

**Ms Charlina Vitcheva**

Director General

Directorate General Maritime Affairs  
and Fisheries

Rue de la Loi 200

1049 Brussels

BELGIUM

**Date:** 20 April 2023

**PelAC reference:** 2223PAC66

**Subject:** Coastal States Sharing Status for the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock

Dear Ms. Charlina Vitcheva,

It is with great regret that the Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) again feels the need to urgently write to the Commission, to share its concerns after the Coastal States (CS) failed to conclude their negotiations on a sharing arrangement for Northeast Atlantic mackerel.

The PelAC fully supports the European Commission's commitment and efforts to find a rational sharing arrangement between all involved Coastal States for the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock, but once again, observes the real risk of parties persisting with the setting of excessive unilateral quotas, which would lead to another year of catches exceeding the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) that has been set in line with scientific advice for 2023. The PelAC again underlines its deep concerns regarding the consequences of other parties maintaining these potentially repeated irresponsible decisions, that run contrary to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and particularly the 1995 Straddling Stocks Agreement, effectively deeming this approach IUU fishing.

These irresponsible unilateral actions, and non-compliance with scientific advice, are putting the health of this economically critical stock at great risk of overexploitation, and have seriously undermined the effectiveness and the credibility of the CS process.

Should these actions, which go against all the efforts of the EU and its fleet to sustainably manage fish stocks based on the best possible scientific advice repeat themselves in other Coastal States, which wrongly perceive the absence of a sharing arrangement as allowing them to operate in an unsustainable, unethical manner without binding legal consequences, the PelAC urges the European Commission and the Council of the European Union to take **immediate action** and urge these Coastal States to stop a third consecutive year of excessive unilateral quota setting of this valuable stock, as it would lead to IUU fishing and jeopardize the future sustainability of the stock. Consequently, the PelAC urges the Commission to act decisively against this irresponsible behaviour by using the market powers and other instruments at its disposal.





We thank you in advance for your kind and early consideration of the above and look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Sean O'Donoghue  
Chairman Pelagic AC

