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Date: 26 July 2011
Our reference: 1011PRAC111/AC
Subject: Response to Policy Statement on fishing opportunities for 2012
CC: Ms Isabelle Viallon (by e-mail)

Dear Ms Evans,

Thank you for consulting the Pelagic RAC with the policy document on fishing opportunities for 2012. With this letter the Pelagic RAC would like to share some views with you and your services.

First of all the PRAC considers a final document should be issued having taken account the views expressed during the consultation process. To do otherwise makes the process of consultation redundant.

The PRAC acknowledges that a very different and indeed simplified approach is taken in the current document as compared to previous years. However the management of 206 different fish stocks throughout EU waters *is* a complex matter and one size does not fit all in many cases.

The Pelagic RAC is particularly concerned about the way that the third category as described in paragraph 6 on 'working method for proposing TACs' is defined. This crude definition focussed purely on availability of information on the stock size could lead to unnecessary sacrifices of industry's fishing opportunities. Technically speaking, for example, the LTM plan for Western horse mackerel which was developed by the Pelagic RAC has not yet been adopted and so it is unclear whether this stock would qualify to be regarded as a 'category one stock' based on the formulation in the document. If not, since the management of this stock is not based on information of the stock size, it would fall under category three of data deficient stocks thus having a 25% cut applied. This example highlights that the simplistic approach proposed is not workable.

Finally, the Pelagic RAC is worried that Member States' efforts to implement and/or improve research necessities will not be sufficient to avoid the complete phasing out of some fisheries through cuts in the TAC of 25% over a number of consecutive years. Some stocks even do not fall under the obligations of the Data Collection Regulation and the Pelagic RAC hopes that the Commission would, together with Member States, regard these stocks in a more suitable manner. Furthermore the industry members of the PRAC find it not acceptable that the industry is punished in the form of a 25% cut in TACs for the failing of Member State(s) to comply with their obligation under the Data Collection Framework regulation. The Commission has other ways and means at its disposal to made Member States comply with their obligations.

Although much more may be said on complex issues such as these, the RAC would prefer to go into more detailed discussions on a stock-by-stock basis rather than a one size fits all with you and your services throughout the rest of the year in preparation of setting the TACs for 2012.

If you have any questions, please contact the secretariat.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat