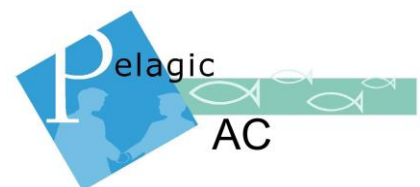




# PELAGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Newsletter 3/2017

July-September 2017



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# PELAC MEETINGS

## **WESTERN HORSE MACKEREL FOCUS GROUP MEETING (27 JUNE 2017, SCHIPHOL)**

The focus group on western horse mackerel met to continue its work on the development of a new management strategy for the stock. The meeting started with a recapture of the benchmark which led to a new stock assessment model that can incorporate more diverse fishery and survey data in the assessment. Instead of relying only on the egg survey, the new model can also take into account a recently developed recruitment index from groundfish surveys and biomass estimates from French and Spanish acoustic surveys. However, the new model changed the perception of the stock, especially fishing mortality is now estimated to be higher compared to the previous model. At the same time reference points have been revised and SSB in 2015 is estimated to be below the new Blim.

The group subsequently discussed the horse mackerel genetics project, but not much progress has been made so far given the uncertainty of funding. However, samples covering a large area, including Mauritania for comparison, have been collected.

A brief overview was provided of the PFA research project. Unfortunately, several of the avenues explored turned out to be inconclusive and the genetics project therefore seemed the most promising advancement. Regarding stock indicators the project has been successful in generating new survey data and a French survey is now included in the assessment. Analysis of vessel catch rates is also still ongoing.

Natural mortality remained an issue. Despite the fact that science agrees that it is unrealistic to keep natural mortality the same over all ages and over time, this is exactly what ICES has done since 1983. The focus group therefore decided to submit a request to the Commission asking WGWIDE to explore alternatives for natural mortality.

The focus group also revisited the draft management strategy from December 2015 and discussed the Irish proposal for a temporal closure. A conclusion could not be reached on the closure, but the meeting agreed on the next steps which included drafting potential harvest control rules and other measures, reformulating the proposed closure and continuing the genetics project. The next focus group meeting will likely take place in the autumn.

## **WORKING GROUP I MEETING (11 JULY 2017, THE HAGUE)**

The Working Group meeting mainly dealt with the ICES advice for North Sea herring and Western Baltic spring spawning herring.

The advice for North Sea herring was based on the EU-Norway management strategy which implies catches of no more than 517 891 tonnes including 491 355 tonnes for the A-fleet. However, the management strategy has still not been updated with the new  $F_{msy}$  value even though the Pelagic AC recommended to do so in last year's advice. There also seemed to be an unwillingness from the scientists to look into the issue before the benchmark early next year.

Regarding Western Baltic spring spawning (WBSS) herring ICES recommended following MSY. The Pelagic AC, however, only recommends on 3a herring for which the TAC is set as 41% of the MSY advice for WBSS herring and 5.7% of the A-fleet TAC for North Sea herring. This led to some confusion

## PELAC MEETINGS

among members. After some initial discussion it was decided to postpone the final decision on the Pelagic AC advice to the October meeting.

### **WORKING GROUP II MEETING (11 JULY 2017, THE HAGUE)**

Working Group II focused on the ICES advice for herring in 6a, Celtic Sea herring and Irish Sea herring.

As expected the advice for 6a herring was zero catch and the introduction of a rebuilding plan. Such a rebuilding has been developed by the 6a herring focus group and was recently submitted to the Commission which has forwarded the plan for evaluation to ICES. The industry was also preparing together with scientists for another acoustic survey.

Irish Sea herring has recently undergone a benchmark which changed the perception of the stock significantly leading to a much higher MSY catch advice compared to previous years. Given that no progress has been made in developing a management strategy for the stock it was concluded to follow the MSY advice. However, all final decisions on TAC recommendations were postponed until the October meeting.

The herring benchmark has also changed the stock perception of Celtic Sea herring with SSB being perceived much lower now (and close to Blim) compared to previous years. As a consequence the MSY advice is also much lower this year. As in previous years there was a discussion on why the Commission asked ICES to provide MSY advice for the stock even though a management strategy is available and has been evaluated positively by ICES.

Subsequently the outcome of Management Strategy Evaluations for southern horse mackerel were presented. These evaluations were based on a harvest control rule suggested by stakeholders and based on reaching  $F_{msy}$  (0.11) in 2025, a Blim of 103 000 tonnes and an MSY Btrigger of 181 000 tonnes. The different scenarios explored were precautionary. It was concluded to draft a management strategy based on these evaluations that would be discussed at the next Working Group II meeting.

A brief update was also provided on the progress made by the focus group on western horse mackerel (see above).

EFCA presented an update on the gramme size project it is currently carrying out. So far the results have been mixed, because data were often scattered and there was concern that the sampling was not representative enough of the catches. It was also important to have data verified by an on board observer. However, pursuing this avenue will be very resource intensive. EFCA was not yet sure what the next steps will be in regards to the project.

The final issue discussed was a choke mitigation tool developed by the NWW AC. It was concluded that this tool could be useful for pelagic fisheries too and that the Pelagic AC should look into applying it to the stocks under its remit.

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## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (12 JULY 2017, THE HAGUE)**

During the Executive Committee meeting the work program and budget for the upcoming operational year were discussed. The work program will mainly be a continuation of the current work program with a strong focus on developing a new management strategy for western horse mackerel and to drive genetic research for stock ID purposes. The implementation of the landing obligation will also continue to play an important role as well as the annual TAC advice provided to the Commission.

At the next General Assembly meeting a new Executive Committee and chairmen will be elected; again for a period of three years. The election procedure was explained.

Subsequently, the Commission gave a presentation on its consultation on fishing opportunities in 2018 as well as on the outcomes of the evaluation of the control regulation.

## **BLUE WHITING FOCUS GROUP MEETING (12 JULY 2017, THE HAGUE)**

The focus group on blue whiting discussed earlier management plans for the stock and the evaluation performed by ICES in 2016. One of the issues with blue whiting are the different productivity periods the stock experiences and which stakeholders argue requires a management approach that takes into account these different periods. The plan developed by the Pelagic AC in 2012 used a two-tier harvest control rule with an upper and a lower trigger point to deal with changes in productivity. However, due to a delayed evaluation by ICES and lack of support from some Coastal States this two-tier approach was never implemented. Recent developments give reason to believe that the Coastal States would now be more open to the suggested approach and it was decided to contract Dankert Skagen to update the two-tier management strategy with the latest values for reference points.

## **SOUTHERN HORSE MACKEREL FOCUS GROUP MEETING (28 JULY 2017, MATOSINHOS)**

The draft plan according to the template sent by the PelAC was presented by the scientists and each article was debated and amended by the stakeholders.

A side discussion on the fact that on this stock Spain has a deficit of quota and Portugal has had a surplus in recent years took place between industry people present. But after some discussion it was made clear that the long-term management strategy (LTMS) applies at a total stock level only and that inter coastal state debates happen after a TAC is set.

Someone raised the issue of the fact that the advice rule starts with an F<sub>bycatch</sub> and not with F<sub>0</sub> being to some extent a political decision and if it is scientifically sound. The question was raised also because it would be a waste of time if ICES or STECF would consider the plan not to be precautionary and in line with the CFP due to this assumption. The scientists replied that the trial runs indicated that if the stock would drop drastically the F<sub>bycatch</sub> would also drop. It was explained that this is because F<sub>bycatch</sub> is not a fixed number, but a fixed F, in this case F = 0,01. This means that the tonnage allowed to catch will decrease proportionally to SSB. It was also mentioned that it was used in other stocks, like blue whiting for example, where it is mentioned as Flow.



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Then there was quite some discussion on the fact that some of the options for the stability clause had some risk – even if very low (2% and 4%) of going above  $F_{msy}$  during the first years of the estimation. Someone again raised the question if this would be acceptable to ICES and/STECF, because to the eNGOs it wouldn't. The researchers explained that the risks are truly low and that with the stabilised Management Strategy Evaluation, which takes into account estimation errors and deviations, it shouldn't be a problem. The person who had raised this issue accepted this, but would like to see what ICES would say of it.

Throughout the meeting several times it was mentioned that  $F$  is increasing both in Portugal and Spain, as industry is turning to this stock due to the decline of the Iberian Sardine and the Western Horse Mackerel Stocks. This means that one of the targets of the LTMS requested by the industry – slowly raising  $F$  to be just below  $F_{msy}$  in 2025 might be reached earlier. Industry said that this was just the way it was and the scientists said that as long as it doesn't go above it, there is no problem.

After some discussion, a 15% variation limit was defined, calculated on the TAC of the previous years. Industry preferred this option due to the increased stability it would bring to the fishery and some scientists preferred it because it had the lowest risk of having  $F$  above  $F_{msy}$  in the first years.

Next steps were discussed – The researchers will prepare a draft of the LTMS which after proof-reading by the other meeting participants will be shared with the PelAC Secretariat. They will also prepare a version of the presentations to annex to the document and a full report which will be made available to ICES or STECF once they decide to evaluate the LTMS.

### BLUE WHITING FOCUS GROUP MEETING (6 SEPTEMBER 2017, COPENHAGEN)

Dankert Skagen presented the outcomes of his explorations for finding a management strategy that would be better suited for a stock like blue whiting than the conventional strategies used to date. Blue whiting is characterized by changes in recruitment regimes which requires an adaptive management strategy taking into account the current recruitment regime to optimally protect and exploit the stock.

Dankert Skagen had explored five different rules:

1. The ICES standard MSY rule
2. Extension of the standard rule
3. Using TSB and a harvest rate instead of SSB and fishing mortality ( $F$ )
4. Let  $F$  in the extended standard rule be a linear function of recruitment
5. Escapement rule at high SSB (as for e.g. sandeel and sprat)

In summary, the ICES standard MSY rule was not the best rule tested, because  $F$  does not adjust properly to changes in productivity. There is an impossible trade-off between high catch when productivity is high and low risk when productivity is low. Modifying the rule improved its performance when reducing  $F$  steeper and earlier at low SSB and increasing it at high SSB and when applying a filter stabilizer and a maximum catch.

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The recruitment-dependent F rule (rule 4) works well; posing a low risk, but giving satisfactory catch at low inter-annual variability (IAV). Using TSB instead of SSB and a harvest rate instead of F also seems to work well.

The escapement rule did not increase mean catch at high SSB, while it did increase IAV very much.

In conclusion, both the recruitment-dependent F rule and the TSB-harvest rate rule work well and are candidates for a better management of blue whiting.

All detailed meeting minutes can be downloaded from the PELAC website:  
<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/2017>

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

### **WKMAKMSE (28-29 AUGUSTUS 2017, COPENHAGEN)**

Alex Wiseman and Sean O Donoghue attended the Mackerel MSE meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017 on behalf of the Pelagic AC. The purpose of the workshop was to evaluate a request from the Coastal States concerning long-term management strategy for mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic. There are two parts to this request:

- 1) the evaluation of the fishing mortality reference points and
- 2) the evaluation of performance criteria.

#### **Evaluation of the fishing mortality reference points**

A large part of the meeting was taken up with the evaluation of the fishing mortality reference points but in the end, it was agreed to evaluate the fishing mortality reference points using long-term stochastic simulations, in accordance with the ICES guidelines. This resulted in the following values:  $F_{lim}=0.48$ ,  $F_{pa}=0.35$ , and  $FMSY=0.21$  which will be forwarded to the Advice Drafting Group (ADG) which is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> September. The reference points reflect ICES current perception of the population dynamics of the stock. As this may change in the future, the fisheries mortality reference points may also change.

#### **Evaluation of performance criteria.**

The Benchmark decided that the best way of approaching the evaluation of performance criteria was to update all the tables concerning the long-term period that were provided by ICES in its response on 13 February 2015 to the *“EU, Norway and Faroe Islands request to ICES to evaluate a multi-annual management strategy for mackerel in the North East Atlantic”*, without and with a constraint in inter-annual TAC variation as indicated in point 4 of the request. The target fishing mortality values evaluated were in the range of 0.10 to 0.35. These were used in combination with  $B_{trigger}$  values in the range of 2–5 million tonnes, including  $MSY\ B_{trigger}=2.57$  million t. Two lower  $B_{trigger}$  values, 0.6 million t and  $B_{lim}=1.94$  million t, were also included in the evaluation. The work in relation to producing the updated tables was done offline after the meeting and the results were forwarded to the ADG.

#### **Reviewers Comments**

The reviewers had a number of concerns about the MSE process which will be addressed at the ADG on the 4<sup>th</sup> September.

### **ADGWIDE (11-14 SEPTEMBER 2017, COPENHAGEN)**

PELAC representatives: Sean O'Donoghue and Ian Gatt.

This ICES Advice Drafting Group (ADG) provides advice for mackerel, blue whiting, Atlanto Scandian herring, western and North Sea horse mackerel and boarfish. All of these stocks fall under the remit of PELAC. This year ADGWIDE also provided advice on long term mackerel management strategies to Coastal States.



## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

### **Mackerel**

Stock was benchmarked in 2017; the SAM model continues to be used for this assessment.

ICES advice is based on the MSY approach (revised to  $F_{0.21}$ ); catches in 2018 should be no more than 550,948 tonnes, and existing measures to protect the North Sea spawning component should remain in place.

Fishing mortality is estimated to be above  $F_{msy}$ . The surveys give contradictory information on the recent development of the stock. The egg survey and tagging data suggests a decrease in the SSB while the abundances-at-age from the IESSNS index have increased. The downward revision of the SSB has largely been driven by the tagging data information. There was a lot of debate among scientists whether the tagging data should be included in the assessment given problems with the data produced. Therefore, there is a lot of uncertainty in this assessment, which may continue for a number of years until a longer time-series has been established for the IESSNS survey and the tagging data.

#### *Information from stakeholders:*

Over the last nine years the pelagic industry has encountered large shoals of mackerel over the entire distribution area, which has expanded both south and north. Based upon these observations the industry believes the stock size has greatly increased. This increase in the stock is not confined to one area or observed by only one fleet. The industry has noted signs of good (above average) recruitment to the fishery (ages 2-3) in recent years, particularly in 2014 and 2015. The same signs were not evident during 2016. Mackerel is also caught in substantial amounts outside of the directed mackerel fishery and in places where it has not been caught in recent years (e.g. during the herring fishery in the North Sea). Danish fishers have reported catches of spawning mackerel in the sandeel fishery. In 2017, the main spawning migration (of the western component) began at the end of January, roughly three weeks later than normal.

### **Western horse mackerel**

The stock was benchmarked in 2017; the assessment model was changed to stock synthesis. This has led to a more positive outlook on the stock SSB. A number of issues arose during the working group including the historical pattern of the assessment, the revised reference points, and both estimates of biomass and abundance.

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 117,070 tonnes.

The stock and fishery is reliant on occasional high recruitment, this has been low since 2000. There are some indications that the last three years are slightly improved. The SSB is currently the lowest observed in the time-series. Fishing mortality has been high since 2007 but 2015-16 has reduced to now below  $F_{msy}$ .

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Although a new assessment is being used there is considerable uncertainty associated with this new assessment. All the biological reference points have been evaluated and updated since the benchmark.

### *Information from stakeholders:*

The industry in conjunction with the PELAC has been working actively on a number of issues namely a large-scale genetics project on stock identification, development of a management strategy with the scientists and a number of voluntary industry measures to protect juveniles.

