



November 17 2016

Letter to the North Sea Advisory Council and Pelagic Advisory Council

Dear Sir/Madame

The Scheveningen High Level Group has the pleasure of sending you a draft joint recommendation regarding derogation from the sprat box, The Scheveningen HLG seeks specific advice of the North Sea Advisory Council and Pelagic Advisory Council according to Art. 18(2) of Regulation 1380/2013.

./ Please find enclosed a proposal for a joint recommendation on derogation from Article 21, para. 1, section c and Article 21, para. 3 of Council Regulation 850/98. The joint recommendation will be a supplement to the discard plan for industrial fisheries in Kattegat, Skagerrak and the North Sea.

ICES published on June 2nd 2016 a report from their expert group on herring (HAWG). In this report (page 599), ICES concludes on bycatch of herring in the sprat fisheries in the closed area on the west coast of Jutland (the sprat box):

“There was no evidence of a higher proportion of herring in catches taken inside the sprat box compared to samples taken outside the box. In fact, the proportion of herring in commercial samples taken inside the box was lower than outside the box in each year and across years, this difference was significant in both models”.

In light of these new scientific findings, there seems to be no scientific justification for maintaining the sprat box as regulated in Council Regulation 850/98, Article 21, para. 1, section c.

In accordance with the rules of procedure in Article 47 for adopting technical measures in the context of discard plans and following adoption of the joint recommendation, the Scheveningen Group expects to seek the cooperation of the Commission in order for the Commission by means of a delegated act to adopt such a measure. The delegated act should enter in force prior to next year's period of closure beginning July 1st 2017.

Please forward the advisory councils' recommendations to ami@mfvm.dk and Henry Damsgaard Lanng, hlan@mfvm.dk by **December 12, 2016**.

On behalf of the Scheveningen HLG,

Yours sincerely,

Anders Mikkelsen

Fisheries Director