



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

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D(2011) 673908

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

Subject: Your request for further evaluation of the long term management plan for North Sea herring

Dear Mr McSween,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May 2011 concerning the joint EU-Norway request to ICES to evaluate the long term management plan for North Sea herring.

ICES considers that the plan performs well in relation to the objectives of providing sustainable fisheries with stable yield in conformity with the precautionary approach. However, the change in the perception of the stock in for 2010 was exceptionally large, and I recognise that the plan was not designed to accommodate such an event. The Commission resisted demands for an in-year revision of the TAC, because such a procedure was not envisaged by the plan that had been evaluated by ICES. This created a great deal of discontent, which prompted the EU and Norway to ask ICES for its opinion on the matter.

I note that ICES endorsed the point of view that in-year revisions of TACs could lead to management decisions that responded to noise in the assessment rather than any underlying biological signal. The question remains, however, as to how we should deal with similar events in the future.

I am aware of the active participation of the Pelagic RAC in the evaluation through its participation in the ICES workshop on the subject. You will therefore be aware of the difficulties that ICES foresees in trying to include exceptional events in an evaluation of a long term management plan. ICES has nevertheless indicated its willingness to explore such scenarios, and I am pleased to offer my support to the collaborative iterative process between scientists, managers and stakeholders that ICES recommends.

Yours sincerely,

Lowri Evans