The Irish fishing industry reported good horse mackerel catches west of Scotland (Division 6.a) during January 2016 and again in January 2017. Catch rates of horse mackerel by the pelagic freezer-trawlers in divisions 7b, 7c and 7h were substantially lower in 2016 and 2017 compared with previous years.

The Irish demersal fleet encountered increased numbers of juvenile (ages 1 and 2) horse mackerel to the south and west of Ireland both in 2016 and again in 2017. The pelagic freezer trawlers self-sampling programme reported larger proportions of small horse mackerel in Division 7j in 2016 compared to 2015 but this has not been seen again in 2017. Overall several fleets are reporting an increase of abundance of juvenile horse mackerel.

### **North Sea horse mackerel**

The stock was benchmarked in 2017. ICES are moving towards providing bi-annual advice for category three stocks such as North Sea horse mackerel.

ICES advise that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2018 and 2019 should be no more than 17,517 tonnes.

The survey indices indicate that the stock is at a low level although there are some encouraging signs of better recruitment. Discarding in the directed fishery is assessed to be negligible. New information available for 2015 indicated that discarding in non-directed fisheries is an issue, this has continued in 2016. ICES recommends that collection of discard data needs to be improved.

### *Information from stakeholders:*

On behalf of the PELAC and the EAPO Northern Pelagic Working Group, a research project on genetic composition of horse mackerel stocks was initiated in 2015 with University College Dublin (Ireland). Genetic samples have been taken over the whole distribution area of horse mackerel during the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 with a specific focus on the separation between horse mackerel in the western waters and horse mackerel in the North Sea. It is anticipated that results of the genetic analysis will be available in the first half year of 2018.

Historical catch rates of pelagic freezer-trawlers, based on skippers' diaries, have been compiled. The results were presented to the benchmark in 2017 but further work is necessary to develop an index of stock biomass from these data.

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

### **Atlanto-Scandian herring**

The stock was last benchmarked in 2016. The working group has identified that the reference points generated by the EQSIM model has created serious concerns. New reference points will be addressed before the 2018 assessment. The new data points from the spawning survey have been left out this year as it only creates more uncertainty when included.

ICES advises that when the Coastal States management plan is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 546,472 tonnes (unsure if this will be the final number).

The stock continues to decline and is estimated to be below the MSY Btrigger point. Recruitment 2005-12 is estimated to be average, and from 2012 onwards considered to be small. Fishing mortality has been well below  $F_{msy}$  for a number of years now.

#### *Information from stakeholders:*

Over the last year the EU pelagic industry has conducted its fishery on the traditional fishing grounds. No changes in distribution have been observed. Large shoals in both the January fishery and in the autumn season have characterized the fishery in 2016 and 2017, with higher catch rates than in previous years.

### **Boarfish**

ICES is moving towards providing bi-annual advice for category three stocks such as boarfish.

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2018 and 2019 should be no more than 21,830 tonnes. Discards should be accounted for, which corresponds to landings of 20,546 tonnes.

The relative stock abundance was stable until 2009, increased 2010-2012, declined steeply in 2013-2014, but now seems stable.

The overall biomass index is influenced by the acoustic survey, there is high uncertainty in the estimates. Although not containing the stock for a number of years the survey is however estimated to be reliable. In 2017 the survey was redesigned to address the stock containment issue. Understanding of the stock dynamics is limited.

#### *Information from stakeholders:*

A small number of Irish vessels prosecuted this fishery in 2016 and the first quarter of 2017. The Danish vessels did not participate. The low participation is mainly due to the fact that the vessels have other pelagic opportunities available which are far more profitable and much easier to prosecute and to the low prices. Ireland changed its allocation method in the Autumn of 2016 which has proved to be successful in terms of uptake for the interested vessels with an expected catch of over 90% of the 2017 Irish quota.

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The demersal trawlers have encountered small boarfish in their catches, particularly in southwestern Ireland over the last twelve months. Pelagic RSW trawlers have encountered boarfish much farther north (Division 6a) than previously.

