



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels, 10 JUIN 2011
MARE/CONS C D(2011)626596

North Sea RAC
Mr Niels Wichmann, Chairman
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen AB16 5GB
Scotland

Subject: NSRAC involvement in EU-Norway negotiations

Dear Mr Wichmann,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May 2011 in which you welcomed the increased transparency in EU/Norway negotiations over the last few years. This has been a deliberate objective of the Commission and is all the more necessary in view of the increasing complexity of these negotiations and the wide range of fisheries interests within the Union that are affected by the results of these annual negotiations.

As you are aware, the Commission negotiating strategy continues to be guided by the need to ensure the sustainability of our fish stocks and, in that regard, we are guided primarily by the ICES and the STECF advice.

Within these negotiations all the main joint stocks are now subject to long-term management plans and are regularly reviewed by ICES to ensure their precautionary nature. This year, for instance, the Parties will review the ICES advice on the long-term management plans for North-Sea cod, haddock and whiting.

The Commission considers that the RACs can contribute in a very positive way to a balanced outcome in these negotiations, in particular, through advice not only in relation to the long-term management plans but also technical issues surrounding the respective fisheries.

The NSRAC request to be more closely associated with the negotiations goes hand in hand with similar expressions of interest from LDRAC and PELRAC. We welcome these requests and are happy to accommodate the participation of the RACs in view of the logistical constraints to the number of participants at these meetings, I would propose that the three RACs in question each nominate three representatives who can assist at the consultations. The Commission would be open to a flexible system whereby the representatives nominated could be replaced during the course of these sometimes lengthy negotiations. It is important however that civil society, including NGOs, are well represented among these nominated persons.

I intend copying this letter to the Chairpersons of LDRAC and PELRAC and look forward to a considered joint reply from you all.

Yours sincerely,



Lowri Evans