



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,  
D(2011)

Ms Aujke Coers  
Pelagic RAC  
Treubstraat 17  
PO Box 72  
2280 AB Rijswijk  
The Netherlands

**Subject: Fishing opportunities 2012 for North Sea herring**

Dear Ms Coers,

Thank you for your letter of 14 November 2011 concerning the performance of a range of TAC stabilising mechanisms that could be considered for the EU-Norway long term management plan for North Sea herring. The joint EU-Norway request to ICES on the subject already incorporated some of the Pelagic RAC's ideas on this subject. Indeed, the RAC's suggested approach of using an average of the existing TAC and the TAC indicated by the harvest control rule performed very well in the evaluations.

Overall, the results of the ICES evaluation give strong support to the view that the 15% TAC constraint of the current plan places too much emphasis on TAC stability and not enough on maximising long term yield. In this respect I agree that alternative TAC stability mechanisms should be explored with a view to modifying the plan.

As this is a plan that is jointly agreed with Norway, this should be done through another EU-Norway request to ICES, which will be formulated following the results of the benchmark assessment in 2012. I can assure you that the ideas and evaluations that you have already submitted, or might submit in the meantime, will be given full consideration.

Finally, regarding the TAC for 2012, Norway and the EU have finally agreed to set the TAC at 405 000 tonnes, taking into account the advice from ICES indicating that there would be a low risk of the stock falling below precautionary limits in the near term if the TAC constraint of 15% would not be applied.

Yours sincerely,

  
Lowri Evans