



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels, 14 JUN 2011
DG MARE – F2/IV633463

Mr Iain MacSween
President of the Pelagic RAC
Treubstraat 17
2280 AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Subject: Your request to include boarfish in the remit of the Pelagic RAC

Dear Mr MacSween,

Thank you for your letter of 31 May in which you requested to include boarfish in the remit of the Pelagic RAC.

As you know the RACs' areas of competence are set in annex 2 of Council Decision 585/2004, which states that the Pelagic RAC is competent for four "Pelagic stocks (blue whiting, mackerel, horse mackerel, herring) in all areas (excluding the Baltic sea and the Mediterranean Sea)". The rationale behind the establishment of the Pelagic RAC was that these wide-spread pelagic stocks would have otherwise been covered by 3 different RACs (NSRAC, NWWRAC, SWWRAC), with the risk that the 3 RACs adopt diverging recommendations.

Boarfish is a wide-spread pelagic species. It is found in the Northeast Atlantic from Norway to Senegal and in Mediterranean Sea. It has been for long a bycatch in the mackerel, horse mackerel and crustacean trawl fisheries but spawning aggregations have recently become the target of a directed commercial fishery in west of Ireland. It is important to develop a sustainable management framework for this fishery, in cooperation with scientists and the pelagic fishing industry. For all these different reasons, the Commission would be favourable to the inclusion of the Atlantic boarfish in the remit of the Pelagic RAC, in the future.

According to Council Decision 585/2004, the list of stocks under the competence of the Pelagic RAC is exhaustive and - as a consequence - the Atlantic boarfish falls now in principle under the remits of the NWWRAC and the SWWRAC. Contrary to your statement, there is no "absence of legal framework". To include boarfish in the remit of the Pelagic RAC, we would need to amend the Council Decision through co-decision.

This issue could be discussed during the CFP reform negotiations. In the meantime, and in light with Article 8 of the Council Decision 585/2044, I would suggest you contact the SWWRAC and the NWWRAC and inform them about your wish to develop management measures for boarfish in the Atlantic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lowri Evans', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lowri Evans

Copy: Chairs of the South Western Waters RAC and of the North Western Waters RAC