



▶ Pelagic AC

Executive Committee meeting
2 October 2014
11.00-12.00 hrs
Parkhotel Den Haag, Netherlands

P.O. Box 72, 2280AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)70 336 9624
E-mail: info@pelagic-ac.org
Website: www.pelagic-ac.org

Participants

Ian Gatt (chairman), Alex Wiseman, Anne Mette Bæk Jespersen, Antoine Dhellemmes, Aukje Coers, Carl Jesper Hermansen, Christine Absil, Claus Reedtz Sparrevohn, Eibhlin O'Sullivan, Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, Evangelia Georgitsi, Frank Minck, Fredrik Lindberg, Gerard van Balsfoort, Goncalo Carvalho, Iain MacSween, Jesper Juul Larsen, John Ward, José Beltran, Justyna Niewolewska, Kari Stange, Ken Whelan, Konstantinos Kokosis, Lesley Duthie, Ludmilla van der Meer, Marie Benatre, Phillip McGinnity, Reine Johansson, Sean O'Donoghue, Stella Nemecky, Stewart Harper, Tony Andrews, Verena Ohms

1) Opening of the meeting by the chairman, Ian Gatt

The chairman opened the meeting at 11.00 hrs.

2) Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without amendments.

3) Follow-up on action items

The first action item was in relation to having mandatory seats on the Executive Committee for EU industry organizations. The Commission has confirmed that this is possible and the necessary changes in the Articles of Association have been agreed at the General Assembly meeting.

The second action item was for members to submit comments to the Commission's policy statement. This has been completed and the Pelagic AC's response to the policy statement has been sent to the Commission.

4) Advice from Working Group I

The chairman invited Esben Sverdrup-Jensen to present the conclusions from yesterday's Working Group I meeting in relation to TAC advice for 2015.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen presented the advice for Atlanto-Scandian herring which suggested following the management plan and repeating concerns over unilateral quotas. The Executive Committee approved the advice.

In terms of mackerel it was suggested to follow MSY in 2015 and follow the new management plan if found precautionary in 2016 and otherwise to continue with MSY. It should also be underlined that the scientific basis of the advice, especially the egg survey have to be strengthened and that adequate control and enforcement was necessary. The Executive Committee approved the advice.

Regarding the North Sea herring stock the Executive Committee endorsed the recommendation by the Working Group to follow the 2014 management plan and applying the TAC constraint only to the A-fleet.

There should be no TAC recommendation given for Western Baltic spring spawning herring, but instead the development of a management plan and a clear TAC setting procedure should be encouraged. The Executive Committee supported this advice.

For VIa South and VIIb,c herring no advice should be provided before the benchmark. Sean O'Donoghue remarked that the questions from last year's advice should be raised again to make sure that they will be dealt with at the benchmark. Esben Sverdrup-Jensen pointed out that the Working Group had agreed to produce a document for the benchmark listing all issues that the Pelagic AC considers relevant. The Executive Committee supported this conclusion.

For Irish Sea herring the Working Group recommended following MSY in 2015 and emphasizing the need for a management plan. The Executive Committee agreed.

The chairman reminded the meeting that the Pelagic AC advice for the other two herring stocks had already been formalized at the July meeting, but will be submitted together with the advice for all other stocks.

5) Advice from Working Group II

Sean O'Donoghue presented the outcome of yesterday's Working Group II meeting. For Southern horse mackerel it was suggested to follow MSY. Regarding North Sea horse mackerel no TAC advice would be given, but instead the need for more data should be emphasized. Gerard van Balsfoort suggested using the text he read aloud yesterday for the actual advice. For Western horse mackerel it was proposed to follow MSY and to finalize the management plan as soon as possible. Regarding boarfish the data limited stock approach should be followed, the management plan revisited and the need for covering the stock under the Data Collection Framework and continuing the acoustic survey should be emphasized. In relation to blue whiting it was suggested not to give a concrete TAC advice, but to accept that an F of 0.18 is no longer appropriate and urge the Coastal States to adopt a new management plan as soon as possible. At the same time the Pelagic AC management plan should be actively promoted. The Executive Committee endorsed all of these recommendations.

Sean O'Donoghue also remarked that the remit of the Working Groups has slightly changed and that in the future stocks would be grouped according to their geographic distribution area as much as possible. That means that in the future Working Group I will be dealing with Atlanto-Scandian herring, North Sea herring, Western Baltic spring spawning herring, blue whiting and North Sea horse mackerel while Working Group II will be dealing with mackerel, western horse mackerel, southern horse mackerel, herring in VIa North, herring in VIa South and VIIb,c, Celtic Sea herring, Irish Sea herring and boarfish.

There were no further comments.

6) Memorandum of Understanding with Member States (draft from PEW)

The chairman said that PEW has recently submitted a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ACs and Member States to the secretariat for discussion at this meeting. He asked one of the Pew representatives to walk the meeting through the document.

Justyna Niewolewska explained that this document has been created as a result of recent discussions in the NWWAC where it had been decided to draft an MoU setting out the relationship between ACs and regional Member State groups. Since the issues are generic and apply to all ACs the document was distributed to all AC secretariats. While this draft did not present an official Pew position it did present a line of thinking regarding how the relationship with the Member States could look like. Justyna Niewolewska said that it was possible to either develop the document further, send it directly to the Member States or keep it for internal use. The main points of the document were that proposals should be developed through collaboration rather than parallel processes, that data and draft proposals should be shared at an early stage and that priorities should be clarified. Moreover Member States and the Commission should attend all AC meetings and AC representatives should be allowed to participate in Member State meetings, including high level groups, at least for the relevant parts of the meetings. Responses to AC recommendations should clearly set out how the recommendation has been taken into account and give reasons for divergence. Finally, ACs, Commission and Member States should share information on work plans as soon as possible.

The chairman thanked Justyna Niewolewska for her presentation and wanted to know whether this document has only been circulated to the ACs or also to the Member States. Goncalo Carvalho said that to his knowledge all AC secretariats have received the document.

Sean O'Donoghue thanked Pew for drafting the MoU and pointed out that this document is very relevant for the Pelagic AC given that it is at the forefront of the non-consultation process with the Member States. He had two specific issues that should be addressed. On the one hand the Pelagic AC has continuously argued not to split up the pelagic stocks into three different regional groups as this would lead to different provisions for the same stocks. Unfortunately the Member States have not listened to the Pelagic AC's concerns. On the other hand he said that AC observers should be active observers who are allowed to participate in discussions and be treated as equal partners at least for the relevant parts of the meetings. He was very concerned that until now the Member States have not shared their recommendations with the Pelagic AC.

The chairman concluded that Sean O'Donoghue largely supported the MoU, but that he would like to see some further refinement. Sean O'Donoghue confirmed that especially in regards to the nature of pelagic stocks some more work was required.

Stella Nemecky said that the North Sea AC has already submitted the MoU to the current chair of the Scheveningen Group. However, the reply was very disappointing, basically saying that an MoU would not add any value and that the North Sea AC was not welcome at high level group meetings. Therefore she thought that it was very important to send it again as Pelagic AC.

Christine Absil said that someone should look at the wording from a legal sense, e.g. taking into account the difference between observer and active observer. She said that the MoU had to be phrased very carefully.

Sean O'Donoghue accepted Christine Absil's comment, but said that it was mandatory for Member States to consult ACs and take their advice into account which has not been done properly so far. He added that the Pelagic AC has already written to the Commission pointing out that Article 18 of the CFP was not observed.

The chairman concluded that it would be important to get the MoU right and put some effort into revising it. He asked whether Pew would be willing to take onboard comments received from members and to revise the MoU accordingly together with Sean O'Donoghue's help.

Justyna Niewolewska indicated her willingness to do so.

7) AOB

Sean O'Donoghue wanted to know what the meeting schedule for 2015 would be and if there was a meeting planned in Bilbao in April back to back with the Sinaval congress.

The chairman replied that this depends on the budget and whether it can be afforded to have an April meeting in Bilbao. He promised to look into this and inform members as soon as possible.

Eibhlin O'Sullivan suggested liaising with the NWWAC to make sure that meetings won't clash and at the same time have them close together to save travel costs.

8) End of meeting

The chairman closed the meeting at 11.25 hrs and wished all participants safe travels home.

Annex I: action items

- Submit yearly TAC recommendations to Commission (secretariat) ✓
- Submit comments about the MoU with Member States to the secretariat (everybody) and revise the MoU accordingly (Justyna Niewolewska, Sean O'Donoghue)