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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR FISHERIES AND MARITIME AFFAIRS

Director-General

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Mr António Schiappa Cabral  
Chairman of LDRAC  
C/Velázquez 41, 4°C  
28001 Madrid  
SPAIN

**Subject: Comments regarding the last NAFO Annual Meeting in Bergen,  
Norway, September 2009**

Dear Mr Schiappa Cabral,

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2009, concerning the comments made by the Long Distance Regional Advisory Council (LDRAC) in relation to NAFO Annual Meeting, which took place in Bergen, Norway on 21 – 25 September 2009. The letter addresses two issues: 1) the coordination between the Commission and the sector in view of last NAFO meeting and 2) the position of the Commission in relation to Greenland halibut in NAFO Division 3LMNO. I know that these comments were also made during the LDRAC meeting in London on 1 October 2009.

Concerning the first point, I regret the fact that the LDRAC members think the industry was not informed enough during the negotiations on management measures for fish stocks. I have taken due note of the offer of the LDRAC representative present in Bergen to act as a liaison between the head of the EC delegation and the industry.

The input from the fishing sector is of great importance – that is why technical preparatory meetings are scheduled with the sector prior to the formulation of the Community position. However, I would like to emphasize that during the Annual Meetings of regional fisheries management organisations the Commission can only negotiate with the relevant Member States. Throughout the negotiations that took place in Bergen, the present Member States were duly informed of the progress by way of frequent coordination meetings.

I note that the LDRAC remains open to a greater coordination with the Commission services. It was my impression that such a coordination between the LDRAC and the Commission had worked well in relation to the discussions on measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems.

As regards the status of the stock of the Greenland halibut, I am of the view that, in its preparations for the NAFO Annual Meeting, the Commission was open to acquire more information about the different available assessments presented for this stock. We welcomed the LDRAC initiative to organise on 1 September 2009 a presentation of the results of an independent collaborative industry/government research project headed by Professor Doug Butterworth.

Yours sincerely,



Fokion FOTIADIS