



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.C5/JD/ac

Dear Mr López,

Thank you for your letter from 5 November 2024 regarding the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock where you call for urgent coordinated action to ensure its sustainable management, and which refers to a PelAC letter on the same matter (ref. 2425PAC02 ⁽¹⁾). The Commission fully recognises the vital role of mackerel in marine ecosystems and its socio-economic importance for European fishing fleets.

We share your concern over the alarming state of the stock. While the coastal States have agreed to set the mackerel catch limits for 2025 in line with the ICES advice, the continued absence of a comprehensive sharing arrangement remains a critical issue. Without such an arrangement, the sum of all quotas has been exceeding this catch limit in the recent years, putting further strain on the stock.

Therefore, the Commission will continue to put in every effort towards the sustainable management of the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock and engage actively with all coastal States. We will also maintain high-level diplomatic efforts – both bilaterally and within the coastal States fora – as well as through the EU-Norway High Level Dialogue. Our aim remains to secure a fair and balanced comprehensive long-term sharing arrangement to ensure the sustainability of the stock. This commitment extends equally to the ongoing consultations on blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring.

At the same time, we are also working to strengthen our sustainability tools, hence the proposed amendment of Regulation (EU) 1026/2012 on unsustainable fishing by third countries on stocks of common interest. We hope that this amendment – once adopted by the co-legislators – will be an incentive for other parties in the Northeast Atlantic to proactively and genuinely engage in the multilateral negotiations for sharing arrangements.

⁽¹⁾ Ares(2024)7126282

Mr Sergio López Chairman South Western Waters Advisory Council South Western Waters Advisory Council
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The Commission values the active engagement of the SWWAC on this critical matter and looks forward to your continued support and contribution as we address this shared challenge. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu, as well as Ms Jessica Demblon via Jessica.Demblon@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Chloé Pocheau info@cc-sud.eu and cpocheau@cc-sud.eu