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2026/0122 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

amending Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

• Reasons for and objectives of the proposal

Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249¹ fixes for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in EU waters and, for EU fishing vessels, in certain non-EU waters. The proposal amends those fishing opportunities to take account of the publication of scientific advice, outcomes of consultations with third countries and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) meetings, and other developments. Regulation (EU) 2026/249 has already been amended once for the same purpose².

• Consistency with existing policy provisions in the policy area

The measures proposed are consistent with the objectives and rules set out in Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013³ of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (‘Basic Regulation’), that are to be applied among others when establishing fishing opportunities, i.e. catch and fishing effort limits. One of the objectives of the CFP is to restore stocks to levels that can deliver the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and to maintain them at those levels. The aim is to ensure that EU fisheries are ecologically as well as economically and socially sustainable.

• Consistency with other Union policies

The proposed measures are consistent with other EU policies, in particular Directive 2008/56/EC⁴ of the European Parliament and of the Council (‘Marine Strategy Framework Directive’) and aim to contribute to achieving good environmental status (GES) for descriptor 3 in particular, which requires all commercially exploited fish and shellfish to be within safe biological limits.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

• Legal basis

The legal basis of the proposal is Article 43(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

¹ Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249 of 26 January 2026 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amending Regulation (EU) 2025/202 (OJ L, 2026/249, 30.1.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/249/oj>).

² Council Regulation (EU) 2026/786 of 30 March 2026 amending Regulation (EU) 2026/249 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters (OJ L, 2026/786 of 31.3.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/786/oj>).

³ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 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, 28.12.2013, p. 22, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>).

⁴ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) (OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj>)

- **Subsidiarity**

The proposal falls under the exclusive EU competence as referred to in Article 3(1)(d) TFEU. Therefore, the subsidiarity principle does not apply.

- **Proportionality**

The proposal allocates fishing opportunities to Member States in accordance with the objectives and rules set out in the Basic Regulation as well as the outcome of multilateral or bilateral consultations with non-EU countries, including in the context of RFMOs. As a result, the fishing opportunities should be fixed on the basis of the best available scientific advice, taking into account biological and socio-economic considerations in mixed fisheries where possible.

Pursuant to Article 16(6) and (7) and Article 17 of the Basic Regulation, Member States are to decide how the fishing opportunities available to them may be allocated to vessels flying their flag in accordance with certain criteria set out in those Articles. Therefore, Member States have the necessary margin of discretion when distributing the allocated quotas, in line with their preferred social/economic model for using the fishing opportunities available to them.

- **Choice of the instrument**

Given that the proposal amends an existing regulation, the most appropriate legal instrument is a regulation.

3. RESULTS OF *EX POST* EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- **Ex-post evaluations/fitness checks of existing legislation**

Not applicable.

- **Stakeholder consultations**

The Commission has consulted stakeholders, in particular through the advisory councils, on the basis of its annual communication entitled ‘*Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2026*’ (COM(2025) 296 final)’.

The responses to that annual communication set out their views on the Commission’s evaluation of the status of the resources and on the appropriate management response. The Commission considered those responses when formulating the proposal.

- **Collection and use of expertise**

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) expert groups and decision-making bodies have developed a framework for ICES scientific advice. That framework is based on the best available science and peer reviewed by independent experts. ICES scientific advice is issued on the basis of that framework and with a view to allow the implementation of the objectives and rules of the Basic Regulation, as requested by the Commission.

- **Impact assessment**

The scope of the proposal is circumscribed by Article 43(3) of the TFEU.

This proposal seeks to avoid short-term approaches in favour of long-term sustainability. It takes account of initiatives by stakeholders and advisory councils if they have been positively reviewed by ICES. The Commission’s CFP reform proposal was based on an impact assessment (SEC(2011) 891) that considered that while achieving the MSY objective was a

necessary condition for environmental, economic and social sustainability, those three objectives cannot be achieved in isolation.

As regards fishing opportunities for RFMOs stocks and for stocks jointly managed with non-EU countries, this proposal essentially implements internationally agreed measures. Any aspects that are relevant to assessing possible impacts of the fishing opportunities are dealt with in the preparation and conduct of international negotiations in which the EU's fishing opportunities are agreed with non-EU countries.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

Not applicable.

- **Fundamental rights**

The proposal complies with fundamental rights and in particular those recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed measures will have no budgetary implications.

OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Detailed explanation of the specific provisions of the proposal**

The proposal seeks to amend Regulation (EU) 2026/249 as described below.

Anchovy in Atlantic Iberian waters west

Regulation (EU) 2026/249 provisionally set at zero the TAC for anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) in the western part of International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) subarea 9 and in subarea 10 (western part of Atlantic Iberian waters and Azores waters) for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, pending the publication by ICES of its scientific advice for anchovy in the western part of ICES division 9a (western Atlantic Iberian waters) for that period.

ICES is expected to publish that advice on 19 June 2026. Pending the publication of the ICES advice, in this proposal the relevant recital is provisionally included in square brackets, and the TAC for anchovy in the western part of ICES subarea 9 and in subarea 10 for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 is marked 'pm' (*pro memoria*). As soon as the ICES advice becomes available, the Commission services will update the proposal by means of a non-paper proposing a definitive TAC for that stock and period based on that advice. However, if it appears that doing so would not allow Council to adopt the definitive TAC in time and would consequently lead to a temporary interruption of this fishery as from 1 July 2026, the Commission services will instead propose a provisional TAC for the period from 1 July to 30 September 2026.

Northern prawn in the Skagerrak-Kattegat and North Sea

Regulation (EU) 2026/249 provisionally set at zero the TAC for Northern prawn (*Pandalus borealis*) in EU and Norwegian waters of ICES division 3a (Skagerrak-Kattegat) for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, pending publication by ICES of its scientific advice for Northern prawn in ICES divisions 3a and 4a east (Skagerrak-Kattegat and northern North Sea in the Norwegian deep).

In addition, that Regulation set the EU quota for Northern prawn in Norwegian waters of the North Sea south of 62°N for 2026 at the level agreed with Norway, at the level of 148 tonnes.

ICES is expected to publish its advice for Northern prawn in ICES divisions 3a and 4a east on 8 June 2026. Following the publication of that advice, the EU will hold bilateral consultations with Norway on: (i) the level of the overall fishing opportunities for Northern prawn in ICES divisions 3a and 4a east for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027; (ii) the level of the TAC for Northern prawn in ICES division 3a for that period; and (iii) an additional transfer from Norway to the EU of fishing opportunities for Northern prawn in Norwegian waters of the North Sea south of 62°N for 2026, which, during bilateral consultations on the exchange of quotas and access arrangements for 2026, the EU and Norway agreed to consider. If such an additional transfer from Norway to the EU were agreed, it would be compensated with a transfer from the EU to Norway of additional fishing opportunities for Northern prawn in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 2, 5, 12 and 14 in 2026.

Pending the outcome of those bilateral consultations, in this proposal the text of the relevant recital of Council Regulation (EU) 2025/1350⁵ is provisionally included in square brackets, and the TACs for Northern prawn: (i) in EU and Norwegian waters of ICES division 3a for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027; (ii) in Norwegian waters of the North Sea south of 62°N for 2026; and (iii) in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 2, 5, 12 and 14, are marked 'pm'. As soon as the outcome of those bilateral consultations is known, the Commission services will update the proposal by means of a non-paper proposing those TACs for those periods and at the levels agreed with Norway.

Sprat in the North Sea and in the Skagerrak-Kattegat

Regulation (EU) 2026/249 provisionally set at zero the TACs for sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) and associated by-catches for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 in: (i) EU and United Kingdom (UK) waters of ICES subarea 4 and division 2a (North Sea); and (ii) EU and Norwegian waters of ICES division 3a (Skagerrak-Kattegat), pending publication by ICES of its scientific advice for sprat in ICES subarea 4 and division 3a for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.

ICES published that advice on 30 April 2026. Following the publication of that ICES advice, the EU will hold trilateral consultations with the UK and Norway on: (i) the level of the overall fishing opportunities for that stock for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027; and (ii) the level of the TACs for sprat respectively in ICES subarea 4 and division 2a and in division 3a for that period.

Pending the outcome of those trilateral consultations, in this proposal the text of the relevant recital of Regulation (EU) 2025/1350 is provisionally included in square brackets, and the TACs for sprat and associated by-catches for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 in: (i) EU and UK waters of ICES subarea 4 and division 2a; and (ii) EU and Norwegian waters of ICES division 3a, are marked 'pm'. As soon as the outcome of those trilateral consultations is known, the Commission services will update the proposal by means of a non-paper proposing those TACs for that period at the levels agreed with the UK and Norway.

⁵ Council Regulation (EU) 2025/1350 of 8 July 2025 amending Regulation (EU) 2025/202 fixing for 2025 and 2026 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters (OJ L, 2025/1350, 10.7.2025, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/1350/oj>).

Sprat in the English Channel

Regulation (EU) 2026/249 provisionally set at zero the TAC for sprat in EU and UK waters of ICES divisions 7d and 7e (Channel) for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, pending publication by ICES of its scientific advice for sprat in that area for that period.

ICES published that advice on 30 April 2026. Following the publication of that ICES advice, the EU will hold bilateral consultations with the UK on the level of the TAC for that stock for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, pursuant to Articles 498(2), (4) and (6) of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part⁶ ('Trade and Cooperation Agreement').

Pending the outcome of those bilateral consultations, in this proposal the text of the relevant recital of Regulation (EU) 2025/1350 is provisionally included in square brackets, and the TAC for sprat in ICES divisions 7d and 7e for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 is marked 'pm'. As soon as the outcome of those bilateral consultations is known, the Commission services will update the proposal by means of a non-paper proposing that TAC for that period at the level agreed with the UK.

Capelin in Greenland waters

Following the publication of the latest scientific advice for capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) in the Iceland-East Greenland-Jan Mayen area in January 2026, Greenland and Iceland set a TAC and their respective quotas for that stock for the period from 15 October 2025 to 15 April 2026. In accordance with Article 2(1) of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part⁷, Greenland offered fishing opportunities for that stock and that period of 5 545 tonnes, which the EU accepted on 5 February 2026. Therefore, Regulation (EU) 2026/249, as amended by Council Regulation (EU) 2026/786⁸, set the EU and Member States quotas for capelin in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 2, 5, 12 and 14 for the period from 15 October 2025 to 15 April 2026 at the level agreed with Greenland.

However, Greenland subsequently requested confirmation from the EU that it had the intention to use those fishing opportunities, as otherwise they could be used by the Greenlandic fleet to ensure the best utilisation of the quota. Based on the absence of interest of its fishing industry, the EU offered Greenland to recover those fishing opportunities. Therefore, the EU and Member States quotas for capelin in Greenland's waters of ICES subareas 2, 5, 12 and 14 for the period from 15 October 2025 to 15 April 2026 should be reduced to zero accordingly.

⁶ Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part (OJ L 149, 30.4.2021, p. 10, ELI: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/689\(1\)/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/689(1)/oj)).

⁷ Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part (2025–2030) OJ L, 2024/3203, 30.12.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/prot/2024/3203/oj>).

⁸ Council Regulation (EU) 2026/786 of 30 March 2026 amending Regulation (EU) 2026/249 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters (OJ L, 2026/786, 31.3.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/786/oj>).

Cod in Greenland waters

In accordance with Article 11 of that Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Greenland⁹, and in line with the conditions set out in Article 6 and Chapter VI of the Protocol to that Agreement, the EU and Greenland agreed to conduct an experimental fishery for cod (*Gadus morhua*) in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 5 and 14, north-east of 42°W for the period from 12 February 2026 to 31 December 2026. The aim of the experimental fishery is to determine the potential occurrence and distribution of cod in that area. Fishing opportunities of 3 000 tonnes have been set for that experimental fishery, from which 900 tonnes have been allocated to the EU. Those fishing opportunities may only be fished by vessels engaged in the framework of that experimental fishery and conducting scientific sampling. That scientific sampling will have to be carried under conditions to be determined by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources. It is proposed to set that EU quota as agreed with Greenland.

Pending an agreement between Member States on the allocation key for that stock, it is proposed to provisionally not allocate the EU quota to Member States and allowing all Member States to fish the EU quota until it is fully utilised.

NAFO northern cod

Regulation (EU) 2026/249 provisionally set at zero the TAC and EU quota for cod in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) divisions 2J, 3K and 3L (cod in divisions '2J3KL', 'NAFO Northern cod') for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, pending NAFO's decision to establish that TAC.

In June 2026, Canada is expected to publish its scientific advice for cod in divisions 2J3KL for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. Following the publication of that advice, Canada is expected to establish for its fishing vessels a catch limit for cod in NAFO divisions 2J3KL for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. In accordance with its rules, NAFO is to establish for that stock and for that period a TAC and an allocation to other NAFO Contracting Parties, including an EU quota, to be fished in the NAFO Regulatory Area. That TAC and that allocation are to be established at a level such that the catch limit established by Canada corresponds to 95% of the TAC and the allocation to other NAFO Contracting Parties corresponds to 5% of the TAC.

Pending NAFO's decision to establish such a TAC, an allocation to other NAFO Contracting Parties and any recovery measures for that stock, in this proposal the text of the relevant recital of Regulation (EU) 2025/1350 is provisionally included in square brackets and the TAC for cod in NAFO division 2J3KL for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 is marked 'pm'. As soon as the decision by NAFO is known, the Commission services will update the proposal by means of a non-paper proposing the TAC and possible recovery measures for that period in line with that decision by NAFO.

ICCAT

⁹ Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part (OJ L 175, 18.5.2021, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/793/oj).

