



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,
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Ms Verena Ohms
Executive Secretary
Pelagic AC
Louis Braillelaan 80
2719 EK Zoetermeer
The Netherlands

Subject: Discard Plans

Your reference: 1415/PAC 01

Dear Messrs. MacSween, Sverdrup-Jensen and O'Donoghue

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the discard plans for pelagic fisheries. Many of the points you have raised were also highlighted by the Northern Pelagic Working Group of EAPO in an earlier open letter to the Commission. Therefore, I will take this opportunity to re-iterate my earlier comments to EAPO and also update you on the progress made since the summer with the discard plans.

We fully recognise the extensive work carried out by the pelagic industry and the PELAC on the implementation of the landing obligation. We are aware of your disappointment as to the level of engagement by Member State groups during formulation of their joint recommendations, but we are confident that the consultation process with the ACs will develop over time.

Following our screening of the joint recommendations received from the Member States and also the evaluation of the separate plans by STECF, we have now incorporated these joint recommendations into delegated acts, and they have been adopted by the Commission, pending the period for objection by the co-legislators, these will enter into force on 1 January 2015.

Though the joint recommendations received do not contain any detail on specific control measures that may be implemented by Member States, we know that in most of the regions groups of control experts have been specifically convened to consider these issues. We expect to receive the recommendations from the Scheveningen and BALTFISH 'control' groups soon. The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in Vigo has also been involved in the work of these groups and it has been running pilot projects with Member States looking at specific fisheries. Jointly this work will inform

the debate on effective control measures. It will be up to the Member States regionally to agree on which measures are most appropriate.

Regarding the concerns of the PELAC on the activities of Norwegian and Faroese vessels fishing for pelagic species in EU waters, I would like to assure you that such vessels will be in no way exempted from the landing obligation. All existing EU technical and control rules including common rules on slipping, discards and high-grading of pelagic species, as well as the weighing and inspection of pelagic landings ashore will apply to all third-country vessels in EU waters.

I am fully aware of the importance of ensuring legal clarity on 1 January 2015 for pelagic fishermen. I shall keep you fully informed of any development in this respect.

If you have any further question on this reply, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,



Lowri Evans

Copies: J. Verborgh, E. Bianchi, J. Paardekooper, D. Rihan, E. Georgitsi (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries)