



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director General

Brussels,  
MARE/ D3/ADV

Mr Jesper Raakjaer  
Chairman of the Pelagic AC  
Louis Braillelaan 80  
2719 EK Zoetermeer  
The Netherlands

**Subject: Recommendation on potential solutions to choke situations in pelagic fisheries**

*Your ref.: 1718/PAC 131*

Dear Mr. Raakjaer,

Thank you for your letter of 25 May 2018, which provides us with the PELAC recommendation on potential solutions to choke situations in pelagic fisheries.

With the full implementation of the landing obligation in 2019, we need to find sustainable, forward-looking solutions to the issue of choke species, in line with the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). In this context, I am grateful for your letter and your detailed analysis of the potential choke situations in the pelagic fisheries as well as for your suggestions for possible solutions. It is important that we try to lay out the totality of choke issues in order to ensure a global and coherent approach, which provides tailor-made solutions on how to solve these issues, where they cannot be solved using the instruments already provided by the CFP.

I note that your main challenges are not other pelagic stocks, but rather demersal bycatches in pelagic fisheries, and also pelagic bycatches in demersal fisheries.

You propose a *de minimis* to solve the pelagic choke issues. However, I regret to have to point out that, if such a solution is not included in a regional joint recommendation, the Commission cannot adopt such provisions in the delegated acts on discard plans.

On the boarfish closures, we very much support the efforts of your Advisory Council to ensure a sustainable exploitation of this species. The stock biomass declined rapidly in 2013 and 2014 and has since then remained low. I encourage you to keep using your technical expertise of the pelagic fisheries to propose sustainable ways forward.

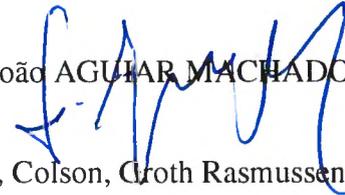
Concerning your 'other solutions' provided I can fully support that such solutions need to be developed and implemented without delay, both in order to comply with the landing obligation and to reach MSY by 2020. I am encouraged by seeing the emphasis you put on improving selectivity. I would appreciate that you keep my services informed of any

solutions you may find to improve selectivity. Furthermore, I fully agree with you that improved at-sea monitoring and control should be encouraged to ensure an effective landing obligation.

Let me thank you again for your constructive input. I look forward to our continued cooperation. Should you have any question regarding this letter, you may contact Ms. Pascale Colson, coordinator of the ACs ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273).

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO



c.c.:

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