Following the adoption of ICCAT Recommendation 25-04 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean¹⁰ at the 29th annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in November 2025, a Commission Delegated Regulation was adopted on 4 March 2026 pursuant to Article 66(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2023/2053¹¹ of the European Parliament and of the Council, amending Article 8(2) thereof with a view to the incorporation of the recommendation into EU law. That delegated regulation is expected to enter into force on 14 May 2026. Consequently, Member States may now request to transfer a maximum 20%, instead of 5% previously, of their annual quota of bluefin tuna in the ICCAT Convention area east of 45°W from the preceding year to a given year. Where Member States make such a request, they are required to submit this request to the Commission in their annual fishing plan. For 2026, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Malta and Portugal requested such transfers from 2025. Based on those requests, the Commission submitted a revised EU annual plan to the ICCAT Secretariat, pursuant to Article 11(5) of Regulation (EU) 2023/2053. Therefore, it is proposed to amend accordingly the quotas of those Member States for bluefin tuna in the ICCAT Convention area east of 45°W for 2026. The Commission services will update the proposal by means of a non-paper specifying the reference and date of entry into force of the delegated regulation adopted on 4 March 2026.

In accordance with Article 17b of Regulation (EU) 2017/2107¹² of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) 2026/249, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2026/786, transferred from 2024 to 2026 annual quotas for certain Member States for albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) in the ICCAT Convention area north of 5°N. The quotas of those Member States for that stock for 2026 were amended accordingly by Council Regulation (EU) 2026/786. However, the UK quota for that stock for 2026 was not amended to take into account such transfers and should therefore be amended accordingly.

NPFC

Regulation (EU) 2026/249, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2026/786, provisionally marked ‘to be established’ the catch limits available to the Member States which are Contracting Parties to the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) for trawlers and purse seiners respectively and the additional EU quota for chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) in the NPFC Convention area for the period from 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027, as well as the associated effort limits.

At its annual meeting in April 2026, the NPFC established those catch limits for the period from 1 June 2026 to 31 December 2026, aligning the fishing period to the calendar year. It

¹⁰ Recommendation 25-04 by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 24-05 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, <https://www.iccat.int/Documents/Recs/compendiopdf-e/2025-04-e.pdf>.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) 2023/2053 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, amending Regulations (EC) No 1936/2001, (EU) 2017/2107, and (EU) 2019/833 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2016/1627 (OJ L 238, 27.9.2023, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2053/oj>).

¹² Regulation (EU) 2017/2107 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017 laying down management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Convention area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1936/2001, (EC) No 1984/2003 and (EC) No 520/2007 (OJ L 315, 30.11.2017, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/2107/oj>).

also added blue mackerel (*Scomber australasicus*), which is harvested together with chub mackerel, to those catch limits.

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249¹ fixes for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters. Those fishing opportunities, including certain measures functionally linked thereto, should be amended to take into account the publication of scientific advice, the outcomes of consultations with third countries and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) meetings and other developments.
- (2) *[The recital and the relevant provisions will be updated after the publication of the ICES advice, or if appears that such an update would not allow Council to adopt the definitive TAC in time and would consequently lead to a temporary interruption of this fishery as from 1 July 2026.] [EITHER] [On 19 June 2026, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) published its scientific advice for anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) in the western part of ICES division 9a for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. Following the publication by ICES of that advice, the total allowable catches (TAC) for anchovy in the western part of ICES subarea 9 and subarea 10 for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 should be set at the level advised by ICES.] [OR] [Regulation (EU) 2026/249 provisionally set at zero the total allowable catches (TAC) for anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) in the western part of International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) subarea 9 and in subarea 10 for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, pending the publication by ICES of its scientific advice for anchovy in the western part of ICES division 9a for that period. To allow fishing to continue until the definitive TAC for that stock for the relevant period is set, a provisional TAC for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 September 2026 should be set at a level corresponding to [X].]*
- (3) *[The recital and the relevant provisions will be updated after the conclusion of consultations between the Union and Norway.] [On 23 June 2025, the Union and*

¹ Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249 of 26 January 2026 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amending Regulation (EU) 2025/202 (OJ L, 2026/249, 30.1.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/249/oj>).

Norway concluded consultations on: (i) the level of the overall fishing opportunities for Northern prawn (*Pandalus borealis*) in ICES divisions 3a and 4a east for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026; (ii) the level of the TAC for Northern prawn in ICES division 3a; and (iii) additional technical measures for that stock. The Union participated in those consultations on the basis of the Union position endorsed by the Council on 12 June 2025. The outcome of those consultations was documented in an Agreed Record signed on 23 June 2025. The TAC for Northern prawn in ICES division 3a should therefore be set at the level agreed with Norway, and the additional technical measures agreed with Norway should be established. During those consultations, the Union and Norway considered exchanges of Northern prawn in Norwegian waters of the North Sea south of 62° N from Norway to the Union. However, as no agreement could be reached on additional transfers of Northern prawn in the North Sea, the unallocated fishing opportunities for Northern prawn in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 5 and 14 should be allocated to Member States. The Member States' quotas for Northern prawn in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 5 and 14 should therefore be amended accordingly.]

