



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/C1/IV/ms

Dear Mr López,

Thank you for submitting on 23 September the Long-Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) advice in preparation for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).

First, please allow me to congratulate the LDAC for the well-coordinated work in preparation of the above-mentioned advice, which has led to its adoption by consensus. I very much appreciate the effort that the LDAC has invested in that advice.

On 17 October, my collaborators attended the LDAC Working Group 2 meeting on North Atlantic Fisheries and provided the LDAC with an update on the NEAFC Annual Meeting and the elements raised in the LDAC advice on NEAFC.

I do take note of your proposal of having a dedicated technical stakeholders preparatory meeting ahead of the NEAFC Annual Meeting, as it is the practice for other RMFOs.

In relation to progress in implementing the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in NEAFC, at the NEAFC Annual Meeting the EU has proposed a dedicated discussion on the ecosystem objectives back-to-back to the first meeting of the Permanent Committee on Science and Management (in its Like-Minded format) in March 2025, pending the other Parties agreement to it.

At the same time, we very much value the OSPAR – NEAFC Collective Arrangement to engage in a constructive exchange between the two entities in relation to the North-East Atlantic and the Arctic marine environment. The EU has been promoting this approach in NEAFC and we now see other Parties valuing this.

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On the management of key fish stocks, the EU quota for Svalbard cod and redfish in the international waters of ICES subareas 1 and 2 have been included in the EU fishing opportunities regulation for 2025. The approach taken is in line with the [letters](#) exchanged between former Executive Vice-President Šefčovič and the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs reflecting the outcome of the EU-Norway High-Level Dialogue and also the adopted NEAFC recommendation on redfish.

In terms of governance, we regret that due to the position of other Parties, there has been no agreement to launch the performance review process without delay. At the NEAFC working group on the future development, we will urge the other Parties to launch the performance review and to address the functioning of NEAFC and the apparent shortcomings, which were mentioned by the LDAC.

At this year's NEAFC Annual Meeting we witnessed unfortunate developments, as for the first time NEAFC failed to adopt the annual compliance report, because other Parties were unwilling to include detected infringements of certain Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties of transshipment operations and the infringements due to bottom fishing in the areas where it is not allowed. I take this situation seriously, and I am and will be conveying the EU concerns in my bilateral meetings with the representatives of the other Parties. DG MARE NEAFC team will be doing the same in the relevant NEAFC meetings.

Finally, please allow me to take this opportunity to repeat how much we value the work of the Advisory Councils and the dialogue with all the stakeholders. This is key to define the EU position and understand where the issues stand and how these can be properly addressed.

However, I do need to stress that this process has to remain a professional one, which is based on mutual respect.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox [MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

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