

Industry Group Agreement to Cod fishery in the northern part of North-East Atlantic (FAO area 27, ICES division IIb2 and Ib*)

November 16th 2016

Industry Group

The Industry Group is composed of the Norwegian oceangoing fleet, representatives for the Russian Barents Sea trawlers, big fish producers and retailers in the UK.

We acknowledge that climate change and the melting of the ice sheet in the above areas has caused concern related to fishing activities in the vast area around Svalbard.

We acknowledge Greenpeace's role in bringing attention to the region under these changing circumstances.

We understand that the marine area around Svalbard have been identified in several scientific programs as important.

We recognise that the fisheries in the northern Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea including the marine areas around Svalbard are amongst the best regulated fisheries in the world. Most of these fisheries are independently certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) as compliant with their standard for sustainable and well-managed fisheries. Additionally there are many protected areas already established around Svalbard to safeguard ecological biodiversity.

We have agreed that from the 2016 season the catching sector will not expand their Cod fishing activities with trawl gear into those areas where regular fishing has not taken place before. This is a precautionary measure until through initiatives such as those mentioned below the fishing activity in future years will be determined by improved knowledge replacing the need for this precautionary approach.

We would like to state that the Industry Group has been successful in gaining agreement to have an action orientated High-Level Roundtable. The Roundtable will include the Norwegian Governmental Fisheries Management agencies and institutions and welcomes other interested public stakeholders to participate.

The objectives of the High-Level Roundtable will be to establish a transparent process that will continue to enable Cod to be sourced from the area but also to meet the MSC independent sustainable fishery standard for activities beyond 2016.

We call for the governments to assist these efforts and ensure all measures as based on best available science, and to properly assess and map the area through surveys, for example but not exclusively the Mareano program.

In parallel with the High Level Roundtable, the Cod catching industry will accelerate their work to meet the MSC condition regarding Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME's) identified in the MSC re-certification process. Together with the scientists from the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research and other relevant institutions, we will use all available data:

- To define areas that may be vulnerable to trawling.
- To develop effective and proportional measures that prevent environmental degradation in such areas.

We are also committed to a voluntary agreement to avoid fishing in such areas on a precautionary basis, whilst the appropriate measures are under development. The voluntary agreement will be in place before the Cod fishing starts in the region in 2016.

Supported by:

Catching Sector:

Fiskebåt -The Norwegian Fishing Vessel Owners Association; Eurofish; Norebo; АТФ (Arkhangelsk Trawl Fleet); Союз рыбопромышленников Севера (Union of Fishermen of the North)

Processors and Manufacturers:

Espersen; Icelandic/Seachill; The Saucy Fish Co; Nomad Foods Europe (Birds Eye, iglo & Findus); Young's Seafood Ltd.

Retailers and Food Service:

Morrisons, Tesco, ASDA, Co-operative, McDonald's, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury`s.

* the part of ICES Division 1b referred is West of the delimitation line as defined in the Treaty between Norway and Russia concerning maritime delimitation and cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean 2010.