



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND  
FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/C1/CA/ms

**Subject: Update on the review of the list of areas where VMEs are known to occur or are likely to occur – Deep-sea Access Regulation (EU) 2016/2336**

Dear Madam, dear Sir

I would like to update<sup>1</sup> you on the annual review process of the list of areas where VMEs are known to occur or are likely to occur, as established by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1614<sup>2</sup> of 15 September 2022.

As you know, ICES confirmed the release of its advice on VMEs **for 18 April 2023**, with the ICES advice drafting group taking place on 14-16 March<sup>3</sup>.

In order to best inform you of all technicalities related to this new advice, we plan to convene an **online meeting, where ICES will be present, on 25 April 2023, at 2.30 pm**. The invitation and the link will follow.

STECF will proceed with an opinion scheduled for its **plenary session, starting on 10 July 2023**, after which the Commission services plan to convene another online meeting with Member States and relevant stakeholders.

Following the ICES advice and STECF opinion, the Commission will review the list of areas where VMEs are known to occur or are likely to occur and, where appropriate, may remove an area from the list or add an area to the list by submitting a proposal for

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<sup>1</sup> 14/12/2022: Letter from the Director-General to all Member States and stakeholders “*Annual Review of the list of areas where VMEs are known to occur or are likely to occur – Deep-sea Access Regulation (EU) 2016/2336*”, ARES (2022)8677332

25/01/2023: Message from MARE C.1 to the Members of the Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture “*Delay in ICES advice on VMEs*”

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 242, 19.9.2022, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ref. ICES meeting [calendar](#)

to  
Member States  
Advisory Councils  
EUROPECHE  
EAPO  
ETF  
DSCC / NGOs

adopting an implementing act to the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture, in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2016/2336, indicatively by late autumn 2023 or early 2024.

I would like to reiterate that the Commission will pursue this review with due diligence.

All meetings will be held online to allow for the widest possible participation. My services will come back to you with further details on the logistics of those meetings.

I thank you for the good cooperation on this file.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA