



March 1st, 2010

Mr. Fotiadis
Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)
Director General
B- 1049 Brussels

Re: Participation of NWW RAC in the implementation of the “marine environmental strategy” framework directive

Dear Sirs,

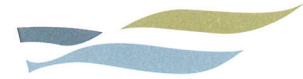
A French professional fishery organisation, the CNPME (Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins), approached me in my position of chairman of the NWW RAC, with a request that I have been very mindful of.

The aim of 2008/56/CE Directive of June 17th, 2008, establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (“marine environmental strategy” framework directive) is that the marine environment reaches a good environmental status by 2020 at the latest.

As such, it constitutes the environmental pillar of the European Union’s integrated marine policy and the marine counterpart of the framework directive on water.

To achieve this good environmental status, annex 1 of this directive lists some descriptors, several of which are directly associated with professional fishing activities:

- “populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock”,
- “All elements of the marine food webs, to the extent that they are known, are present at levels of normal abundance and diversity, and capable of ensuring the long-term abundance of the species and the retention of their full reproductive capacity”,
- “the level of sea-floor integrity ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected”.



Consequently, European fishing professionals will be particularly concerned by the enforcement of the directive.

To allow Member States implement this directive in a uniform manner, the European Commission set up a co-ordination group and working groups at European level:

- Good ecological status Working Group,
- Data exchange Working Group,
- Socio-economic assessment Working Group.

These groups met once or twice in 2009, and a few of them met at the beginning of 2010. At each of these meetings, you regretfully noted the very poor attendance of professional fishing representatives, not to say their complete absence, including the "socio-economic assessment" Working Group meeting. European organisations are the only ones able to attend these meetings.

This work takes place concomitantly with the common fisheries policy reform which is part of the wider context of the Blue Book for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union. The CFP integrates more and more environmental policies. It is therefore particularly important for European fishing professionals to be a force for proposals in the implementation of this new regulation that will have a direct impact on their activity.

I am writing to you to request that the North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee be associated with this work from the next meetings on, among which the "socio-economic assessment" Working Group meeting that is planned at the beginning of March.

Yours faithfully,

Sam Lambourn
Chairman of the North Western Waters RAC

CC:

- **Members of the NWWRAC Executive Committee**
- **Miss Isabelle Viallon (DG MARE)**