



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,
MARE A2/KP/D (2014)

Ms. Verena Ohms
Executive Secretary Pelagic AC
Treubstraat 17
PO Box 72
2280 AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Subject: Opinion on Policy Statement

Dear Ms. Ohms,

Thank you for the Pelagic AC's contribution to the consultation on fishing opportunities for 2015¹.

You ask whether it is foreseen to begin a process at Member State level to develop multiannual plans for the same stocks as are presently under internationally-agreed plans. As the stocks of interest are managed under Coastal State or bilateral agreements, it is clear that the internationally-agreed multiannual plans will continue to be necessary. In the preparation of the next generation of such plans, Member States may well undertake discussions and analyses between themselves, with the fishing sector and with scientific agencies. This would be a preparation before an international agreement rather than a parallel process.

Concerning the Celtic Sea and Southwest Ireland herring TAC, we take note of your request that the TAC should be based on the management plan agreed by the Pel AC and endorsed by ICES. This request will be considered by the Commission before a proposal is made.

We note that you concur that delays to reaching MSY beyond 2015 should only be accepted where there is clear evidence of jeopardy to social and economic sustainability clearly demonstrated by the Member State concerned, and we thank you for your support on that point.

For data-poor situations, the application of the precautionary approach should be implemented in a way that balances the risks to the fish stocks and the needs of the industry for stable and sustained catches.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council concerning a consultation on fishing opportunities for 2015 under the Common Fisheries Policy. COM(2014) 388 final

As regards your question about the meaning of the statement that once MSY has been achieved the Commission will as appropriate propose measures to enable further rebuilding, this refers to the fact that it will be necessary to continue to ensure not only achieving, but maintaining MSY over time.

We agree that effort management is a less efficient tool than TACs for managing pelagic fisheries. We will continue to pursue our goal of simplifying fisheries management in the next generation of management plans.

In terms of discards, there will naturally be intensive discussions on quota increases to take account of fish previously discarded and these will be addressed in the course of preparations for the EU-Norway bilateral and Coastal States meetings. It would be premature to address the topic in detail at this stage. However, we note that you recognise the principle that the total out-take of fish must not be higher than that corresponding to the F_{msy} catch.

We regret that our Communication has not covered the state of pelagic stocks in as much depth as you would have liked. This Communication has a very wide scope covering all European fisheries and fish stocks, and it is unfortunately impossible to do full justice to each of the subjects in the space available.

Thank you again for your positive and helpful contribution to the discussion.

Yours sincerely,



Lowri EVANS