



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels, 26 April 2022
MARE/C3/OS/ae (2022)

Subject: Letter Pelagic AC: Progressing the ICES assessments for North Sea horse mackerel and boarfish

Dear Mr. Raakjaer,

I would like to follow-up on your letter of 28 February (Ares(2022)2267764) which references the progress of the ICES assessments for North Sea horse mackerel and boarfish.

These are category 3 stocks without full analytical assessment, which are covered under the ICES-MARE grant agreement and for which DG MARE receives precautionary advice every two years. With regards to boarfish, the ICES benchmark Working Group WKABM 2023 will look next year at the available data, evaluate the state of play and see if there is enough information to upgrade the stock to category 2 or 1. The North Sea horse mackerel is not scheduled to our knowledge for an ICES benchmark during the next period, in which the additional data you mention would be taken into consideration for a review of the stock status.

As you are aware, ICES provides advice to the European Commission in complete independence. Although the European Commission finances the release of recurrent advice, together with other ICES members, it does not influence the ICES advice release processes, which are solely regulated by this organization, according to its transparent assessment and quality of advice framework, and DG MARE firmly supports the impartiality of advice provided by ICES. This being said, we are happy to further discuss with ICES on the possibility of reinforcing science on these stocks in line with the suggestions you made and we will keep you informed about ICES decision.

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I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
Charlina VITCHEVA

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