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COVER NOTE

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To:	Mr Uwe CORSEPIUS, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
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Delegations will find attached document COM(2014) 132 final.

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EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 11.3.2014
COM(2014) 132 final

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Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

**on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in the North East
Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

By Council Decision 81/608/EEC of 13 July 1981, the European Community approved the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in North-East Atlantic Fisheries (the Convention) which entered into force on 17 March 1982. Subsequent amendments to the Convention were approved by the European Union by Council Decision 2009/550/EC of 5 March 2009. The Convention established the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) which is a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) responsible for the adoption of measures designed to fulfil the objectives of the Convention.

Pursuant to Article 218(9) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the position to be adopted on behalf of the Union in RFMOs such as NEAFC when they are called upon to adopt acts having legal effects, with the exception of acts supplementing or amending their institutional framework, must be adopted by Council Decision, on a proposal from the Commission.

Such position within the RFMO is currently established according to a two tier approach. A Council Decision sets out the guiding principles and orientations of the Union's position on a multiannual basis, whereas it is thereafter adjusted for each annual meeting by Commission non-papers to be discussed in the Council Working Party.

As regards the NEAFC, Council Decision 13903/09 of 26 October 2009 provides for a review of the Union's position before the 2014 annual meeting. Therefore, this proposal aims at setting out the Union's position within the NEAFC for the period 2014-2019 and thereby replacing Council Decision 13903/09 which is covering the period 2009-2014.

This revision aims at incorporating the principles and orientations of the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹, taking also into account the objectives of the Commission Communication on the external dimension of the CFP². Moreover, the Union's position has been adjusted to the Lisbon Treaty. At last, the position has been aligned to the extent possible taking into account the specificities of the different RFMOs.

As it is the case for the current positions, the following position contains principles and orientations. In addition, the standard process for the year to year specification of the Union position has been incorporated as requested by Member States for positions aligned more recently.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354 of 28/12/2013, p.22).

² COM(2011) 424 of 13.7.2011.

2. RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS WITH THE INTERESTED PARTIES AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The external dimension of the CFP was part of the impact assessment for the CFP reform proposals. The principles and orientations agreed for the new CFP are simply being transposed into the revised positions.

3. LEGAL ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

The following Decision is based on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(2), in conjunction with Article 218(9) which provides that the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt a decision establishing the positions to be adopted on the Union's behalf in a body set up by an agreement, when that body is called upon to adopt acts having legal effects. This shall apply to the position to be adopted by the Commission, on behalf of the Union, in the NEAFC.

Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council³ is the legal basis setting up the principles to be reflected in this negotiating mandate.

The following Decision shall replace Council Decision 13903/09 which is covering the period 2009-2014, and shall cover the period 2014-2019.

³ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354 of 28/12/2013, p.22).

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(2), in conjunction with Article 218(9) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 38 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in conjunction with Article 39 thereof, provides that one of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy is to assure the availability of supplies.
- (2) Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁴ provides that the Union shall ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and of contributing to the availability of food supplies. It also provides that the Union shall apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management, and shall aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains population of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield. It also provides that the Union shall aim to take management and conservation measures based on best available scientific advice, to promote fishing methods that contribute to more selective fishing and the avoidance and reduction, as far as possible, of unwanted catches, to fish with low impact on marine ecosystem and fishery resources and to gradually eliminate discards. Besides, the regulation specifically provides that these principles shall be applied by the Union in its external policy.
- (3) By Council Decision 81/608/EEC of 13 July 1981⁵, the European Community approved the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in North-East Atlantic Fisheries (the Convention) which entered into force on 17 March 1982. Subsequent amendments to the Convention were approved by the European Union by Council Decision 2009/550/EC of 5 March 2009. The Convention established the North East

⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354 of 28/12/2013, p.22).

⁵ OJ L 227, 12.8.1981, p. 21

Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). The objective of the Convention is to ensure long-term conservation and optimum utilisation of the fishery resources in the NEAFC Convention Area, providing sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits, by the adoption of measures designed to fulfil the objectives of the Convention. Such measures may become binding upon the Union.

- (4) Pursuant to Article 218(9) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the position to be adopted on behalf of the Union in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations when they are called upon to adopt acts having legal effects, with the exception of acts supplementing or amending their institutional framework, must be adopted by Council decision, on a proposal from the Commission.
- (5) In view of the evolving nature of fishery resources in the NEAFC Convention Area and the consequent need for the position of the Union to take account of new developments, including new statistical, biological and other information presented before or during the annual Meeting of the NEAFC, procedures must be established, in line with the principle of sincere cooperation among the Union institutions enshrined in Article 13(2) TEU, for the year-to-year specification of the Union position;

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The position to be taken by the European Union in the annual Meeting of the NEAFC when that body is called upon to adopt decisions having legal effects is set out in Annex I to this Decision.

Article 2

The year-to-year specification of the Union position to be taken in the annual Meeting of the NEAFC shall be conducted in accordance with Annex II to this Decision.

Article 3

The Union position set out in Annex I to the present Decision shall be assessed and, where appropriate, revised by the Council upon a proposal from the Commission, at the latest for the annual Meeting of the NEAFC in 2019.

Article 4

This Decision replaces Council Decision 13903/09 of 26 October 2009.

Article 5

This Decision shall enter into force on XXX

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*