### **Blue whiting**

Blue whiting was inter-benchmarked in 2016. The international acoustic survey went well and the working group did not find any issues with the assessment.

ICES advises that when the MSY approach (F0.32) is applied, catches in 2018 should be no more than 1,387,872 tonnes.

Fishing mortality has increased from a historical low in 2011 to above  $F_{msy}$  since 2014. SSB increased since 2010 and is well above  $MSY$  trigger. Recruitment in 2013 and 2014 was high, the 2016 year class is small, and 2017 is estimated to be low. The stock is anticipated to decline in coming years.

The assessment has used preliminary catch at age data since 2016 to supplement information from the acoustic survey conducted in the spring. In most recent years more than 90% of the annual catches of the age 3+ fish are consistently taken in the first half year, which makes it reasonable to estimate the total annual catch at age from preliminary first semester data. This is expected to provide more realistic fishing mortalities in the assessment year.

#### *Information from stakeholders:*

The EU industry reported that the fishery for blue whiting in 2017 was very good. High catch rates were maintained all through the season and the vessels had no difficulty catching their allocations. There was a higher proportion of smaller blue whiting in the catch in the spring this year (February, March and April) than in the previous year. The industry considers recruitment to have been good over the last three years.

### **NWW AC MEETING ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ACS (15 SEPTEMBER 2017, DUBLIN)**

PELAC representatives: Jesper Raakjær, Sean O'Donoghue, Verena Ohms

The NWWAC organized a meeting on the functioning of the ACs with a special focus on the future of the ACs once the UK leaves the EU and hence the ACs. This meeting was an initiative taken by the NWWAC following the hearing in the PECH Committee on the functioning of the ACs which only the MEDAC had been invited to. This was perceived to be an unacceptable move by Alain Cadec, chair of the PECH Committee. The meeting was attended by members of the NWWAC, NSAC, PELAC, MAC, AAC and DG MARE.

A number of speakers had been invited to the meeting who all declined, including Ernesto Penas from DG MARE who had been asked to give a presentation on US fisheries management, Darius Campbell, new secretary of NEAFC and David Agnew from the Marine Stewardship Council. The withdrawal of so many invited speakers had a negative effect on the agenda, but attendants were encouraged to view this meeting as a first opportunity to exchange ideas and to consider the possible consequences

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

of BREXIT for the various ACs, particularly the NWWAC, the NSAC and the PELAC. It had to be prevented that with the next CFP reform looming the ACs will take on a shape in which the relationships built with UK members suddenly become strained and difficult.

People generally agreed that it was time to start discussions on how the ACs could function in the future once the UK has left the EU. However, it also became clear that despite intentions of establishing various focus groups dealing with the issue, not much has happened yet. Some participants were of the opinion that it was impossible to anticipate what the situation of the ACs could look like in the future, because the outcomes of BREXIT were unknown. They favored monitoring the situation above all else.

The PELAC representatives explained that during preliminary discussions within the PELAC the view emerged that people should look at the issue from a post BREXIT perspective. Furthermore, a few years ago views have already been tabled advocating a structure similar to the ACs under the auspices of NEAFC to deal with widely distributed stocks shared with Third Countries. Many PELAC members were of the opinion that after BREXIT there can be no business as usual given that 40% of the waters currently under remit of the PELAC will disappear. Instead, new models have to be looked at. The PELAC representatives also pointed out that the relationship with UK members is already deteriorating. Half of the UK members have left the PELAC in the past couple of months whereas the others have become noticeably less active.

Discussions within the MAC also resulted in agreement that people should look at the situation from a post BREXIT perspective.

A discussion followed on potential new models for stakeholder engagement in the next CFP and how the process could be approached. It was suggested to look at models that are already working and therefore could be promising. In that regard focus groups were mentioned by several ACs as a structure that is working well due to their concentrated efforts and efficiency.

