fish used by UK processors, primarily white fish (cod and pollack), warm and cold water shrimps and prawns and tuna is imported from outside of the EU. The UK will be able to decide what tariffs to apply to imports after leaving the EU.

Further details on the UK's trade in fish products can be found in the Marine Management Organisations UK Sea Fisheries Statistics 2016, at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-sea-fisheries-annual-statistics>

**HL Deb 05 February 2018 | PQ HL5088**

[Fisheries: London Convention—Withdrawal](#)

**Asked by: Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

The noble Lord will know that the Government played a significant role in creating the new EU multilateral management plan for the North Sea, and have indicated that we want to carry on participating in this plan or a similar one in the future, post Brexit. Does he believe that the EU 27 will take this commitment at face value in the light of the unilateral decision to withdraw from the London Fisheries Convention? Will not the rest of the EU think this is rather provocative and respond accordingly?

**Answered by: Lord Gardiner of Kimble**

My Lords, the countries involved in the London Fisheries Convention expected this to happen. It deals with the six to 12 miles issue when already we will leave the 12 to 200 miles agreement when we leave the common fisheries policy and the EU. This is why we took the decision that we did. As I have said, we want to work with partners, because fish stocks need to be sustainably driven. However, it gives an opportunity for the excellent fishing fleets in all parts of our kingdom to fish productively, sustainably and profitably.

**HL Deb 11 January 2018 | Vol 788 c302**

[Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: Percy, Andrew**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to develop an independent fisheries policy when the UK leaves the EU.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government has announced plans for a Fisheries Bill in this session, which, combined with our withdrawal from the London Fisheries

Convention, will allow us to develop a new UK fishing policy as we leave the EU. This will mean that the UK can control access to, and set quotas for, fish caught in our Exclusive Economic Zone. Defra is currently developing the Fisheries Bill as outlined in the Queen's Speech.

**HC Deb 05 December 2017 | PQ 115322**

### [Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: McCarthy, Kerry**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to introduce (a) a legal requirement to fish at a level that enables fish stocks to recover and (b) to document all fish caught, after the UK has left the European Union.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government has always made clear that it is committed to science-based fisheries management and managing stocks at sustainable levels; and we will continue to do so after we leave the European Union. We will continue to require accurate data recording by fishers and the gathering of robust scientific evidence. A number of trials have been undertaken to test Remote Electronic Monitoring which provides an effective and efficient way of gathering data on what is caught at sea. We have developed significant expertise through this work and are considering how best to apply this learning as we develop options for future fisheries management approaches.

**HC Deb 30 November 2017 | PQ 115868**

### [Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what bilateral discussions they have conducted with neighbouring countries interested in fishing in UK waters after Brexit; and how Parliament will be advised of progress in such discussions.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government maintains regular dialogue with neighbouring countries on marine and fisheries issues but have undertaken no formal negotiations on future access to UK waters. However, we have written to parties to the London Fisheries Convention to give notice of our intention to withdraw from that agreement. The Minister of State has also discussed the Voisinage Agreement with the Minister for Fisheries in the Irish Republic. We have committed to keep Parliament informed provided that doing so would not risk damaging our negotiating position.

**HL Deb 15 November 2017 | PQ HL2933**

[Navy: Fisheries](#)

**Asked by: Lord MacKenzie of Culkein**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for additional naval assets to provide for increased protection to UK fisheries in both the UK territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone following withdrawal from the EU and the London Fisheries Convention.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Defra is making a full assessment of the scale and volume of sea-based patrol capability required after we leave the EU with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Ministry of Defence, Royal Navy and other agencies.

The Government has established a Joint Maritime Operational Coordination Centre to coordinate all sea-based patrol activity across marine agencies to derive maximum surveillance benefit.

**HL Deb 07 November 2017 | PQ HL2604**

[Brexit: EEZ and Territorial Seas](#)

**Asked by: Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contingency planning they have undertaken to ensure patrolling and enforcement of the United Kingdom's exclusive economic zone and territorial seas after Brexit.

**Answered by: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Gardiner of Kimble)**

My Lords, the Government recently established the Joint Maritime Operations Coordination Centre—JMOCC—to co-ordinate sea-based patrol activity across marine agencies to reinforce the security of our waters after Brexit. In respect of fisheries, Defra has assessed the scale and volume of sea-based patrol capability required for Brexit. Defra and the Marine Management Organisation will work through the JMOCC to utilise available resources in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and other agencies.

