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Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management  
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Cc: DG MARE

Brussels, 12 April 2024

**NSAC Advice Ref. 06-2324**  
**NSAC Advice on amendment of technical measures in directed**  
**fishery for squid**

*This paper was approved by the NSAC Executive Committee on 12 April 2024 via fast-track procedure.*

## 1 Background

On 25th of March 2024, the NSAC received a request for advice from the Swedish Presidency of the Scheveningen Group concerning an amendment of the Technical Measures Regulation (TMR) regarding mesh size for the directed fishing for squid.

Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 establishes a framework for technical measures for the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems. Article 15 with its annexes establishes technical measures at regional level and empowers the Commission to adopt delegated acts in order to amend, supplement, repeal or derogate from those technical measures. The delegated acts are adopted on the basis of joint recommendations (JR) submitted by Member States concerned, in accordance with Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

The regional Annex V for the North Sea area, part B provides for baseline mesh sizes for towed gear (point B 1.) and point 1.1. lays down the basic mesh sizes. Point 1.2. stipulates that for certain directed fisheries listed in the tables in part B smaller mesh sizes may be used provided that by-catches of cod, haddock, and saithe, do not exceed 20 % of the total catch in live weight of all marine biological resources landed after each fishing trip.

The draft joint recommendation for which NSAC advice has been sought requests an amendment to the derogation granted in Annex V for the directed fishing for squid. Increasing the minimum mesh size for this fishery aims at improving fishing practices in the North Sea, in line with the objectives and targets set out in the Regulation, under Article 3(2)(a) on the optimisation of exploitation patterns to provide protection for juveniles and spawning

aggregations of marine biological resources, and Article 4(1)(a) on the reduction of catches of marine species below the minimum conservation reference size.

Under the current definition in Annex V, part B, it is legal for a fishing vessel to fish for squid with mesh sizes of 40mm and up in the whole North Sea for the targeted fishing of squid, given that no further definition of a targeted fishing is currently given in the applicable regulations. This potentially facilitates abuse of the derogation from the baseline mesh size and is contrary to the objectives outlined in Article 3(2)(a) and 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241. To amend this derogation from the baseline mesh size, the Scheveningen Group proposes to increase the minimum mesh size used for towed gear targeting squid would be 80 mm in Union waters in ICES area 4 and 90 mm in ICES subdivision 3a.

## 2 NSAC Advice

The NSAC has in the past provided advice<sup>1</sup> supporting the proposal to increase the minimum mesh size in the directed fishery for squid to 80 mm. In addition, Member States were advised to take into consideration maintaining the gear type specifications to the directed fishery for squid and seek a level-playing field with other geographical areas where targeted squid fisheries are present. The position stated in the previous advice is maintained for the current JR.

## 3 Conclusion

The NSAC wishes to thank the Swedish administration for the possibility to provide input to the draft amendment to the derogation for the directed fishing for squid and remains available for further discussion on the subject.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nsrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/18-2223-NSAC-Advice-to-Sch-Group-JR-on-Technical-measures-for-Directed-Fisheries-for-Squid.pdf>