- (4) *[The recital and the relevant provisions will be updated after the conclusion of consultations between the Union, United Kingdom and Norway.]* [On 21 May 2025, the Union, the United Kingdom and Norway held consultations on: (i) the level of the overall fishing opportunities for sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in ICES subarea 4 and division 3a for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026; and (ii) the levels of the TACs for sprat in Union and United Kingdom waters of ICES subarea 4 and division 2a and in Union and Norwegian waters of ICES division 3a for that period. The Union participated in those consultations on the basis of the Union position endorsed by the Council on 12 May 2025. The outcome of those consultations was documented in an Agreed Record signed on 21 May 2025. The relevant TACs should therefore be set at the levels agreed with the United Kingdom and Norway.]
- (5) *[The recital and the relevant provisions will be updated after the conclusion of consultations between the Union and the United Kingdom.]* [On 12 May 2025, the Union and the United Kingdom conducted bilateral consultations pursuant to Article 498(2), (4) and (6) of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part², on the level of the TAC for sprat in ICES divisions 7d and 7e for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. The Union participated in those consultations on the basis of the Union position endorsed by the Council on 8 May 2025. The outcome of those consultations was documented in a Written Record signed on 22 May 2025. The TAC or sprat in ICES divisions 7d and 7e for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 should therefore be set at the level agreed with the United Kingdom]
- (6) Regulation (EU) 2026/249, as amended by Council Regulation (EU) 2026/786³, set the Union and Member States quotas for capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) in Greenland

² Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part (OJ L 149, 30.4.2021, p. 10, ELI: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/689\(1\)/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/689(1)/oj)).

³ Council Regulation (EU) 2026/786 of 30 March 2026 amending Regulation (EU) 2026/249 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters (OJ L, 2026/786, 31.3.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/786/oj>),

waters of ICES subareas 2, 5, 12 and 14 for the period from 15 October 2025 to 15 April 2026 at the level agreed with Greenland, in accordance with Article 2(1) of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part⁴. However, subsequently based on the absence of interest of the Union fishing industry, the Union offered Greenland to recover those fishing opportunities. Therefore, the Union and Member States quotas for capelin in Greenland's waters of ICES subareas 2, 5, 12 and 14 for the period from 15 October 2025 to 15 April 2026 should be reduced to zero accordingly.

- (7) In accordance with Article 11 of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Union and Greenland⁵, and in line with the conditions set out in Article 6 and Chapter VI of the Protocol to that Agreement, the Union and Greenland agreed to conduct an experimental fishery for cod (*Gadus morhua*) in Greenland waters of ICES subareas 5 and 14, north-east of 42°W for the period from 12 February 2026 to 31 December 2026. Fishing opportunities of 3 000 tonnes have been set for that experimental fishery, from which 900 tonnes have been allocated to the Union. That Union quota should be set as agreed with Greenland. Pending an agreement between Member States on the allocation key for that stock, provisionally the Union quota should not be allocated, allowing all Member States to fish the Union quota until that is fully utilised.
- (8) [*The recital and the relevant provisions will be updated after the decision by NAFO.*] [On 18 June 2025, Canada adopted a catch limit for its vessels fishing for cod in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) divisions 2J, 3K and 3L for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. Subsequently, on 23 June 2025, NAFO adopted a TAC for that stock and that period, and an allocation to other NAFO Contracting Parties corresponding to 5 % of the TAC, including a Union quota, to be fished in the NAFO Regulatory Area. In addition, NAFO maintained the recovery measures for that stock for that period. Those measures should be implemented in Union law.]
- (9) [*The recital will be updated after the delegated regulation referred to therein enters into force.*] Following the adoption of ICCAT Recommendation 25-04 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean⁶ at the 29th annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in November 2025, a Commission Delegated Regulation was adopted on 4 March 2026 pursuant to Article 66(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2023/2053⁷ of the European Parliament and of the Council, amending Article

⁴ Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part (2025–2030) OJ L, 2024/3203, 30.12.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/prot/2024/3203/oj>

⁵ Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, of the other part (OJ L 175, 18.5.2021, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2021/793/oj).

⁶ Recommendation 25-04 by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 24-05 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, <https://www.iccat.int/Documents/Recs/compendiopdf-e/2025-04-e.pdf>.

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2023/2053 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, amending Regulations (EC) No 1936/2001, (EU) 2017/2107, and (EU) 2019/833 and

8(2) thereof with a view to the incorporation of this recommendation into Union law. That delegated regulation is expected to enter into force on 14 May 2026. As a consequence, Member States may now request to transfer a maximum 20% of their annual quota of bluefin tuna in the ICCAT Convention area east of 45°W from the preceding year to a given year. For 2026, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Malta and Portugal requested such transfers from 2025. Based on those requests, the Commission submitted a revised Union annual plan to the ICCAT Secretariat, pursuant to Article 11(5) of Regulation (EU) 2023/2053. Therefore, the quotas of those Member States for bluefin tuna in the ICCAT Convention area east of 45°W for 2026 should be amended accordingly.

