

## NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

### STATEMENT TO THE PRESS: NORWAY MACKEREL UNILATERAL QUOTA

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The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA) is the unified voice of the marketplace for sustainable seafood.

Created to advocate for long-term, sustainable management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic fisheries, NAPA is sector-wide, multi-stakeholder, global and non-competitive. As a collective of businesses with a major share of Northeast Atlantic pelagic purchasing, NAPA is directly invested in the responsible, science-driven management of Northeast Atlantic mackerel.

Today, we are alarmed by the decision of the Norwegian government to set a unilateral quota for Northeast Atlantic mackerel. Increasing the Norwegian national catch of mackerel by 106,456 tonnes up to 298,299 tonnes is a decision that directly challenges cooperative and sustainable management of this crucial stock.

This action undermines efforts to reach an agreement between all parties to achieve long-term sustainability of the stock and will lead to other Coastal States seeking reciprocal increases in their quotas – we are seeing the tragedy of the commons played out in real-time.

The ultimate consequence of this action? Continuing disputes over quota allocation of mackerel will result in an annual catch well in excess of the scientifically advised quota. As a body of over 50 retailers, food-service companies, and suppliers from across the world, we want to underscore in the strongest terms that this has major implications for the supply chain who have made public commitments to source sustainable seafood. The inability of the Coastal States to follow the scientific advice and reach agreement on quotas has thus far resulted in the loss of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for mackerel.

Commitments to sustainable fishing have been made by all coastal States involved in Northeast Atlantic mackerel fisheries through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 on 'life below water'. SDG 14.4 states:

***by 2020, effectively regulate harvesting, and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics***

Yet these commitments are ignored whenever it is convenient.

In absence of responsible leadership by the Coastal States, and Norway in particular in this instance, NAPA members have launched a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) for Northeast Atlantic mackerel to channel the power of the market to incentivise positive changes toward sustainability in the fishery through policy change.

Whilst we embrace our commitments to responsible and ethical sourcing of products for our consumers, it is remarkable that we are in a position where supply chain businesses need to work to drive forward science-based management of common resources. This is the responsibility of the Coastal States governments and needs to be addressed urgently.

NAPA urges all Coastal States to commit to and establish binding fisheries management strategies and to agree sustainable quota shares for all the shared stocks in the Northeast Atlantic that follow scientific advice. We have written to the Heads of Delegations for NEAFC today to this effect, and will continue to advocate our position as we approach the Coastal States meeting in October.

\*ENDS\*

*Notes to editors:*

### **More on NAPA**

NAPA is growing constantly, and currently represents nearly 50 retailers, food service companies and suppliers from EU and non-EU countries with the shared aim of sourcing sustainable and certified seafood in order to supply a growing demand for ecolabelled fish products. To achieve this, NAPA is seeking an agreement on total allowable catches for North East Atlantic Pelagic fisheries in line with scientific advice, and for a long-term science-based management agreement.

Further detail can be found at: <https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/fisheries-management/north-atlantic-pelagic-advocacy-group/>

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