



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.C.3/NG

Subject: Fish Welfare in Pelagic Fisheries

Dear Mr Sverdrup Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 11 October 2024 (Ares (2024)7229638) on behalf of the Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) concerning the steps that have been taken to discuss and address fish welfare in pelagic fisheries.

In your letter, you highlight that, to move forward on this topic and to ensure adequate discussion, the PelAC has identified fish welfare as one of the topics to be addressed in the newly formed WGIII - Working Group on Ecosystem and Horizontal Issues and has created this Focus Group on Fish Welfare in Pelagic Fisheries (FGFW).

I welcome this initiative by PelAC and recognise that this is intended to address broader societal concerns on the issue of fish welfare. Nonetheless, you will know that animal welfare is currently covered by Council Directive 98/58/EC ⁽¹⁾, which however concerns the protection of animals kept for farming purposes only. My services have informed DG SANTE about your initiative. DG SANTE has communicated that the scope of the animal welfare legislation will remain unchanged during its modernisation, meaning that it will concern animals kept and bred for farming purposes only.

Esben Sverdrup Jensen
Chair of the Pelagic Advisory Council
Louis Braillelaan 80
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⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes.

Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Julia.RUBECK@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.296.88.89), or Mr Niall Gerlitz (niall.gerlitz@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.298.5764).

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation, and to the position paper that PelAC will draft in the coming months on this topic.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

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