



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR FISHERIES AND MARITIME AFFAIRS

Resources and relations with stakeholders

**Interinstitutional relations and dialogue with the sector; Information and communication**

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### **RACs COORDINATION MEETING**

**Brussels, 11 October 2005**

### **DEBRIEFING**

The Commission convened the first coordination meeting with the RACs on 11 October 2005 in Brussels with the participation of representatives from the North Sea, Pelagic and North Western Waters RACs. The idea to organise coordination meetings with all RACs in place was suggested to the Commission by the RACs themselves. The purpose of the Commission is to organise them on a regular basis to inform RACs about priorities and planned initiatives for the next months, ensuring thus an early involvement of RACs in the CFP policy-making.

The Commission invited as observers to the meeting representatives from the UK Presidency, the Member States and from the Advisory Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA). As ACFA will continue to advise the Commission on CFP issues at European horizontal level, it is important to ensure a good coordination between the work of the RACs and that of ACFA to avoid overlapping and duplication of work.

#### **1. Commission's Work Programme until the end of 2005**

DG FISH mentioned the key priorities for the CFP until the end of the year. The central piece of work would be the **TAC and Quota Regulation**. Due to the internal procedures within the Commission, RACs consultation could not take place before the adoption of the Commission's proposal. However, RACs input could be taken into account during negotiations with Council and the Commission would organise a consultation meeting with RACs during the month of November.

DG FISH explained that it was stimulating discussions within the Council on frontloading to ensure a better involvement of stakeholders in the decisions on TACs and quotas. The different options considered consisted of a change in the management year or bringing forward the scientific advice, but any measure taken in this sense could only be implemented by the end of 2006-2007.

Other priorities before the end of 2005 were: a proposal for a Council Regulation on a long-term management plan for plaice and sole in the North Sea (the Commission's written reaction to the NSRAC's opinion would be ready within the next days); a proposal for a Council Regulation setting out a recovery plan for the Eastern Baltic Sea Cod stocks and a Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on the parameters for measuring fishing effort.

## **2. Commission's Priorities for 2006**

DG FISH gave an overview of its work programme for 2006, explaining over which items it intended to consult RACs and/or ACFA. RACs would work within a decision-making process where other bodies were also involved and the necessary synergies would need to be established between them, in particular ACFA, but also with the scientific community, as well amongst RACs when there were issues of common interest. Although RACs could of course discuss on any item they wished, they would be more effective and influential if they focused on their core business. In any case, there was no guarantee that the Commission could attend every meeting and discussion given its limited resources. The coordination meetings would be an excellent opportunity for RACs to state their intentions regarding the points on which they would like to issue advice.

DG FISH will seek RACs advice on the following areas:

- § MSY Communication – a non-paper had already been transmitted to RACs for consultation.
- § Proposal for a Council Regulation recasting Council Regulation 850/98 on technical measures – RACs were already being consulted through a non-paper.
- § TACs and Quotas for 2007, including for certain deep sea stocks and for the Baltic Sea.
- § Communication on discards, which would also be discussed in ACFA but some case studies could be undertaken at regional level through RACs.
- § Simplification – DG FISH was also expecting RACs feedback in order to prepare an Action Plan by the end of 2005.

## **3. State of play on the undergoing Consultations and Follow up of the Recommendations**

As two RACs had just been set up, only the North Sea RAC had been able to provide advice to the Commission during the last months. Before the end of October, the Commission would reply to the NSRAC advice on plaice. The Pelagic RAC would soon send its advice on mackerel and on the cod-end on pelagic trawls.

## **4. Role of the RACs with regard to Control issues (in particular the Control Agency)**

DG FISH provided an update on the constitution of the Control Agency, explaining that RACs could play a role if they were interested. RACs' participation would take place through an Advisory Board. The RACs concluded that this item would be considered by them in an Inter-RAC working group in December and then come back to the Commission.

## **5. Overview of the Grant Agreements**

DG FISH referred to the practical modalities for the implementation of the grant agreements. To some concerns about the complexity of the process, DG FISH explained that it had to comply with the Community financial rules. The fact that RACs funding was too small was also highlighted. DG FISH indicated that RACs could pursue other sources of funding.

## **6. Communication with the Commission and Website**

DG FISH reminded that Miriam García Ferrer was the contact point for RACs and that she should be included in all communications with DG FISH to ensure that RACS work could be effectively coordinated. DG FISH also encouraged RACS to develop their websites and that a link would be included in the Commission's Fisheries website ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/dialogue/rac\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/dialogue/rac_en.htm)).

## **7. A.O.B.**

A communication on the state of play of RACs was included in the agenda of the October Council for information purposes. DG FISH also thanked the UK Presidency for the useful discussion on RACs that took place in Edinburgh last September.

The Commission intends to meet with all RACs at least twice a year and the next meeting is planned early 2006.

Miriam García Ferrer

**Annex**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE COORDINATION MEETING WITH RACs**

**Brussels, 11 October 2005**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>North Sea RAC</b>	
	Mr Hugo ANDERSSON
	Ms Ann BELL
	Mr Gerard VAN BALSFOORT
<b>Pelagic RAC</b>	
	Mr Iain MACSWEEN
	Ms Ingvild HARKES
	Mr Rob BANNING
<b>North Western Waters RAC</b>	
	Mr Sam LAMBOURN
	Ms Patricia COMISKEY
<b>UK Presidency</b>	
	Mr Lindsay HARRIS
	Ms Katie BLOXAM
	Mr F. STRANG
<b>Member States</b>	
Denmark	Mr Jesper Wulff PEDERSEN
Germany	Mr Bruno HOFFSTADT
Spain	Mr Pedro GALACHE
Estonia	Mr Mart UNDREST
France	Mr Francis FOULON
Ireland	Mr Colm HAYES
Malta	Mr John BRINCAT

Netherlands	Mr Joost PAARDEKOPER
Sweden	Mr Stefan DE MARÉ Ms Karin VICTORIN
<b>ACFA</b>	
Europêche/Cogeca	Mr Guy VERNAEVE
NGOs	Ms Carol PHUA
ETF	Ms Livia SPERA
AIPCE/CEP	Mr Michel COENEN
AEPM	Mr Bruno GUILLAUMIE
<b>DG FISH</b>	
	Mr HOLMQUIST
	Mr MASTRACCHIO
	Mr FARNELL
	Mr PENAS
	Mr PAPAIOANNOU
	Mr LAUREC
	Miriam GARCÍA FERRER
	Mr CERVANTES
	Mr SNOWDON
	Ms Veronique WRZYSZCZ
	Ms Catherine DALE