

**Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of the Pelagic RAC
Tuesday February 14th 2006 in hotel Eurovillage, Brussels**

Chairman: Iain MacSween

Secretariat Pelagic RAC: Ingvild Harkes and Rob Banning

The meeting was attended by 18 executive committee members, plus observers, plus 4 interpreters (see annex 2).

Opening of the meeting

Opening of the meeting at 9.00 by Iain MacSween.

Approval of the minutes of first RAC meeting 5 Sep 2005

Minutes were approved.

Changes in membership

General Assembly:

- Jason Whooley (Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation) is new member.
- Eduardo Chagas (ETF) has been replaced by Philippe Alfonso.

Executive Committee:

- Charlotte Mogensen is replaced by Carol Phua (WWF).
- John Paterson is replaced by John Wallace (Peterhead Port Authority) for the EAFPA.
- The EAA is represented by Jaques Cornec (Fédération française des Pêcheurs en Mer).

Working Groups:

- New members are Jose Beltran and Jannik Hougaard.

Update search other stakeholder organisations

The Pelagic RAC still lacks NGO/other stakeholder representation as many of the approached organisations lack the capacity to attend meetings or indicate that the issues dealt with by the Pelagic RAC lie outside the scope of their organisation. A further search will be conducted and an attempt will be made to raise an interest from consumer organisations.

Collaboration with ICES

The RACs have been invited to attend an ICES workshop and we have to decide which subjects or stocks we would like to discuss.

Suggested topics are:

- The mackerel management plan should be revisited in order to establish where we are going and to see how the management objectives relate to MSY (mortality rates).
- In the case of horse mackerel the RAC notes a scientific deficit in the assessment. The question is what is ICES planning to do to improve the scientific assessment. More information is expected in the first half of 2006.

- For blue whiting there are environmental issues to be addressed and more scientific advice needs to be done in relation to the various components of the stock. Juvenile blue whiting is also still an issue that needs further consideration.
- A position was drafted on the dioxin and dl-PCB regulation. The position will be formulated more precisely and sent out to the Commission.

The Working Groups will be present at the ACFM meeting in May/June and prepare recommendations on the ACFM advice.

It was agreed that there should be collaboration with ICES on an ongoing basis. The question as to how to deal with the logistics and finances of this is still an open question. It was noted that all the RACs have a different need from ICES and that this could cause difficulties in prioritising work.

Confusion about the IIIa system causes confusing and hampers management (there are overlapping fisheries in Skagerrak and North Sea, e.g. Baltic spring spawners). This issue needs to be resolved.

It is suggested that data gathering and analysis of ICES is streamlined and includes the input of stakeholders. This requires that reports are written in a way that fishermen can understand (laymen's version). Financial resources for producing scientific data are limited.

The Commission could incorporate requests from the RACs to ICES in the Commission's request to ICES. The Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with ICES and it may be that this covers the advice that RACs require. STEFC could play a role in providing socio-economic advice.

Small vessel owners do not understand MSY and fear it will lead to the loss of employment. It is therefore requested to study the effects more before making any decisions on MSY.

Interpretation at meetings

The language barrier is a structural problem. After requests from both the Spanish and French delegations, the Pelagic RAC has revised its budget to allow for interpretation at meetings. Additionally, the Spanish government offered to finance translation when our sources run out.

Procedure WG recommendations and incoming comments afterwards

To avoid having to deal with incoming comments afterwards, the Pelagic RAC has set a more clear procedure. The Working Groups can present an agreed position that will be discussed and decided upon at the Executive Committee. If there is no consensus, a minority standpoint can be included in the recommendations.

The RACs will concern themselves with horizontal issues as they are independent. The ACFA could deal with issues on a European level, while the RACs could deal with issues concerning specific (geographical) areas.

AOB

The MSY issue in relation to pelagic stocks is dealt with at the next Executive Committee meeting.

The Executive Committee will also deal with Technical Measures. Rob Banning will prepare a position paper.

Simplification will be dealt with through a written procedure (time span is 4 weeks).

The Spanish Government offers to host a meeting in Madrid in 4 weeks time, which is gladly accepted by the Pelagic RAC.

Closing of the meeting

The meeting is closed by Iain MacSween at 12.00.