

# The North Sea Regional Advisory Council

NSRAC Secretariat  
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Ms Lowrie Evans  
Director General – DG MARE  
European Commission  
B-1049  
Brussels  
Belgium

3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2013

Dear Ms Evans,

## **Discard ban in the Skagerrak - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain technical and control measures in the Skagerrak and amending Regulation (EC) No 850/98 and Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008**

The NSRAC provided advice dated May 30<sup>th</sup> 2013 on a number of important issues associated with the proposal following the EU and Norway agreement on implementing a discard ban in the Skagerrak. The Commission response to this advice dated 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and the state of play following the EU and Norway technical meeting in Edinburgh 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013 gives rise to the following observations from the NSRAC Skagerrak and Kattegat Working Group.

### **Entry into force**

It is no longer realistic that a discard ban in the EU waters of the Skagerrak will be entered into force on 1st January 2014.

There are many reasons for this. However, the present uncertainty about what officially is going to happen from 1st January 2014 is not acceptable to the fishing industry. We are

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aware that the Norwegian authorities have been informed that EU cannot achieve the January 2014 introduction date. The NSRAC is therefore of the opinion that it would be appropriate if the Commission were to issue a notice to all fishermen in the Skagerrak clarifying that the discard ban will not be implemented from January 2014.

### **Increasing TAC levels**

In contradiction to the response from the Commission dated 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013 it has come to our knowledge that the EU and Norway request to ICES on the quota compensation issue, following the introduction of a discard ban, was withdrawn at the beginning of July 2013. However quota compensation is considered a prerequisite for the successful introduction of such a ban. Therefore, we would very much like to receive some information regarding what is proposed for the fisheries sector.

### **Level playing field**

To repeat ourselves - for the fishing industry a level playing field is essential. Therefore we fully endorse that the discard ban in the Skagerrak shall follow the discard ban model provided by the new framework regulation for the common fisheries policy. It is regrettable if Norway does not want to agree to this for the Skagerrak, but then the EU should make its own regulation for the Skagerrak. We cannot let Norway dictate the fisheries policy.

Yours sincerely,



Niels Wichmann  
Chairman, Executive Committee