**Lord West of Spithead (Lab)**

My Lords, I thank the Minister for that helpful Answer and for the discussions we have had about the co-ordination of this. We have a dreadful hotchpotch of vessels and departments involved, and we are responsible for a vast sea area and a hugely long coastline. To somehow get the maximum effect out of the very small number of ships we have, and to overcome the fact that we do not have a proper air surveillance capability and are not using drones properly, it is absolutely necessary to have a study into how we can focus this and use the JMOCC properly—

bearing in mind there is also an operations centre in the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the MMO—so we can co-ordinate this and do it properly. At the moment, we will not be able to do it. Is the Minister willing to look at setting up some group to co-ordinate that study so that we have a snowball's chance in hell of looking after the waters for which we are responsible?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble**

My Lords, yes, with 11,000 miles of coastline and an EEZ of 165 square miles, it is a task. That is precisely why, with the Security Minister having overall responsibility for the JMOCC, the whole purpose is to improve the co-ordination of cross-agency patrol capabilities, increase information-sharing across government and enhance aerial surveillance operations. The whole purpose is to ensure co-ordination; the fact that the JMOCC will be co-located with the National Maritime Information Centre will offer us a strong chance to bring all these things together.

**Lord Sterling of Plaistow (Con)**

The first responsibility of government is the defence of the realm and, in particular, homeland defence. The co-ordination that my friend the Admiral, the noble Lord, Lord West, has just commented on is essential but, frankly, without the kit and the people it does not make much sense. Some of us have pushed many times before, but in practice, we should have not just offshore vessels but inshore ones, whether they are large RIBs or MTB types, stationed in every single little port in the country. The key point is that that would have the effect of the public, at large, feeling that they are being protected. We could use our reservists and marine reservists to man those vessels—and it would encourage them to realise that, if the service is to do what it should be doing, they must vote more moneys in favour of giving it the resources it needs.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble**

My Lords, as I said, the purpose of the JMOCC is to ensure the best co-ordination. Obviously, we rely on the Royal Navy, as we have traditionally. The offshore patrol vessels currently in operation will be replaced by five more capable Batch 2 OPVs, being built in Govan; then there is our Border Force, with six coastal patrol vessels and five cutters. Marine Scotland runs its own arrangements, and the 10 inshore fisheries conservation authorities have 31 “sea-going assets”, as they are described, ranging from small, inshore vessels to larger fisheries protection vessels. I want to be absolutely clear: we are analysing and working on how we can best enhance the capability.

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab)**

My Lords, the Minister will be aware of the UK's obligation under international law to co-ordinate with neighbouring states on access rights and sustainable management of fishing stocks. As not all of the EU 27 states have an interest in this, will the Minister tell us what bilateral discussions the Government are having with all our potential

neighbouring fishing allies and competitors? How will the Lords be kept up to date with progress in those discussions?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble**

My Lords, there were a number of points there. We will be introducing a fisheries Bill, as was in the Queen's Speech. Our objective is to publish a White Paper by Christmas.

**A noble Lord**

This year.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble**

Indeed, this year—my brief says “this year”. That is very important so we set out our future marine fisheries management. Of course, we need to co-operate. The whole essence of what we need to do in these waters is to negotiate, for the first time for a long time, up to 200 miles or the median line. We will be responsible for access to those fisheries but, clearly, the whole purpose of what we are entering into is to have responsible coastal states having discussions and negotiations. As the noble Baroness said, the most important thing is that we get maximum sustainable yields and that they achieve the total allowable catches. Of real importance and the real opportunity is to have sustainable stocks.

**Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD)**

My Lords, would the anxieties of the noble Lord, Lord West, not be allayed were it the position that the Royal Navy, as he has frequently argued, should have more surface ships? In view of its responsibilities in this area, would it not be appropriate for Defra to lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure there are no more cuts to the defence budget?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble**

The whole purpose of JMOCC is to ensure that we and our capabilities are properly co-ordinated. In fact, the noble Lord and I are going to the MMO in Newcastle as soon as we can, early next year, because it is important that we have not only maritime, vessel and aerial capability but the enormous technology there is in digital and awareness of surveillance from the Newcastle office. All those combined will ensure we have secure waters.

## Debate

**Commons debate: UK Fishing Industry**

**HC Deb 07 December 2017 | Volume 632 cc1285-**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-12-07/debates/294F742A-A773-4787-B01F-9EDF7A011DB5/UKFishingIndustry>

## Committees

### **Current House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry: Fisheries**

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/fisheries-17-19/>

### **House of Lords EU Environment Sub-committee inquiry – Brexit: Fisheries**

**HL78 17 December 2016**

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldcom/78/78.pdf>

#### **Evidence volume**

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-energy-environment-subcommittee/Brexit-fisheries/Fisheries-evidence-volume-Written-Oral.pdf>

#### **Government Response**

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-energy-environment-subcommittee/Brexit-fisheries/Gvt-Response.pdf>

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