



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,
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Mr. Sam Lambourn
NWWRAC
Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Crofton Road
Dun Laoghaire
Co Dublin
Ireland

Subject: NWWRAC advice on the setting up of a regional Task force for Fish stock assessment

Dear Mr. Lambourn,

Thank you for your letter of 1 April 2010 concerning the proposal for establishing a Regional Task Force for the North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council to address data deficiencies in specific fisheries.

This initiative addresses indeed an issue which is of great importance for improving the quality of advice for fisheries management decisions. That the quality and comprehensiveness of data and thus of advice is crucial for the efficiency of fisheries management has already been recognised in the Green Book on the reform of the CFP. Our proposals for reform will have to pay particular attention to this aspect. In this context, it is important to know that the Belgium Presidency is organising a conference in November 2010 precisely on "Improved Fisheries and Science Partnerships as Policy drivers" which will look notably into aspects of data availability and reliability of scientific advice.

Let me also point out that the new Data Collection Framework (DCF) as reformed by Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 introduces already higher requirements with regard to data coverage, data quality and data access, including the possibility of financial reductions, suspensions or recoveries in case of non-compliance by Member States with the DCF requirements. We are now in the second year of application of this new framework and the forthcoming analysis of recent data calls by ICES and annual reports on the implementation of the DCF by Member States by STECF will provide a first assessment to which extent the new requirements have been fulfilled or would require further action.

I would also like to inform you that we are currently finalising a study on 'Joint Data Collection in the Western Waters' involving fisheries scientists and fishing industry

partners from 7 Member States. The study, composed of four separate pilot projects, is focusing on brown crab fishery, demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea and western channel, the Basque trawling fishery and the Portuguese artisanal deep-water long line fishery. The results of this study will help to further improve the knowledge needed to take decisions in fisheries.

A Task Force as suggested by you might provide interesting input to the reflections for the future. To make it most efficient, it should build upon the information that will become available in mid-2010, i.e. the feed-back of ICES and STECF on recent data calls and on the implementation of the DCF by Member States, as well as the results of the above mentioned study.

Colleagues from DG MARE will be available to attend meetings of the Task Force, when necessary. We can also make our meeting facilities available to you. However, I firmly believe that the initiation of this Task Force should remain within the remit of the NWWRAC.

Yours sincerely,



Fokion Fotiadis