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Date: 24 November 2009  
Our reference: 0910PRAC09/AC  
Subject: Recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2010 for joint pelagic stocks

Dear Mr Fotiadis,

Please find attached as an annex the Pelagic RAC's unanimous recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2010 for several pelagic stocks. While recognising that negotiations with third countries are ongoing and that the Pelagic RAC has already communicated most of these points of view to Commission representatives during its Working Groups meeting on 14 October 2009, the Pelagic RAC still finds it important to formally inform the Commission via this letter.

For any questions, please contact the secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aukje Coers', written over a horizontal line.

Aukje Coers  
Pelagic RAC secretariat

c.c. Ms Isabelle Viallon (by e-mail)

## **Annex 1: P-RAC recommendations on several pelagic stocks**

### Herring in the Northeast Atlantic

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the ICES advice is followed, i.e. that the TAC is set in accordance with the LTM plan at 1 483 000 t. At the same time, the Pelagic RAC wonders whether the plan delivers maximum yield in the long term, and requests the Commission to ask ICES to investigate whether the plan aims at MSY or not.

### Mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic

The Pelagic RAC would like to express its serious concerns about the current management situation of this stock. The Pelagic RAC members are extremely frustrated by the fact that they have made major efforts over the last few years, and especially last year with the development of the LTM plan, to make the management of this stock sustainable. The anticipation of those efforts turning out to be in vain, because the stock might deteriorate within the next few years due to significant amounts of quota set unilaterally by Norway, the Faroes Islands and Iceland set outside of the Coastal States agreement and overshoot of the TAC by the fishery on the Southern component of the stock, is unacceptable. The Pelagic RAC therefore refrains from providing an advice on the TAC for this stock, until managers have resolved the situation.

### Blue whiting (Combined stock)

The Pelagic RAC refrains from providing an advice on the TAC, because it feels that science is not providing a definitive solution, due to the major uncertainty in the assessment as is illustrated by the vast range of precautionary catch levels that are provided in the catch options table in the ICES advice. In particular, the Pelagic RAC is concerned about the assumption that the recruitment figure for 2008 is not reliable and ICES has instead taken an average number based on the stock recruitment relationship, which, as far as the Pelagic RAC understands, are not very reliable figures either. The Pelagic RAC therefore requests that STECF is asked to reconsider this assumption and advice on the TAC in accordance with their findings.

### Horse mackerel – Western, North Sea and Southern stocks

Considering that no new information is available on the assessments, the Pelagic RAC recommends that the TACs for the three stocks are rolled over; i.e. 170 kt for Western stock, 39 kt for the North Sea stock and 58 kt for the Southern stock.