- (10) At its annual meeting in April 2026, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) established catch limits for chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) and blue mackerel (*Scomber australasicus*) available to all NPFC Contracting Parties for trawlers and purse seiners respectively for the period from 1 June 2026 to 31 December 2026. In addition, the NPFC established an additional amount of those stocks for the Union for that same period. It also established associated effort limits. Moreover, the NPFC established measures functionally linked to those catch limits and to that additional amount, without which: (i) those catch limits for all NPFC Contracting Parties could not have been established; and (ii) the fishing opportunities for chub mackerel and blue mackerel in the NPFC Convention area would have to be reduced to protect the non-target species. Those fishing opportunities and functionally linked measures should be implemented in Union law.
- (11) Regulation (EU) 2026/249 should therefore be amended accordingly.
- (12) In order to maintain the reporting periods for the TACs amended by this Regulation, and given that some of those TACs apply from 1 January 2026, the amended TACs should apply retroactively from that date. Such retroactive application does not affect the principles of legal certainty and protection of legitimate expectations, as the TACs concerned are maintained or increased.
- (13) Given the urgency of avoiding interruptions to fishing activities, this Regulation should enter into force on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2026/249

Annex IA, Parts A and B, Annexes IB, IC, ID and IM to Regulation (EU) 2026/249 are amended in accordance with the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 2

Entry into force and application

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from 1 January 2026.

repealing Regulation (EU) 2016/1627 (OJ L 238, 27.9.2023, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2053/oj>).

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*



Brussels, 20.5.2026
COM(2026) 245 final

ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

amending Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters

ANNEX

Amendments to Regulation (EU) 2026/249

(1) Annex IA is amended as follows:

(a) In Part A, Table 2(1) is replaced by the following:

“

Table 2(1)			
Species:	Anchovy <i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	Zone:	9W ⁽¹⁾ and 10 (ANE/9WX10)
Spain	pm ⁽²⁾	Analytical TAC	
Portugal	pm ⁽²⁾		
Union	pm ⁽²⁾		
TAC	pm ⁽²⁾		
⁽¹⁾	Part of subarea 9 west of the line connecting the following points:		
	Point	Latitude	Longitude
	1	36°00'00"N	11°00'00"W
	2	37°01'20"N	8°59'47"W
⁽²⁾	This quota may be fished only from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.		

”

(b) In Part B, Table 77 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 77			
Species:	Northern prawn <i>Pandalus borealis</i>	Zone:	3a (PRA/03A.)
Denmark	pm ⁽¹⁾	Analytical TAC	
Sweden	pm ⁽¹⁾	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Union	pm ⁽¹⁾	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
TAC	pm ⁽¹⁾		
⁽¹⁾	This quota may only be fished from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.		

”

(c) In Part B, Table 79 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 79

Species:	Northern prawn <i>Pandalus borealis</i>	Zone:	Norwegian waters south of 62°N (PRA/4N-S62)
Denmark	pm	Analytical TAC	
Sweden	123 ⁽¹⁾	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Union	pm	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
TAC	Not relevant		
⁽¹⁾	By-catches of cod, haddock, pollack, whiting and saithe are to be counted against the quotas for these species.		

”

(d) In Part B, Tables 113 and 114 are replaced by the following:

“

Table 113

Species:	Sprat and associated by-catches <i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	Zone:	3a (SPR/03A.)
Denmark	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	Analytical TAC	
Germany	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾		
Sweden	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾		
Union	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾		
TAC	pm ⁽²⁾		
⁽¹⁾	Up to 5 % of the quota may consist of by-catches of whiting and haddock (OTH/*03A.). By-catches of whiting and haddock counted against the quota pursuant to this provision and by-catches of species counted against the quota pursuant to Article 15(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 shall, together, not exceed 9 % of the quota.		
⁽²⁾	This quota shall apply from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.		
⁽³⁾	Transfers of this quota may be effected to United Kingdom and Union waters of 2a and 4. However, such transfers shall be notified in advance to the Commission and to the United Kingdom.		

”

“

Table 114

Species:	Sprat and associated by-catches <i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	Zone:	United Kingdom and Union waters of 4; United Kingdom waters of 2a (SPR/2AC4-C)
Belgium	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	Analytical TAC	
Denmark	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Germany	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
France	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾		
Netherlands	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾		
Sweden	pm ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾		

Union	pm (1)(2)
Norway	pm (1)
Faroe Islands	pm (1)(4)
United Kingdom	pm (1)
TAC	pm (1)

- (1) The quota shall apply from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.
- (2) Up to 2 % of the quota may consist of by-catches of whiting (OTH/*2AC4C). By-catches of whiting counted against the quota pursuant to this provision and by-catches of species counted against the quota pursuant to Article 15(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 shall, together, not exceed 9 % of the quota.
- (3) Including sandeels.
- (4) May contain up to 4 % of by-catch of herring.

