



Ms Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Jozef II-straat 99
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Dun Laoghaire, 20 April 2022

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Subject: NWWAC-PelAC gentlemen's agreement

On 31 March 2022 the Executive Committees of the North Western Waters Advisory Council and the Pelagic Advisory Council approved a gentlemen's agreement, enclosed with this letter, establishing a protocol for collaboration on providing advice to the European Commission on Sprat and Greater Silver Smelt in ICES areas 6 and 7.

These stocks are currently under the remit of the NWWAC, as detailed in Annex III of the Common Fisheries Policy. The NWWAC emphasised its interest in the stocks mainly as part of its bycatch advice in relevant demersal fisheries, while the PelAC's interest lies in the directed fisheries for these stocks.

There is a clear understanding between both ACs that as long as the current CFP regulation remains in place as it is, the ACs will respect each other's remit. As such the NWWAC will continue to be the point of contact with the Commission for Sprat and Greater Silver Smelt in its area. At the same time, the ACs recognise each other's ability in providing advice within their competencies on the above species.

Currently, the ICES annual advice on these species is presented to the ACs in July each year. However, the Bilateral Agreement between the EU and the UK has amended the TAC year for sprat in the English Channel (SPR/7DE). From 2022 onwards, similarly to North Sea Sprat TAC, also in the Channel the TAC year will run annually from July to July. It is expected that this change will shift the timing of the annual publication of the ICES advice to early April. Therefore, we would like to request that ICES presents the sprat advice in the English Channel at the annual PelAC meetings in April.

In the subsequent weeks following the PelAC April meeting, the PelAC Secretariat will share written recommendation proposals with the NWWAC Secretariat based on this interaction. The NWWAC Secretariat will share these draft recommendations with the members of the regional Working Group concerned, and a bilateral meeting between the ACs will then be set up to agree on a final recommendation.





A similar approach will be followed for the greater silver smelt, as the PelAC will include this stock in the advice package to be presented by ICES during the annual PelAC Working Group II meeting in July.

In order to ensure the implementation of the gentlemen's agreement, the ACs are seeking the support of the Commission regarding the change in timing and organisation of the presentation of the ICES advice for sprat in the English Channel as detailed above.

Thank you for your attention on this matter. We remain available for further clarification if needed and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Emiel Brouckaert
NWWAC Chairman

Jesper Raakjær
PelAC Chairman

