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Mr Gerard J. van Balsfoort  
Chair  
Northern Pelagic Working Group – NPWG  
European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)

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Dear Mr van Balsfoort,

I would like to thank you also on behalf of Commissioner Malmström for your letter dated 28 July 2019 regarding unilateral action by Iceland to increase its mackerel quota for 2019.

I share your concerns that such actions jeopardise the sustainability of this highly important stock. I have already written to the Icelandic Minister expressing our concern and as chair of the 2019 Coastal States negotiations, the Head of the EU Delegation has sent a joint EU, Norway Faroe Islands response strongly denouncing the Icelandic action as well as their failure to attend the recent consultations.

As noted in my previous letter, I consider that leaving the 2019 TAC unchanged was the correct course of action. The unexpected decision of Iceland undermines the EU efforts to achieve long-term sustainability for this highly important stock. I can assure you that my services will continue to work with all stakeholders and the Member States to reach this objective, in addition to the very close cooperation with those Coastal States that share our goals.

I can assure you that we are examining all possible avenues and we have already signalled to Iceland that we are exploring any further actions that may be necessary in response to their actions.

Yours sincerely,

