



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels, 10 JAN. 2013  
A2/OB D(2012) 25956

**Pelagic RAC**  
Ms Verena Ohms (RAC Secretariat)  
Treubstraat 17  
POBox 72  
NL-2280  
AB Rijswijk  
The Netherlands

**Subject: Recommendation from the Pelagic RAC on fishing opportunities 2013 for Western Baltic spring spawning herring and North Sea autumn spawning herring**

*Yr reference: Letter from V. Ohms dated 6 November 2012*

Dear Ms Ohms,

Thank you for the Pelagic RAC recommendation on fishing opportunities 2013 for Western Baltic spring spawning herring and North Sea autumn spawning herring. You will find below our response, especially the follow-up that the Commission intends to give to the points raised. For sake of clarity, we will follow the structure of your letter.

Western Baltic herring stock

The Commission agrees that it would be desirable to develop a management plan for the Western Baltic herring stock, but we would first need to resolve the technical and political difficulties that are a consequence of the seasonal migration of the stock into the Skagerrak, where they mix with herring of North Sea origin. Setting a TAC for the stock according to a management plan, and then deciding the proportions we want to allow to be fished in the Skagerrak and the Baltic would effectively fix the TAC for the combined North Sea and Baltic stocks in the Skagerrak. Norway must therefore be implicated in the development of any management plan. So far, Norway has been reluctant to adopt any methodology that implies automaticity in setting the TAC for herring in the Skagerrak. Nevertheless we are continuing to discuss possible approaches to this end.

North Sea herring stock

The Commission has noted your preferred option in relation to the harvest control rule for the North Sea herring stock. We appreciate that you emphasise the crucial issues of low risk, high average yield and TAC stability criteria. It is noted that the ICES advice on the options requested by the EU and Norway all fall within the precautionary range.

The Commission is also favourable to the option you have suggested and we will determine jointly with Norway in the on-going negotiations, the most suitable option to be chosen. As ICES points out, whichever option is chosen, it should be reviewed again by ICES in 2016.

I thank you for your continued interest and constructive input. If you have any question on this reply, you can contact Mr Olivier Baudelet, coordinator of the Regional Advisory Councils ([olivier.baudelet@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olivier.baudelet@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.68.70).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lowri Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lowri Evans

Copies: F. Candela Castillo, J. Spencer, P. Hopkins, A. Thomson, O. Baudelet (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries)