

Brussels, 29. 11. 2007
CAB D(2007) 317

Dear Mr. Andersson,

I was disappointed to read in your letter of 18 October that the NSRAC has decided not to go ahead, for a second year, with the effort management scheme in the Kattegat.

Furthermore, I was surprised to learn that the NSRAC was disappointed by the way the Commission handled the NSRAC proposal. I would like to clarify that the Commission services have done everything in their power for the past two years to make the effort management scheme a reality.

The initial proposal from the NSRAC was welcomed by the Commission as a step forward towards the involvement of stakeholders in the management process. In the discussion that followed the initial proposal, the Commission was always open and available to discuss any further NSRAC proposals, and indeed several aspects of the scheme were agreed by both parties, such as the total level of effort to be deployed. However, other unavoidable issues involved in an effort management scheme in the Kattegat are still under discussion, i.e. the protection of cod and discard measures.

It is possible that there have been some misunderstandings between the Commission and the NSRAC, as the main divergence regarding the effort scheme was the level of protection necessary for cod and not, as suggested in your letter, the measures regarding discards.

Further to this, please note that in a meeting on the 26 September between NSRAC representatives and the Commission, several issues were discussed and clarified:

- a. the Commission reiterated its willingness to implement the Kattegat effort scheme and thus that it was fully prepared to resolve any outstanding issues;
- b. that although the discard mitigation measures proposed by the NSRAC were not as ambitious as the Commission would like, the Commission was in a position to accept the proposed measures for the first year, but that further measures would have to be implemented in the next years;

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- c. and that the only outstanding issue was the level of effort to be deployed in the first quarter of the year, as the 20% value proposed by the NSRAC was deemed insufficient to protect cod. Nevertheless, the Commission made it clear that it continues to try to find solutions for this issue.

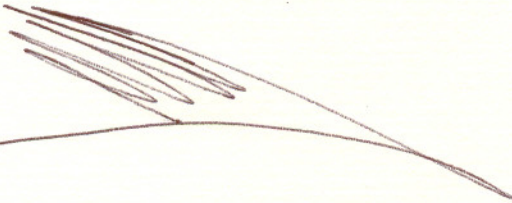
Regarding the protection of cod, and since according to scientific advice considerable amounts of landings are misreported, there is a real possibility that the Kattegat effort scheme becomes a blank cheque to fish cod. A fisheries management scheme cannot further deteriorate a fish stock that is in an extremely poor state.

Finally, please note that the Commission recently asked the Member States involved in fisheries in the Kattegat to provide historical landing data in order to divide the common TACs between the Skagerrak and the Kattegat. A proposal for TACs and quotas only for the Skagerrak, for the species that have so far been under common Skagerrak-Kattegat TACs, was ready to be introduced in the TAC and Quota regulation for next year.

To conclude, the Commission has done everything possible over the last two years to make the implementation of the Kattegat effort management scheme a reality, and in fact the proposal was ready to be implemented in 2008.

The Commission remains prepared at all times to discuss new ideas and methods for effective fisheries management.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape. The signature is positioned to the left of the page, below the text "Yours sincerely,".