

Ms Charlina Vitcheva

Director General

Directorate General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Rue de la Loi 200

1049 Brussels

BELGIUM

Date: 9 July 2024

PelAC reference: 2324PAC68

Subject: Coastal States sharing status for the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock

Dear Ms. Charlina Vitcheva,

The Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) fully supports the European Commission's commitment and efforts to establish a rational sharing arrangement between all involved Coastal States for the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock. However, It is with great regret that once again it feels compelled to urgently write to the Commission to share its concerns following the partial agreement reached between the UK, Norway, and the Faroe Islands on the sharing of Northeast Atlantic mackerel fishing opportunities.

Indeed, we must express our serious concern regarding the persistent risk of parties setting excessive unilateral quotas, which would lead to another year of catches exceeding the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) established in line with scientific advice for 2024. The PelAC again underlines its deep concerns regarding the consequences of other parties maintaining these repeated irresponsible decisions, that run contrary to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and particularly the 1995 Straddling Stocks Agreement, and it should be established whether this can be qualified as IUU fishing. This agreement, rather than resolving the issue, rewards the setting of excessive, inflated unilateral quotas by some parties in recent years and legitimizes continuous overfishing based on these inflated quotas, which deviate significantly from the shares applicable under the last sharing arrangement.

It is now clear that in the absence of a comprehensive agreement between all Coastal States, the trend of setting excessive, inflated quotas will persist, adversely impacting fishing opportunities and jeopardizing the future sustainability of the stock.

Therefore, the PelAC urges all Coastal States to continue negotiations on a comprehensive sharing arrangement that reflects genuine, sustainable track records and interests. We also call on the European Commission and the Council of the EU to act decisively against this irresponsible behavior by utilizing the market powers and other instruments at its disposal.





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

Yours sincerely,

Sean O'Donoghue
Chairman Pelagic Advisory Council

