



**European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)
(Northern Pelagic Working Group – NPWG)**

To: Commissioner Mr. Karmenu Vella (MARE)

Subject: ICES advice on herring for 2019 / additional banking possibility

Date: 18th of June, 2018

Dear Mr. Vella,

In my letter of the 5th of June I requested on behalf of the North Sea herring fleet, Western Baltic herring fleet and Skagerrak/Kattegat herring fleet a positive decision by the EU and Norway on an additional banking possibility of in total 25% in light of the dramatic ICES advice for the North Sea herring TAC for 2019 and an ICES advice for a full closure of the western Baltic and Skagerrak/Kattegat herring fisheries in 2019.

Since then this option of an extra banking possibility has been discussed by the EU and Norway in London on 6 and 7 June in the framework of the management strategies for various North Sea stocks, shared by EU and Norway, among them also North Sea herring. Norway has proposed to come to an immediate decision by the two coastal states as the herring fisheries is bound to begin and also to give ship-owners the opportunity to adapt their fish plans for this year. We also have understood that the member states involved in these herring fisheries have supported this extra banking possibility and have made their position clear to the European Commission.

Since then the decision to act lies with the European Commission and we have been informed by our member states that at the moment the Commission is still considering the legal aspects connected to this extra banking possibility, including the question if the European parliament has to be involved in this decision or not. We of course do not want to interfere in these deliberations but we merely want to note that both in 2014 and in 2015 – i.e. after the reform of the CFP – the catching industry was also allowed the same extra banking possibility for several pelagic stocks; also with the argument of a potential market destabilisation. And in 2017 at Coastal States level the same was decided against the background of a substantial reduction in the TAC for Atlanto Scandian Herring.

In light of the above we kindly urge you for a straightforward and speedy decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerard van Balsfoort', is located below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Gerard van Balsfoort
(chair Northern Pelagic Working Group)