



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.C.5/NG/vr

Subject: PelAC recommendations on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 2027 herring stocks.

Dear Mr Sverdrup,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 6 July 2026.

I note your position regarding North Sea herring to follow the outcome of the LTMS for this stock. The development and introduction of this long-term strategy is a significant achievement that will hopefully lead to predictability for the sector going forward. I also welcome the introduction of the area closure to protect the Western Baltic Spring Spawning (WBSS) herring stock. Catches of this stock in the North Sea have had a negative impact on WBSS herring and are an impediment to its recovery. I expect that the implications of this closure will be reflected in the ICES advice for both the North Sea and Western Baltic stocks. In this context, the increased sampling efforts and resulting improvements in the precision and understanding of the mixing should provide a stronger basis for assessing the effects of the closure and informing future advice.

On 6a North herring, I acknowledge the issue you raise regarding both the advice and the genetic homogeneity with the North Sea stock and your request to include a commitment for a joint EU-UK request to ICES. We are reflecting on the implications for management and fishing opportunities, and further discussions are necessary on this issue.

In more general terms, including your wider observations and concerns on the Malin Shelf acoustic survey, the issues relating to the Category 3 assessment/advice and the separation of Autumn and Spring spawning herring, I take note of these observations and concerns, and we are open to discussing these with the UK. While I acknowledge these have direct consequences for advice, they are mainly scientific issues, and it would therefore seem appropriate that these issues are also raised with ICES via the stakeholder forum MIACO as well as with national administrations and scientific institutes.

The depleted status of Celtic Sea herring remains a concern, and we are committed to continuing the monitoring survey. I also welcome the wider work being undertaken on the synoptic survey and the issue of mixing in the Irish Sea and the implications for the Celtic Sea stock. The latter point has already been raised with the UK, and we are supportive of further dialogue on the wider herring management issues associated with inter-stock mixing. The views and input from the PelAC are welcome and important.

Mr Esben Sverdrup-Jensen
Chair Pelagic Advisory Council
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Thank you once again for your dedication and efforts. I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu as well as Norman Graham (MARE.C5) at Norman.Graham@ec.europa.eu .

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

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