



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director-General

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Mr Hugo Andersson
North Sea Regional Advisory
Council
NSRAC Secretariat
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen AB16 5GB
United Kingdom

Subject: North Sea RAC concerns on discards

Dear Mr Andersson,

Thank you for your letter of 23 July regarding the North Sea RAC concerns on discards.

The initial Commission discard policy was indeed a results-based management strategy, where a fishery-by-fishery approach on the basis of defined discard reduction targets would be implemented gradually, with a long term goal of eliminating discards. However, the commission considered that this approach was not ambitious enough.

Discards must be eliminated and in the shortest practical time-frame. This is why the Commission proposed a highgrading ban in the North Sea and Skagerrak, a measure that should be extended from 2010 to all community waters. This is a first step to reach the objective of eliminating discards by European fisheries.

The Commission is nevertheless considering additional measures such as pilot studies to test practical discard reductions, the promotion of selective gears, new instruments such as real-time closure, the obligation to move fishing grounds when a % of undesirable catch is caught, the abolishing of minimum landing size (MLS) in many species, and last, but not least, the reduction of overall fishing effort.

In this context, the Commission will always support scientific pilot studies to test different policy options on discards, and particularly projects based on partnership

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between industry and science. As ever, we strongly encourage pilot projects and schemes whereby the industry could test new ways of reducing discards, and we are happy to consider result-based schemes where the industry undertakes to reduce discards through measures devised and implemented by the industry itself.

I continue to look forward to close co-operation with the NS RAC in developing and establishing measures that would deliver low environmental impact and sustainable fisheries.

Yours sincerely,



Fokion Fotiadis