



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

DIRECTOR GENERAL

Brussels, 15.01.2009 D 00322
DG MARE – B1V D(2009)

M. Antonio Cabral
Long Distance RAC
C/ Velazquez 41,4° C
28001 Madrid
Spain

Subject: LDRAC advice on swordfish

Dear M. Cabral,

Thank you for your letter of 1 December concerning the margin of tolerance applied to the minimum size of the Atlantic swordfish.

I am pleased to inform you that the Commission has reintroduced the 15% margin in Community legislation, to be applied provisionally in 2009, pending the stock assessment by the SCRS and the ICCAT Commission deliberations in 2009.

However, the Commission remains of the view that minimum landing sizes are both a very important means of preventing juvenile fish from being taken from the sea and a crucial measure to protect fish stocks. Furthermore, it is generally recognised that margins of tolerance applied to the minimum size cause difficulties for control purposes once unloading has taken place. Therefore, they are only allowed in exceptional cases and are becoming less and less authorised by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations.

Therefore, the Commission appreciates your commitment to build a phasing plan aimed at reducing catches of juvenile swordfish and welcomes any proposal that the LDRAC and SWWRAC may submit to the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Fokion Fotiadis