

# MINUTES

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**BEC – BILBAO**

**14<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**09:30 - 12:30**

Chairman: Sam Lambourn

Rapporteur: Alexandre Rodríguez

### **1. Welcome**

The Chairman of the NWWRAC, Sam Lambourn, thanked Víctor Badiola and the Basque Country Government for hosting the meetings of the NWWRAC within the framework of the SINAVAL Trade Show 2011 and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Mr. Lambourn praised the high attendance rate by members and welcomed observers, in particular, Mike Park whose organisation (i.e. the Scottish White Fish Producers Association) had recently become a new member of the NWWRAC and Marina Santurtun of AZTI. The list of participants is detailed in Annex I.

- Apologies: No apologies were received on this occasion.

- Agenda

The Chairman proposed to change the order of items 5 (Actions put forward by geographical Working Groups) and 6 (Report on work progress made by the NWWRAC in 2011). This proposal was accepted and the agenda was adopted.

- Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting (Paris, 27 January 2011): No comments were made and the report was formally adopted.

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## 2. Report of the meeting between the RACs and DG Evans

The Chairman highlighted the following two aspects in referring to the official minutes<sup>1</sup> of the meeting held with DG Evans in Brussels, 2 March 2011:

1) Regarding the achievement of consensus, DG Evans indicated a preference in receiving evidence-based advice, with indications of majority and minority positions if necessary, rather than receiving a “diluted” report adopted by consensus. This is a change to the original position of the Commission and of the previous Director General;

2) Regarding the future funding of RACs, DG Evans made it clear that a budget reduction for the RACs was likely to occur as a consequence of a reduction in the overall Commission budget. However, this point was not reflected in the meeting report and appeared to be in contradiction with the views expressed by the DG during a previous coordination meeting held in December 2010.

**Action:** Secretariat to seek clarification from the Commission on future funding for the RACs within a reformed CFP.

## 3. Update on DG MARE work programme and calendar of consultations

María Fuensanta Candela, Head of Unit J2 of DG MARE, informed members about the Commission’s work priorities for 2011 and spoke about consultations where NWWRAC input is expected.

### CFP Reform

The reform process will be the cornerstone of DG MARE proposals. The first CFP reform package will be launched on 13 July 2011 and will contain:

- an overarching Communication;
- a new basic regulation; a new Common Market Regulation;
- a Communication on the external dimension of the CFP and
- a report on access to EU waters.

The EU Financial regulation is expected by the end of 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> Both the [Agenda](#) and the [Minutes](#) are available on the NWWRAC website.

### Communication on Fishing Opportunities for 2012 (“Policy Statement”)

Internal consultation procedures have been finalised within DG MARE and the Policy Statement should be published within the next few weeks. This item is expected to be included for discussion on the agenda of the Council in June 2011. Whilst admitting it was premature to go into much level of detail, Ms. Candela acknowledged that its content will differ substantially from that of previous years. It will be focused on the long-term and will cover a multi-annual period. Furthermore, a new approach will be taken regarding the management of TACs and quotas, resulting in the 11 categories of stocks being revised and simplified.

### Long-term management plans (LTMP)

There are a number of proposals for different stocks in the pipeline (Baltic salmon, anchovy and horse mackerel being the main ones). In relation to demersal stocks of interest to the NWWRAC, a review of recovery plans for Cod, Northern Hake, and consultation on management options for Nephrops are expected in the mid-term. A consultation document with options for the review of Western Channel Sole will be available in the next few weeks.

The Commission is scheduled to meet the European Parliament and the Council shortly, in an effort to ease the seemingly institutional deadlock between European institutions in deciding who has the competence to legislate regarding the adoption of long term management plans. In addition, a technical session will be organised by the Commission to explore long-term policies and identify priorities, components and potential benefits of the LTMPs.

In relation to a regional, multi-fishery approach, the Commission supports the NWWRAC initiative to develop a Management Plan for mixed demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea. If successful, this process could be used as *an example* for other mixed fisheries in EU waters in the future. The Commission’s representative affirmed that RACs are the best forum to detail the management needs of the fishery. The Commission will closely follow NWWRAC progress on this issue.

Finally, a regulation on the deep-sea access regime is scheduled for the summer of 2011 and will be tabled once the Impact Assessment has been finalised.

