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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) / Council
No. Cion doc.:	ST 11636/16 PECHE 293 CODEC 1142 + ADD 1 - COM(2016) 493 final
Subject:	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on establishing a multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 676/2007 and Council Regulation (EC) 1342/2008 (First reading)

- Presentation by the Commission and exchange of views

1. On 3 August 2016, the Commission submitted to the European Parliament and the Council a proposal for a multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks.
2. The objective of this proposal is to implement in that area key aspects of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, namely management objectives for exploitation levels linked to the maximum sustainable yield or to the precautionary approach, safeguards related to the state of biomass, the move towards multi-species management including problems of mixed fisheries, the implementation of the landing obligation and the reliance on regionalisation for developing delegated acts for plan-specific technical measures and specifications regarding the landing obligation.

3. The Working Party on Internal Fisheries Policy discussed the Commission's impact assessment on 2 September 2016 and started the examination thereafter. DK entered a parliamentary scrutiny reservation. Several delegations entered general scrutiny reservations. DE and ES have already submitted written comments.¹
4. Delegations welcomed the proposal and acknowledged the quality of the accompanying impact assessment and scientific work. Initial reactions also brought forward a number of concerns, in particular the following ones:
- the scope of the plan which is not harmonised with TAC areas for certain stocks;
 - the categorisation of stocks in different groups, and possible transfers between groups;
 - the avenues for solving the problem of mixed fisheries in the context of a landing obligation, and in particular the limited flexibility and discretion that the proposal leaves by setting the management objectives and targets stock by stock;
 - the related problem of underlying scientific advice still being delivered stock by stock, and evolving only slowly towards mixed fisheries advice, and a lack of response in the plan to cases of significant changes to the scientific advice;
 - the scope of the empowerment for delegated acts, and in particular possible overlaps with the forthcoming general Regulation on technical measures;
 - the practical and resources constraints related to reinforced control provisions;
 - the need for involving Norway into the establishment of the plan as a third country with which many of the stocks are shared.
5. The Presidency considers it important at this point to have a presentation of the proposal and an exchange of views in the Council, following preparation by COREPER.

¹ Cf. docs. 12064/16 and 13790/16.