



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
DIRECTOR GENERAL

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M. Antonio Cabral
Long Distance RAC
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28001 Madrid
Spain

**Subject: LDRAC letters regarding the EU representation in NEAFC and NAFO
and requesting more campaigns of investigation**

Dear Mr Cabral,

Thank you for your letters of 28 November 2008. Please accept my apologies for the late reply.

In your first letter, you suggest that the position of the European Community in the negotiations within NEAFC and NAFO would best be served by having the same negotiator responsible for both.

As you know, within DG MARE's new structure, fishery issues are now managed on a regional basis rather than on a subject basis. Atlantic fisheries are managed by Directorate C, together with relations with Norway and negotiations within NEAFC and with coastal states. As to other RFMOs, including NAFO, we decided that they should remain grouped together under Directorate B (external affairs and markets).

However, the respective negotiators for both NAFO and NEAFC are in constant touch with a view to ensuring that the approach taken by the Community in the respective negotiations is entirely coherent. The Community has never followed different approaches in these two organisations and has always fully defended its interests there.

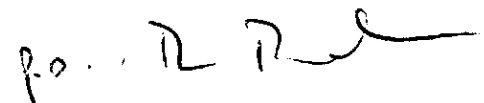
Let me turn now to your second letter and the management of redfish fisheries in the NEAFC area. It is true that ICES considers insufficient the scientific data and information available for these fisheries. The complexity of the structure of the stocks makes these fisheries especially demanding of detailed catch and biological data. This is why the Community has included these fisheries in the system of data collection covered by Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 of 25 February 2008 concerning the establishment of a Community framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy.

In the context of this regulation, Member States have presented programmes of data collection that include acoustic surveys for biomass estimation and other important sources of scientific information. We expect that this, with the expected collaboration of other NEAFC contracting parties, will help improving the quality of scientific advice in the future.

Irrespective of the issue of stock assessment tools, ICES's advice also takes into account the fact that redfish, due to its very slow growth, is very sensitive to exploitation. It is now known that the current exploitation rates, although they cannot be evaluated precisely, are believed to be well in excess of what would be required to guarantee sustainability. Furthermore, recent studies suggest that the stock structure is even more complex than originally thought. Therefore, more data is needed before an accurate distribution of possible redfish stocks can be determined and agreed.

A considerable deal of scientific work, including sea-going surveys, require a considerable cooperation with the fishing industry. I take it that this cooperation, which has been good until now, will continue in the future, and I am grateful for that.

Yours sincerely,



Fokion Fotiadis