*The Chair thanked Ms. Candela for her presentation and opened the floor for discussion. The following remarks/questions were made:*

Sam Lambourn asked about the timing of the front-loading exercise for the NWWRAC. He also asked if the Commission representative could speculate on what the main controversial items for discussion in the new Policy Statement would be.

Bertie Armstrong suggested that the Commission set a minimum period of time for the advice cycle, which would allow the NWWRAC to produce the best possible advice to Commission requests. It was also suggested that a feedback mechanism be put in place which would allow stakeholders to submit further comments following the Commission's reply to the RAC. Mr. Armstrong remarked that if CFP reform is the main priority, it should be expressly included in the Commission's work programme. Finally, he asked if there was any news in relation to a LTMP for West of Scotland haddock.

Sean O'Donoghue requested information on the timetable for the review of the CFP process, as well as the western waters regime. He also asked about the timeframe for implementing the rules of the Control Regulation (including JDPs for western waters) and the procedure and timeframe to introduce the new technical conservation measures.

Jacques Pichon asked if a revised western waters regime would have implications on effort in the Celtic Sea.

Barrie Deas asked the Commission about the state-of-play and way forward of a revised cod recovery plan.

Hugo González asked about the review of nephrops measures (i.e. quota limits for Member States) on the Porcupine Bank (FU16) and relayed the disappointment of the Spanish fleet as a result of the decision to limit quota in this area. He recalled that this was the only area that had specific management measures in place and asked if this meant that an attempt was being made to manage this species by functional unit.

Daniel Lefèvre asked about the Commission's position regarding the landing ban on several species of sharks and rays. He asked if the Commission planned to lift this ban in the near future following advice from both Member States and stakeholders' organisations on individual species management (e.g. Undulate ray and common skate).

*The Commission's representative replied to most of the above questions as follows:*

#### Preparation on Fishing Opportunities - Policy Statement and CFP reform

The Commission does not intend to front-load Nephrops management in area VII. This is due to the need for revised data and the reluctance that some Member States have openly manifested in relation to management by functional units.

The Communication on Fishing Opportunities for 2012 should be ready in about 3 weeks. The NWWRAC will be given 8 weeks to develop its advice.

The Policy statement is adopted as a consultation document, allowing RACs to provide feedback and for DG MARE to submit a detailed response. If the NWWRAC thinks that their advice has not been duly taken onboard or included in the Proposal of Regulation, it can suggest modifications in subsequent years, as the new document will be multi-annual.

The omission of CFP reform in the updated Commission's work programme is purely accidental as it is obviously the top priority for the Commission, this year.

#### Technical Conservation Measures

No new proposal will be unveiled until the CFP package is adopted. It is, therefore, certain that a new Regulation on TCMs will not be adopted before 2013.

#### Western waters effort regime

Discussions were held at the Council in Luxembourg concerning a report presented in November 2010. It is too early to present a formal proposal and the Commission will wait to see the first reactions to the reformed CFP package.

Regarding the Celtic Sea, the Commission supports the ongoing work of the NWWRAC in developing a management plan for demersal stocks in this area and will not interfere. The Commission will work on their own proposal, however, in case the NWWRAC fails to deliver a functional plan. The NWWRAC has been given until the end of the year to present a coherent management plan. It will be considered by the Commission if it contains functional proposals that guarantee the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks in this area.

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### Control Regulation

The Implementing rules of the Control Regulation were adopted this week. DG MARE held a formal press conference on Tuesday 12 April 2011 on the matter. The referred measures will not enter into force until 1 January 2012.

### Long Term Management Plans

All management plans, including that for West of Scotland Haddock, are currently on hold until the institutional problem between the European Parliament and Council is solved and the competencies (i.e. matters to be decided by co-decision or by cooperation) are clearly allocated. In relation to V1a Haddock, the socio-economic impact assessment has not yet been accomplished as the Commission has been dealing with other priorities. However, as far as this stock is concerned, the Commission will comply with the Harvest Control Rules established for the North Sea.

Ms. Candela stated that she did not know what was going to be included in the LTMP and that the LTMP may even look into alternative approaches, such as setting general targets at a high level and leaving the implementation of these measures to the Member States concerned and/or their fishing industry and stakeholders.

