

**Mr. Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO**  
Director General  
Directorate General for Environment  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels  
BELGIUM

Pelagic AC  
Louis Braillelaan 80  
2719 EK Zoetermeer  
The Netherlands  
  
Tel: +31 (0)63 375 6324  
E-mail: [info@pelagic-ac.org](mailto:info@pelagic-ac.org)  
<http://www.pelagic-ac.org>

Date: 17 September 2019  
Our reference: 1920/PAC02  
Subject: Setting-up of an ICES working group to investigate impacts of seismic activities on (herring) spawning grounds

Dear Mr. Calleja Crespo,

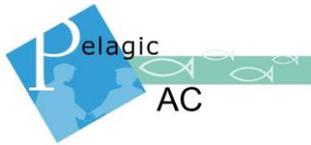
The Pelagic Advisory Council would like to request the cooperation of the Commission on an important issue. This request has unanimously been endorsed by the Executive Committee. It has been acknowledged as significant by your colleagues of DG MARE who invited us to contact you directly for further discussions.

Over the past years, the Pelagic AC has paid careful attention to ongoing developments as regards the effects of seismic activities on herring spawning grounds. It is becoming increasingly clear that oil/gas exploration, wind farm construction and cabling are an important development in European offshore areas and the continuous growth of these sectors is to be expected. However, the impacts of these activities on fish, spawning grounds and larval development remain poorly understood by the scientific community. Pelagic AC members are concerned over these potential impacts given the importance of spawning grounds for the health of the stocks under the Pelagic AC remit (notably, herring).

The Pelagic AC is concerned over the quality, thoroughness and independence of impact studies carried out in advance of offshore projects. To date, most impact studies are being commissioned and/or funded by the energy sector, raising the question of impartiality. The Pelagic AC is of firm belief that independent scientific research regarding the impacts are necessary and urgent. We would therefore highly encourage the development of scientific expertise by ICES in this research field.

The members of the Pelagic AC proposed DG MARE and the Commission to ask ICES to set up a working group, that would specifically investigate the effects of seismic surveys and cabling, on spawning grounds, larval development and fish biology. We see this working group as separate from the existing ICES group focusing on effects of underwater noise on marine mammals. DG MARE agreed with the Pelagic AC and highlighted in its answer that it is worth supporting some work on the matter. It





therefore decided to explore the possibilities with ICES to address this issue. We would be interested in discussing your views in terms of the more precise scope of such working group.

We would be very grateful if the Commission could discuss this with ICES and the Pelagic AC, to help ensure delicate spawning grounds are given their due preservation.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of the above.

Looking forward to your response,

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Jesper Raakjær".

Jesper Raakjær  
Chairman Pelagic AC

