



16.12.2009 D 14372

Brussels,  
MARE/ D(2009)

M. Ian MacSween  
Pelagic RAC Secretariat  
Treubstraat 17  
PO Box 72  
2280 AB Rijswijk  
The Netherlands

**Subject: Mackerel and Horse Mackerel**

Dear Mr. MacSween

I have followed the mackerel issue closely as it is critical to the well being of our important European pelagic fleets. The recent move by Norway onto horse mackerel is a new development.

I regret the recent positions taken by Iceland and other the mackerel Coastal States. I consider Iceland's unilateral declaration of a 130 000t outside the management arrangements set in the relevant regional Fisheries Organisation to fall short of what is expected compared to its obligations under the UN Straddling Stocks agreement. I also regret the claim for an increased share by Denmark (on behalf of the Faroe Islands) that led to the rupture of talks this autumn. I also find it unfortunate that Norway finds it necessary to make severe demands concerning increased access and an increased share of this stock, among other difficulties. Norway's actions in respect of horse mackerel are a further cause for concern.

As the European Union is the main stakeholder for both these stocks, we can expect that that any deterioration of the management system will be to our disfavour.

I am aware of the good collaboration that has developed between the Pelagic RAC, ICES and my services, in particular through the development of the mackerel long-term plan last year. Like you, I had hoped things were on a good track.

Nevertheless, the other parties in the negotiations can develop their international fisheries policy according to their sovereign interests, and for the moment we can only regret the positions they have taken and hope that, through negotiation, we will still be able to reach an acceptable solution. If no negotiated solution is possible, the situation would naturally

fall back to a "zero-access" solution where each party fishes only in its own economic zone. This would leave open the possibility of olympic fishing by all parties, to the eventual detriment of all.

I will not comment in detail while the negotiations continue, but I assure you of my concern and my close attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Fokion Fotiadis