### Review of the cod recovery plan

The Commission cannot set aside and not implement this plan as this would go against an act emanating from the powers of the Co-legislators, namely the European Parliament and the Council.

The RAC was advised to engage in discussions relating to the review of the plan.

The main problem for stocks off the West of Scotland and in the Irish Sea was considered to be a lack of available data in order to determine the state of these cod stocks. It was suggested that this represents a good opportunity for the RACs to work on improving data quality. In terms of timing, there was already a joint ICES/STECF scoping meeting in February 2011 and there will be an STECF working group in Hamburg, in June 2011, to run the evaluation.

### Nephrops management

As a result of a formal request made by the Spanish Government, the Member States agreed, at a recent Council meeting, to review and amend the table of allocation of quota limits for Nephrops on the Porcupine Bank (FU16), with a deadline of 27 April 2011. A revised quota limit will be established in relation to track records in area FU16. The original quota allocation was calculated based on shares for the whole of area VII. This does not reflect the track record of catches by the different fleets in the Porcupine Bank.

### Rays and sharks

ICES advice in recent years is unambiguous and indicates that the species of rays and sharks detailed in the landing ban cannot be targeted. The Commission was simply following ICES advice. It was noted that there was a request from stakeholders to ease this measure and allow the fishing of these species in some areas. The Commission noted that as there seemed to be a mismatch between the perception of fishermen on the ground and the scientific advice, the Commission was obliged to follow a precautionary approach for the conservation of these species. Further efforts should be made by the industry to work with the scientists and provide accurate and reliable data to justify the industry's position and influence change.

## **4. Commission proposal for a discard ban in European waters**

A Public Hearing with Stakeholders was held in Brussels on 3 May 2011. This event was organised by the Commissioner following the launch of the proposal for a discard ban by the Commission to Council and EP representatives on 1 March 2011.

The Commission's representative acknowledged that the demands of public opinion, driven by the media impact of a number of initiatives, which raised concerns on the problem of discards (including from chef celebrity Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and other voices), had led DG MARE officials to react quickly.

As a result, Commissioner Damanaki called a meeting with the Fisheries Ministers of Member States and some Members of the European Parliament to exchange views on how the problem of discards might be tackled. The next step would be to consult the stakeholders and give them the opportunity to express their opinions and submit contributions.

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It is the Commission's view that all stakeholders must be committed to the elimination of discards although the Commission also acknowledged that this will be difficult to achieve.

*The Chair thanked Ms. Candela for her presentation and opened the floor for comments.*

Jacques Pichon stated that discarding is a complex issue, especially when it refers to by-catches. There are a number of reputable and robust scientific studies and sources that agree with the industry's position that closures and bans are not the solution and do not help the conservation of species in all cases. It is necessary to adopt a fishery-by-fishery approach, separating areas of high and low abundance indices and adjusting quotas accordingly in order to avoid discards.

The industry would be able to provide technical data and it would definitely be a more sensitive solution than blanket protective measures.

Mr. Pichon also sought clarity regarding the hierarchy of advice and the weighting given to RAC opinion in the context of the public consultation on discards. It was considered that the Commission is sending contradictory messages; from one side, they affirmed that RACs are important and that this role should be reinforced but from the other side there is lack of formal recognition of RAC advice, especially in the context of public consultation. This opinion was shared and endorsed by the NWWRAC Chairperson, Sam Lambourn.

Bertie Armstrong believed that the Commission must be open and remain sensitive to proposals on how to tackle discards, from stakeholders. The Commission must also be transparent when defining the objectives of the meeting and when providing information or documents, in advance, so addressees know what is expected of them. In essence, the Commission must set in place an open process that respects the work already undertaken by the industry.

Mr. Armstrong also stressed that there was a need to adopt a sober approach to the problem of discards in mixed fisheries. It was considered regrettable the way in which Commissioner Damanaki had reacted to the Fish Fight campaign by calling together Fisheries Ministers from Member States in such a short time. It was considered that this projected a superficial approach to the subject. Indeed, the Member States' reply, which was based on the Commissioner's demands, was quite rushed. It was advocated that this should not be considered the way forward, as it could create serious consequences, which could in turn compromise the future of the fishing industry. More dialogue must be encouraged to find balanced solutions rather than implementing a total discard ban for all European stocks in 3 years time.