”

(e) In Part B, Table 115 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 115			
Species:	Sprat	Zone:	7d and 7e
	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>		(SPR/7DE.)
Belgium	pm (1)	Analytical TAC	
Denmark	pm (1)		
Germany	pm (1)		
France	pm (1)		
Netherlands	pm (1)		
Union	pm (1)		
United Kingdom	pm (1)		
TAC	pm (1)		
(1)	The quota shall apply from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.		

”

(2) Annex IB is amended as follows:

(a) Table 3 is replaced by the following and Table 3(1) is inserted:

“

Table 3			
Species:	Cod	Zone:	Greenland waters of 2 and 12; Greenland waters of 5 and 14, south-west of 42°W
	<i>Gadus morhua</i>		(COD/GL251214)
Germany	2 050 (1)	Analytical TAC	
Union	2 050 (1)	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply	
TAC	Not relevant	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply	

- (1) May not be fished from 1 March to 31 May within the ‘Kleine Bank management area’ bounded by the lines

joining the following coordinates:

Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	65°00'N	38°00'W
2	65°00'N	35°15'W
3	64°00'N	35°15'W
4	64°00'N	38°00'W

”

“

Table 3(1)

Species:	Cod <i>Gadus morhua</i>	Zone:	Greenland waters of 5 and 14, north-east of 42°W (COD/GL51442)
Union	900 ⁽¹⁾	Analytical TAC	
TAC	Not relevant ⁽¹⁾	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply	

⁽¹⁾ May only be fished by vessels in the framework of the experimental fishery and conducting scientific sampling. That scientific sampling shall be carried under conditions to be determined by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources.

”

(b) Table 9 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 9

Species:	Capelin <i>Mallotus villosus</i>	Zone:	Greenland waters of 2, 5, 12 and 14 (CAP/GL251214)
Year	2026	2027	
Denmark	0 ⁽²⁾	0 ⁽³⁾	Analytical TAC
Germany	0 ⁽²⁾	0 ⁽³⁾	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply
Sweden	0 ⁽²⁾	0 ⁽³⁾	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply
All Member States	0 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	0 ⁽¹⁾⁽³⁾	
Union	0 ⁽²⁾	0 ⁽³⁾	
Norway	0 ⁽²⁾	0 ⁽³⁾	
TAC	Not relevant ⁽²⁾	Not relevant ⁽³⁾	

⁽¹⁾ Denmark, Germany and Sweden may access the ‘All Member States’ quota only once they have exhausted their own quota. However, Member States with more than 10 % of the Union quota shall not access the ‘All Member States’ quota at all. Catches to be counted against this shared quota shall be reported separately (CAP/GL251214_AMS).

⁽²⁾ This quota shall apply from 15 October 2025 to 15 April 2026.

⁽³⁾ This quota shall apply from 15 October 2026 to 15 April 2027.

”

(c) Table 13 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 13			
Species:	Northern prawn <i>Pandalus borealis</i>	Zone:	Greenland waters of 2, 5, 12 and 14 (PRA/GL251214)
Denmark	pm	Analytical TAC	
France	pm	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Union	pm	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Norway	pm		
Faroe Islands	0		
TAC	Not relevant		

”

(3) In Annex IC, Table 1 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 1			
Species:	Cod <i>Gadus morhua</i>	Zone:	NAFO 2J3KL (COD/N2J3KL)
Bulgaria	pm (1)(2)	Analytical TAC	
Germany	pm (1)(2)	Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Estonia	pm (1)(2)	Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply.	
Spain	pm (1)(2)		
France	pm (1)(2)		
Latvia	pm (1)(2)		
Lithuania	pm (1)(2)		
Poland	pm (1)(2)		
Portugal	pm (1)(2)		
Romania	pm (1)(2)		
Union	pm (1)(2)		
TAC	pm (1)(2)		
(1)	This quota shall apply from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.		
(2)	No directed fisheries are permitted under this quota between 00:00 UTC 15 April 2027 and 23:59 UTC 30 June 2027. During this period, this species shall only be taken as by-catch within the following limits: a maximum of 1 250 kg or 5 %, whichever is greater.		

