



Pelagic RAC
Treubstraat 17
PO Box 72
2280 AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)70 336 9633
Fax: +31 (0)70 399 3004
E-mail: info@pelagic-rac.org
<http://www.pelagic-rac.org>

European Commission
Directorate-General Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
Att. Mr Fokion Fotiadis
Rue de la Loi 200
B 1049 Brussels, BELGIUM

Date: 22 February 2007
Our reference: PRAC07.06/IH
Subject: Timing scientific advice

Dear Mr. Fotiadis,

On 27 October 2006, the Pelagic RAC received a proposal to adapt the timing of the scientific advice from the Commission (ref. D12314). In the paper, it was recognised that the current process is not optimal and it includes provisions for the advice to be released earlier in the year.

The Pelagic RAC feels this is a positive move and would like to express its support to the proposed changes.

The suggestion to change the timing of scientific advice is very important as the Pelagic RAC needs time to reflect on the advice before providing its recommendations. However, the positive effects of the proposed changes are nullified if the timing of the Coastal States meetings does not also change. Last year, for example, the decision on the TAC for Northeast Atlantic mackerel was taken by the Coastal States before the Pelagic RAC was able to comment. We strongly advise therefore that both the timing of the scientific advice and the timing of the Coastal States meetings be adapted.

The adaptation of a longer-term perspective would also assist the development of stock management plans. The Pelagic RAC is in the fortunate position that it does not need to devise recovery plans, but can focus on longer-term management. One possible approach is a system in which management plans would be based on a specific TAC, but when additional scientific information is released later in the year, minor adjustments (5-10%) could be made to TAC. This approach would also help to circumvent the consequence of the change in timing, i.e. the fact that some scientific data would not be available when the advice is being developed.



Again, we would like to express our support and are very interested in discussing the proposal and management strategies further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ingvild", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PELAGIC RAC

Ingvild Harkes

c.c. Mr Peñas-Lado, Kenneth Patterson, Mr Emmanouil Papaioannou, Mr Poul Degnbol, Ms Miriam Garcia-Ferrer