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Sean O'Donoghue agreed with Bertie Armstrong that the way in which the Commissioner reacted and the proposal, as presented, was regrettable and based purely on PR rather than on a considered response to the issue. Discards are a highly complex problem, and the Commission's paper was a "recipe for disaster", as it does not address the real problems by fishery.

As a total elimination of discards is not feasible in the short term, discussion should be based on the reduction and minimisation of discards rather than the imposition of an unrealistic ban.

Barrie Deas noted that both the TV programmes and the Commissioner's response left the audience with the impression that no work had been carried out by the industry on this issue (or if so, it had been slow). Initiatives such as the "50% Project" in South West England, where beam trawlers had significantly reduced discards, had been very successful and was presented as an example of industry initiative.

A considerable reduction in discards had also been made through decommissioning schemes and gear-oriented and selectivity projects. Regulatory discards (created by European legislation) such as those in the cod recovery plan, were also considered to act as effective obstacles for the implementation of industry-lead initiatives such as cod avoidance plans.

Mr. Deas suggested all existing scientific and industry initiatives for the reduction of discards in western waters, be collated. This would allow an analysis of all historical work on discards to take place generating conclusions that would move the process in the right direction by helping to set realistic objectives rather than mythical ones.

Hugo González agreed with all previous speakers on the discard issue. He asked the Commission to explain the exact meaning and concept of the catch quotas included in the UK-France-Denmark declaration. The allocation of 15% extra quota for by-catch appeared to be quite a general and simple approach and not designed to solve a complicated problem. The need to adopt transitional and progressive measures was advocated and a specific request was made not to rush this complex issue.

Kara Brydson welcomed the renewed interest of the Commission in discards but insisted that any proposed measures must consider the particular circumstances of individual fisheries and be tailored to address the specific needs of each fishery. It was considered that the Stakeholders' hearing would be a useful forum for identifying successful tools and measures, which are either currently being tested or working effectively. It was brought to the Commission's attention that RSPB-Birdlife supports preferential access to fishing opportunities for those fishermen who prove that they fish sustainably.

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Victor Badiola remarked that all fishermen want to eliminate discards. There is incoherence from the Commissioner in the objectives presented and the regulatory restrictions currently in place. Discards are not uniform and are dependent on fishing areas, gear types and market aspects.

The Commission was asked for moderation and reflection before the adoption of measures to address the discard issue.

Jim Portus mentioned that several studies had been undertaken in the UK regarding the survival rates of discards. A lot of work had been completed in the Channel with the beam trawl fleet and a further project with CEFAS was underway to quantify survival rates. He reminded members that the landing ban on undulate ray creates a 100% discard of this species, and that there is scientific evidence that several species of skates and rays have a reasonably good survival rate once discarded.

Iwan Ball expressed that the new CFP regulation must contain clear objectives for the development of long term management plans to include clear discard-reduction measures and targets. Any steps to end discards must be mainly focused on improving the selectivity of catches.

Paul Trebilcock suggested looking at the drivers of discards, in particular the regulatory discards such as landing bans, catch composition rules, etc. The Commission was asked to note that it is the regulators and not fishermen who have been the main contributors to this problem.

*The Commission's representative replied to the majority of these opinions as follows:*

Ms. Candela acknowledged that this issue of discards and discarding was a topic that invokes much passion and has systematically been on the table for the last 5 years. There had been a lot of discussion on the subject but no resulting action. The Commission would include proposals on discards in the CFP reform package and it would be the responsibility of the European Parliament and the Council to decide ultimately on their final scope.

Ms. Candela highlighted that it would be impossible for the Commission to ignore the public reaction to the issue. There is a societal demand to put an end to discards, and the Commission must work towards this objective. It was acknowledged by the Commission that there are already some successful initiatives and suggestions on specific fisheries but it was also noted that all parties needed to react quickly in order to design and implement an appropriate solution on the discard issue.

The Commission noted that there was a common responsibility to end discarding (i.e. European institutions, Member States and stakeholders).