”

(4) Annex ID is amended as follows:

(a) Table 7 is replaced by the following:

“

Table 7		
Species:	Northern Albacore <i>Thunnus alalunga</i>	Zone: ICCAT Convention area, north of 5°N, excluding Mediterranean (ALB/ICAN05NXM)
Ireland	4 959,40	Analytical TAC Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply
Spain	27 953,00	
France	8 791,67	
Portugal	3 065,81	
Union	44 769,88 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	
United Kingdom	741 ⁽³⁾	
TAC	47 251,00	
⁽¹⁾	The number of Union fishing vessels fishing for Northern albacore as a target species shall be: 1 241.	
⁽²⁾	Special condition: Within the limit of this quota, no more than the following quantities may be taken in United Kingdom waters (ALB/*ICAN05NXM-UK):	
	Ireland	62,03
	Spain	349,65
	France	109,97
	Portugal	38,35
	Union	560,00
⁽³⁾	Special condition: Within the limit of this quota, no more than the following quantities may be taken in Union waters (ALB/*ICAN05NXM-EU):	
	560,00	

”

(b) Table 12(1) is replaced by the following:

“

Table 12		
Species:	Bluefin tuna <i>Thunnus thynnus</i>	Zone: ICCAT Convention area, east of 45°W (BFT/ICAE45W)
Cyprus	240,16 ⁽⁴⁾	Analytical TAC Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply
Greece	480,79	
Spain	8 352,55 ⁽²⁾⁽⁴⁾	
France	8 067,21 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾	
Croatia	1 353,64 ⁽⁶⁾	
Italy	6 534,98 ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾	
Malta	517,31 ⁽⁴⁾	
Portugal	858,28	
Others	104,03 ⁽¹⁾	
Union	26 508,95 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾	
TAC	48 403,00 ⁽¹⁾	

⁽¹⁾ Except Cyprus, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Malta and Portugal, and exclusively as by-catch.

Catches to be counted against this shared quota shall be reported separately (BFT/ICAE45W_AMS).

- (2) Special condition: within this TAC, the following catch limits and allocation between Member States shall apply to catches of bluefin tuna between 8 kg/75 cm and 30 kg/115 cm by the vessels referred to in point 1 of Annex VI (BFT/*E45W8301):

Spain	1 267,03
France	588,60
Union	1 855,63

- (3) Special condition: within this TAC, the following catch limits and allocation between Member States shall apply to catches of bluefin tuna weighing no less than 6,4 kg or measuring no less than 70 cm by the vessels referred to in point 1 of Annex VI (BFT/*E45W641):

France	100,00
Union	100,00

- (4) Special condition: within this TAC, the following catch limits and allocations between Member States shall apply to catches of bluefin tuna between 8 kg/75 cm and 30 kg/115 cm by the vessels referred to in point 2 of Annex VI (BFT/*E45W641):

Spain	167,05
France	322,69 *
Italy	130,70
Cyprus	4,80
Malta	10,35
Union	635,59

* Of which 50% may only be fished in the Gulf of Lion.

- (5) Special condition: within this TAC, the following catch limits and allocations between Member States shall apply to catches of bluefin tuna between 8 kg/75 cm and 30 kg/115 cm by the vessels referred to in point 3 of Annex VI (BFT/*E45W643):

Italy	130,70
Union	130,70

- (6) Special condition: within this TAC, the following catch limits and allocations between Member States shall apply to catches of bluefin tuna between 8 kg/75 cm and 30 kg/115 cm by the vessels referred to in point 3 of Annex VI for farming purposes (BFT/*E45W8303F):

Croatia	1 218,28
Union	1 218,28

”

- (5) Annex IM is replaced by the following:

“

ANNEX IM NPFC CONVENTION AREA

Table 1

Species:	Chub mackerel and blue mackerel <i>Scomber japonicus</i> and <i>Scomber australasicus</i>	Zone:	NPFC Convention area
Union	5 560 ⁽¹⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾	Precautionary TAC	
NPFC Contracting Parties,	47 940 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾	Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply	

including
Union

TAC

Not relevant

⁽¹⁾ May only be fished from 1 June 2026 to 31 December 2026.

⁽²⁾ Special condition: under this catch limit no more than the quantities given below may be taken by the following vessels:

Trawlers* (M/M/NPFC-TR)	Purse seiners* (M/M/NPFC-PS)
5 703	42 237

* The fisheries under those catch limits will be closed by NPFC Contracting Parties, including for the Union by the Commission, within two days from the issue date of the notice of the NPFC Executive Secretary that the utilisation of those catch limits has reached 95 %.

⁽³⁾ Only one trawler flying the flag of a Member State shall be authorised to fish for chub mackerel and blue mackerel at any time. That applies without prejudice to any allocation of future fishing opportunities by the Union in the NPFC Convention area, in particular to the Member State authorised to fish in the period from 1 June 2026 to 31 December 2026.

⁽⁴⁾ Union fishing vessels over 10 000 gross tonnage shall not be authorised to fish for chub mackerel.

⁽⁵⁾ Catches under this quota shall be reported separately (M/M/NPFC-EU).

”