Some participants voiced hope that the new models will not have to be very different from the current model of the ACs and that there will be a phasing-in over a long period of time. Others were concerned that BREXIT will have severe negative consequences for fisheries in the remaining EU countries and thought that the new CFP will have to be radically different from the current CFP depending on the UK's interpretation of UNCLOS.

Solidarity between Member States was mentioned by several meeting attendants as a prerequisite for future sustainable fisheries.

The PELAC representatives reiterated the need to look at different models for how the ACs could be structured in the future and to assess the pros and cons of all options including the possibility of abolishing the ACs altogether. The NEAFC model as proposed previously could work for widely distributed pelagic stocks, but for stocks which are only fished by EU countries this model is likely not appropriate. Should there be one big AC or several smaller ones and should their remit be area-based or not? The PELAC representatives emphasized the need for bringing forward a position paper that analyzes and evaluates all those different options.

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

A number of active fishermen attended the meeting too and stressed the usefulness of the ACs. Despite some of the discussions being very abstract and difficult to follow, fishermen generally felt that it was good to have discussions within the ACs instead of leaving fishermen to their own discussions. While the UK will leave the EU, the other countries will not and the ACs provide a forum for having discussions, so that they will not need to take place on the ground.

Some people suggested looking into the option of a “Super AC” similar to ACFA. While some people claimed that this could be a very effective structure, others highlighted its downsides. It was agreed, however, that this was a model to be investigated.

Another issue that came up was the involvement of Member States in the current discussion. Everyone acknowledged that the Member States will play a big role in the reform of the CFP and that they should be involved in the current process. However, many people doubted that the Member States will show even the slightest bit of interest in getting involved.

Subsequently, Björn Stockhausen (Seas at Risk) gave a presentation similar to the one he gave at the hearing in the PECH Committee on behalf of several OIGs. A copy of the presentation can be found here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/124125/STOCKHAUSEN.pdf>

At the end of the meeting it was concluded that the new model for stakeholder involvement will require strong leadership and improved communication, not only within, but also between ACs. It was also agreed that this forum should be continued and the PELAC representatives volunteered to follow-up on the initiative and to arrange the next meeting, if approved by the PELAC Executive Committee. The PELAC will ensure that all AC secretariats will be informed about the process and they in turn will communicate next steps to their members. A balance will be struck between industry and OIG representatives in participating in future events.

Furthermore, it was emphasized that the next meeting has to be very well structured to be effective, including a well-defined agenda and participation. Member States and Commission should be invited to the follow-up meeting and results must be made available to all relevant parties, including the PECH Committee.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### **UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER 2017**

Every three years a new General Assembly is appointed which subsequently elects a new Executive Committee as well as new chairmen. The current three year period ends in October 2017 and therefore, we will have elections at the next General Assembly meeting on 5 October 2017 in The Hague. If you are not able to attend this meeting in person, please contact the Secretariat and appoint a replacement who may vote on your behalf.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS

Please remember that the secretariat has to receive your reimbursement claims within one month after the corresponding meeting by post or email including copies of all receipts. Reimbursement sheets received after the deadline will not be taken into account. If you cannot meet the deadline please inform us as soon as possible. To find out more about reimbursement rules please consult the PELAC's "Rules of procedure" or contact the secretariat.

<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/media/pdf/Rules%20of%20Procedure%20Pelagic%20AC%20-%202014%20November.pdf>

# UPCOMING MEETINGS

## **WORKING GROUP I AND II MEETING (4 OCTOBER 2017, THE HAGUE)**

The upcoming Working Group meetings will mainly focus on the ICES advice for the widely distributed stocks. In addition we will discuss the draft management plan for Southern horse mackerel and the results of the blue whiting focus group.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING (5 OCTOBER 2017, THE HAGUE)**

During this year's General Assembly meeting new chairmen and a new Executive Committee will be elected, followed by the approval of last year's accounts.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (5 OCTOBER 2017, THE HAGUE)**

The Executive Committee will mainly deal with the advice from the Working Groups on the various stocks.

All meeting documents are accessible here:

<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/pracmeetings/upcomingmeetings>

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