The Public is not interested in a sophisticated approach to a progressive reduction in discards; they simply want to see discards disappear! The Commission is responsible for setting policy objectives, even if this is not always done in favourable situations.

Regarding the idea of introducing by-catch quotas, the Commission stated that it was not in a position to respond to the proposal coming from the Member States. There had already been some experience in this field, which is currently under evaluation by STECF concerning its efficacy. However, Ms. Candela affirmed that some fisheries cannot work on the basis of by-catch quotas.

Regarding post-discard survival rates, the Commission acknowledged that some species showed high rates of survival. The reason for a landing ban for some sharks and rays is precisely because it is believed that fishermen can release these species to the sea and they have a good chance of survival. Fishermen could, however, help to improve the knowledge of the shark and ray fisheries by providing data to STECF, as there was currently insufficient data available to evaluate the performance of these fisheries.

The Commission's representative agreed with the NGO representatives that the main aim should be to avoid unwanted catches.

**Action:** The NWWRAC to prepare a position paper compiling all existing initiatives and projects aimed to reduce discards, and submit this to the Commission prior to the Stakeholders Meeting that will take place in Brussels on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May.

## **5. Report on progress made by the NWWRAC in 2011**

### **5.1. Data Deficiency**

Barrie Deas reported on two inaugural meetings held between the North Western Waters and North Sea RACs and ICES in January and March 2011. These meetings discussed and adopted the terms of reference for the establishment of regional task forces to prioritise data poor stocks and agree on a priority list of stocks that each of the respective RACs would address.

Mr. Deas insisted that it was essential to keep up the momentum achieved at these meetings and to work on providing the required data for each stock at working group level within the RACs.

The members were advised that the minutes of both meetings were available on the NWWRAC website<sup>2</sup>.

## 5.2. Long term management plans

### 5.2.1. *Celtic Sea Focus Group*

The Focus Group Chairman, Jacques Pichon, gave an update of the outcomes of the meeting held in January 2011, in Paris. The steering group was now working on the development of a set of measures to implement the biological, economic and social objectives formally adopted in March 2011<sup>3</sup>. It was noted that the collaboration and commitment of the scientific community, in building a biological range of options, would be the key to the success of this initiative. The next meeting of this focus group is scheduled to take place at the next session of the NWWRAC in Dublin, in July 2011.

The members were advised that the report of the Focus Group meeting was available on the NWWRAC website<sup>4</sup>.

The Commission indicated that even though the Commission's proposal to reduce effort in the Celtic Sea was dismissed in December, the Council Declaration clearly identified the need to continue work on a management proposal for the Celtic Sea.

The Commission considered the NWWRAC initiative as the first structured effort from a RAC to advance and adopt a coherent approach for a mixed fishery, in European waters. A well-structured plan could result in a model that could be applied to other regions and fisheries. It was acknowledged that the challenge to produce ideas or concrete proposals towards a practical and appropriate management plan puts pressure on the RAC, but it was also acknowledged by the

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings\\_ENG/Navigation.php?id=493&language=English](http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=493&language=English)

[http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings\\_ENG/Navigation.php?id=481&language=English](http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=481&language=English)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nwwrac.org/Publications/Publications\\_ENG/Navigation.php?page=search&language=English](http://www.nwwrac.org/Publications/Publications_ENG/Navigation.php?page=search&language=English)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings\\_ENG/Navigation.php?id=446&language=English](http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=446&language=English)

Commission that this represents a clear opportunity for stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and effective management. The Commission will expect a final report from the NWWRAC by the end of 2011.

#### 5.2.2. ICES-STEFC evaluation of the cod recovery plan in VI and VII

Lorcan O’Cinnéide and Barrie Deas reported on the ICES-STEFC joint scoping meeting on the evaluation of the cod recovery plan for VI and VII. Detail was provided on the programme, attendees, stocks and areas covered.

The meeting was informed that there would be an Expert Group meeting in Hamburg between 20 and 24 June 2011 that will run an evaluation based on previously identified information. Following this meeting, recommendations will be put forward to the STECF Plenary Session for adoption, and subsequently submitted to the Commission. The recommendations will be included in the Commission’s Proposal of Regulation and sent to the Council for discussion and adoption in 2012.

The meeting was informed that the opinions of stakeholders would be appended to the Expert meeting report in the form of an Annex. It was proposed that the NWWRAC convene a meeting, as a matter of urgency, to prepare a position paper to be presented to the Hamburg meeting and included in the STECF report.

**Action:** Secretariat to co-ordinate arrangements for a focus group in late May-early June 2011 to prepare a specific opinion paper from the NWWRAC, which would be submitted in early June in sufficient time for consideration at the STECF meeting in Hamburg.

Finally, Mr. Deas announced that STECF will make available 5,000 euro to employ a scientist to work for a maximum of 15 days on a topic chosen by the North Western Waters and the North Sea RACs. The North Sea RAC had already suggested areas where work is needed and proposed, through Mr Deas, that the NWWRAC be associated with this project.

The Executive Committee approved NWWRAC association with the NSRAC project.

**Actions:**

- NWWRAC Secretariat to contact North Sea RAC to indicate support for their advice in using the resources made available from STECF to hire a scientist for a 15-day project;
- NWWRAC Secretariat to confirm with the Chair, John Simmonds, that it would be acceptable to include a NWWRAC position paper as an Annex in the STECF Hamburg meeting report.

*5.2.3. Control and compliance of CFP rules*

Hugo González and Alex Rodríguez summarised the content and outcomes of this meeting, and asked the Executive Committee for their approval to progress the organisation of a Control Conference in Western Waters with CFCA, the Pelagic RAC and the South Western Waters RAC Secretariats. The Executive Committee approved this proposal.

A summary note of the NWWRAC/CFCA meeting can be found on the NWWRAC<sup>5</sup> website.

**Action:** NWWRAC Secretariat to continue working with the CFCA, Pelagic RAC and South Western Waters RAC Secretariats in the organisation of a Control Conference for Western Waters, and report on the work progress to the members at the next Executive Committee meeting.

**6. Actions put forward by Geographical Working Groups**

**Working Group 1 – West of Scotland and Western Approaches**

+ Fishing Opportunities:

- Prepare the ground for NWWRAC advice on fishing opportunities for 2012 by sending a letter to the Commission expressing disappointment for the lack of transparency in previous years and asking for clarification of timing and length of consultation.

+ Cod recovery plan (see horizontal action)

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[http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/FINAL\\_Summary\\_Note\\_Preparatory\\_Mtg\\_CFCA\\_NWWRAC\\_Control\\_Seminar\\_010311\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/FINAL_Summary_Note_Preparatory_Mtg_CFCA_NWWRAC_Control_Seminar_010311_EN.pdf)



+ Blue ling:

Víctor Badiola to write a letter to DG MARE requesting the current status of blue ling management and formally requesting that ICES/STECF undertakes an evaluation of the efficiency of the seasonal closures for blue ling spawning aggregations.

+ West of Scotland management plan

- Bertie Armstrong to draft a letter proposing that DG MARE develop a scientific trial involving Ireland and Scotland to address the discard of haddock and to find relief measures to catch composition rules.

**Working Group 2 – West of Ireland and Celtic Sea**

+ Northern Hake

- WG2 plan to convene a Focus Group on Northern Hake once new scientific evidence and a consultation paper and/or a proposal from the Commission is released.

+ Celtic Sea Focus Group meeting

- The steering group and Marine Institute scientists will progress work on developing an evaluation matrix, based on the one used in the MEFPO Project, to classify implementing measures needed to fulfil agreed objectives. A new, detailed proposal will be presented at the next WG meeting, to be held in July 2011.

+ PISCES Project:

- NWWRAC to express grave reservations on the conclusions reached at the PISCES Stakeholders forums, where no members of the main fleets operating in the Celtic Sea were duly represented.

+ Porbeagle and Spurdog:

- Paul Trebilcock to redraft the letter presented last summer with the aim of seeking consensus, focusing on the need to achieve sustainability, and take due consideration of the socio-economic impact of management measures applied to these stocks. The main objectives must be the conservation of the stocks and improving knowledge of the fishery.

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+ Technical measures for Lobster

- NWWRAC Secretariat to reply to the Cornish skipper informing him of the decision of the NWWRAC to reject the proposal of applying UK by-laws to all of area VII and recommend that this issue is addressed at the Channel Regional Council as the most competent forum for this matter.

