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Mr. Jorgen Holmquist
Director General
DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Date: 26 April 2006
Our reference: PRAC06.07/IH
Subject: Input Pelagic RAC on MoU with ICES

Dear Mr. Holmquist,

In the light of the current revision of the MoU with ICES, the Pelagic RAC is pleased with the opportunity to present its views and comments.

Comments from Pelagic RAC to MoU EU-ICES

1. In paragraph 4, it should be specifically mentioned that 'the information on which the advice is based and all other relevant reports' should also be made available to the RACs.
2. In paragraph 5 (b), results from the ACFM-meeting in May should be specifically mentioned, i.e. that advice on the relevant stocks should be presented as soon as possible – and not wait until October.
3. In paragraph 5 (b), the 7 RACs and their WGs should be specifically mentioned, i.e. that ICES is also obliged to present the advice and its scientific background in May and October to each of the RACs and their WGs.
4. In paragraph 5 (c), the RACs should be listed as (very important) forums where dialogue between scientists, fishing sector and other stakeholders take place. And ICES accordingly, should make every effort to attend all meetings in the RACs and their WGs.

5. In paragraph 6, special requests directly from the RACs should be included.
6. Paragraph 11 (under the heading 'General Administrative Arrangements') should include an access – as observer – for each of the RACs to the Annual Science Conference of ICES and all Advisory Committee meetings.
In particular, access as observer to plenary sessions of ACFM should be incorporated.
And access as active observer in the meetings of the subgroups during ACFM should be established.
(During the ACFM session, discussions take place in more subgroups simultaneously, so each of the RACs should be allowed to send observers to each of the subgroups)
7. Annex 2 lays out the format of standard recurring advice. However, multi-annual advice is not included. As a minimum, the recurring advice should include a 3 to 5 year forecast, based on 'normal' recruitment, catches=TAC, TAC set according to management plan and so on.
8. Annex 3 needs to be amended according to the new schedule for setting TACs.

We hope you will take these views on board while discussing and drafting the new MoU. Please let us know if there are any issues that need further clarification.

We are looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I. Harkes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pelagic RAC

Ingvild Harkes

c.c. Miriam Garcia-Ferrer, Northsea RAC, Baltic RAC, SWW Rac.