# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Agreement of 2018 EU Fishing Opportunities and Quotas under the Common Fisheries Policy** |
| **DATE**  | **19 December 2018**  |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

As part of the UK Ministerial negotiating team, we have again helped secure a deal for Wales on fishing opportunities and quotas at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels, which concluded in the early hours of this morning.

In line with our commitments to ensure our natural resources are sustainably managed and based on the best available scientific advice, the priority was to safeguard fish stocks whilst securing a positive outcome for those coastal communities whose economies depend so much on the sea. This year’s negotiations were more important than ever with the uncertainty Brexit presents.

We worked closely with our stakeholders and I am very grateful to them for their support. We were able to present a strong Welsh case to the Presidency and Commission, along with colleagues from the UK Government and other Devolved Administrations. I am pleased to inform Members we were successful in securing a deal on Wales’ priorities.  These were to:

* Avoid needless discards of sea bass and protect the interests of commercial and recreational fishers whilst keeping the stock on track to recovery.
* Increase or maintain quotas for Skates/Rays, Plaice, Haddock and Megrim in the Celtic Sea and for Cod, Haddock, Plaice and Sole in the Irish Sea, while still meeting sustainability targets
* Facilitate interim solutions to the challenges posed by zero-catch advice for a number of species under the implementation of the Discard Ban in accordance with the Common Fisheries Policy.

*“This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should*

*members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.”*