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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.C.5/NG/vr

Dear Ms Philippe,
Dear Mr Sverdrup-Jensen,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 June 2025 regarding the NWWAC and PelAC position on the setting of fishing opportunities for sprat in the Chanel and your comments on wider ecosystem considerations regarding forage fish species such as sprat. I am pleased to inform you that the outcome of the EU-UK consultations was aligned with the NWWAC/PelAC position to follow the ICES advice in full.

I note your concerns regarding the uncertainties of the stock structure. You consider that this should be resolved before any progress can be made with a management strategy. I am aware of ongoing scientific work on genetic analysis ([1]) as well as progress in developing ecosystem-based management plans for sprat in the Celtic Sea ([2]). Hopefully, when this work is complete, and incorporated into the ICES process, it will improve the current understanding of the sprat stocks in the Western Waters and will form the basis for a future management strategy.

I would like to once more thank you and the members of the NWWAC and the PelAC for your active involvement and views regarding the consultations. I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Norman Graham, desk officer in MARE C5 (Norman.GRAHAM@ec.europa.eu), or Julia Rubeck, coordinator for the Advisory Councils (Julia.RUBECK@ec.europa.eu), who will forward them to the relevant colleagues.

Yours faithfully,

Charlina VITCHEVA

([1]) Marine Institute: The Stock Book 2024: Annual Review of Fish Stocks in 2024 with Management Advice for 2025, page 492 http://hdl.handle.net/10793/1995

([2]) Laurence T. Kell, Jacob W. Bentley, David A. Feary, Afra Egan, and Cormac Nolan. 2024. Developing management plans for sprat (Sprattus sprattus) in the Celtic Sea to advance the ecosystem approach to fisheries. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. 81(8): 1104-1121. https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2023-0090

Ms Philippe
NWWAC Chair
Mr Sverdrup-Jensen
PelAC Chair
info@nwwac.ie

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË – Tel. +32 22991111
Office: J-99 05/014 – Tel. direct line +32 229-50483

Electronically signed on 04/09/2025 13:34 (UTC+02) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121