



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR FISHERIES AND MARITIME AFFAIRS

Director-General

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Brussels,
D(2007)

Mr. Iain MacSween
Chairman, Pelagic
Regional Advisory Council
PO Box 72
Rijswijk
Nederland

Dear Mr. MacSween

We have corresponded previously about the long-term management plan for herring in ICES Division VIa (West of Scotland). We both share a wish to have this plan adopted as soon as possible and we agreed on all the main elements.

However, a new element has to be introduced. The EC-funded project "WESTHER – A multidisciplinary approach to the identification of herring (*Clupea harengus* L.) stock components west of the British Isles using biological tags and genetic markers" has been finalised and the final report has been accepted by the Commission services. Among its conclusions is the recommendation that the management unit for the herring in VIa(N) should be merged with the herring in VIa(S) because this is the same biological stock.

This report and its recommendation will be made available to ICES and to STECF who will have to consider whether to change the relevant biological assessment units. If they do, the Community will in turn have to reconsider the TAC management areas. Finally, a new long-term advice may be necessary based on any newly-adopted biological stock structure.

Given that this process is necessary and may result in a very different perception of long-term management than we have now, the Commission has decided against making a proposal for the long-term management plan until the stock structure issue has been reviewed by STECF and ICES. The alternative could lead to a situation where a long-term plan is adopted that no longer accords with scientific advice.

I know your sector will be disappointed at this additional delay, but I am sure you will understand the need to resolve the stock structure question before moving forward. The issue concerning the Butt of Lewis closure will now have to be addressed in the context of the review of technical measures.

Yours sincerely


Fokion Fotiadis

c.c: Ms Garcia Ferrer