+ Nephrops management (see horizontal actions)

**Working Group 3 - Channel**

+ Western Channel Sole:

- WG3 to resume the preparation of a common position on the consultation document to be presented by DG MARE in the following weeks.

+ Cod recovery plan (see horizontal action)

+ Marine Protected Areas in UK waters:

- NWWRAC Secretariat to translate and circulate a letter stating the position from the Channel Conference on the process of designation of the MPA network in UK waters and the consultation procedure with stakeholders.

**Working Group 4 – Irish Sea**

+ Cod recovery plan (see horizontal actions)

+ Nephrops management (see horizontal actions)

+ Marine Protected Areas in UK waters:

- Paul Trebilcock to prepare a letter to the UK minister providing a NWWRAC opinion of the UK Marine Bill and the effects of the designation of sites in “offshore” waters beyond 12 nautical miles for non-UK vessels.
- WG4 to investigate the procedure and costs of mapping or establishing the coordinates and likely impacts of designated sites, forming an MPA network in UK waters.

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- NWWRAC Secretariat and members to compile all available information regarding the network of MPAs (Natura 2000, MCZs, etc.) in order to have a clear picture of the impact of these MPAs for demersal fisheries in north western waters.

### **Horizontal issues**

#### + Review of the Cod recovery plan:

- NWWRAC Secretariat to liaise with the NSRAC Secretariat expressing NWWRAC interest to avail of 5,000 euro to fund a scientist, contracted by STECF, to develop a joint work programme on stocks of concern.
- NWWRAC Secretariat to make all necessary organisational arrangements for a Focus Group on this topic to be held in Dublin in late May or early June.
- Steering group to undertake preparatory work and draft a discussion paper to be circulated among Focus Group members prior to this meeting.

#### + Nephrops management:

- Lorcan O' Cinnéide to prepare a letter to DG MARE articulating the concern of the NWWRAC regarding the management of Nephrops by Functional Unit and voicing NWWRAC disagreement with the current TAC and Quota regulation which allocates quota limits by Member State on the Porcupine Bank.

**All of the actions put forward by the Working Groups Chairs and/or rapporteurs were endorsed and adopted by the Executive Committee members present.**

## **7. Chairman's summary of agreed actions**

Apart from the adopted actions from the Working Groups, the Chair reminded members of the following actions, proposed and agreed by the Executive Committee.

### **+ Discards**

- The NWWRAC would compile all initiatives and projects that have contributed to the reduction of discards in western waters, and submit a letter to the Commission prior to the Stakeholders meeting scheduled for 3 May 2011.

### **+ Data Deficiency**

- The NWWRAC clearly supports this initiative. Working Groups are instructed that momentum must be maintained and progress made by identifying priority stocks with data deficiencies in each geographical Working Group area.

The Chairman thanked all participants, the Basque Government, and the interpreters before closing the meeting.

**Meeting was adjourned at 12:35**

## ANNEX I

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>		
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Víctor	Badiola	OPPAO
Iwan	Ball	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Jacques	Bigot	CTFC-ETF
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Kara	Brydson	RSPB Scotland
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO
John	Crudden	European Angler's Association
Barrie	Deas	NFFO
Anton	Dekker	Dutch Fisheries Organisation
Hugo C.	González García	ARVI-ANASOL
André	Gueguen	CNPMEM
Sam	Lambourn	Skipper
André	LeBerre	CRPMEM - Bretagne
Jesús	Lourido	EAPA
Sean	O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Eibhlin	O'Sullivan	Irish South & West FPO
Jacques	Pichon	ANOP
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
<b>OBSERVERS</b>		
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Alain	Biseau	IFREMER
María Fuensanta	Candela	DG MARE - European Commission
Alan	Coghill	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
John	Daly	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM
Marc	Ghiglia	UAPF
Hector	Villa González	Ministerio de Medio Ambiente
Daniel	Lefèvre	CRPMEM Basse Normandie
Thierry	Leprêtre	France Peche Durable et
<b>SECRETARIAT</b>		
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Dr Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Alexandre	Rodríguez	Executive Assistant, Policy
Joanna	McGrath	Executive Assistant, Administration

NWWRAC Executive Committee

Bilbao, 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2011

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