



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

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PRESS RELEASE

EU pelagic industry meets Commissioner Maria Damanaki to put forward a realistic solution to the long running mackerel dispute

Last night representatives of the EU pelagic fishing industry (listed below) met Commissioner Damanaki to put forward a realistic solution to resolving the long running mackerel dispute between EU and Norway on one side and Faroe Islands and Iceland on the other. The EU industry took this initiative in the light of the dramatically changed scientific advice for 2014 (64% increase) and the unjustified autonomous quota for 2013 of approximately 334,000 tonnes by Iceland, Faroe Islands and now also Greenland. This is more than a tenfold increase of their mackerel catches in 2005.

Gerard van Balsfoort, chairman of the Northern Pelagic Working Group of EAPO, said right after the meeting: “We presented the Commissioner a detailed solution for the sharing arrangement of the mackerel stock which allows for the expansion and contraction of the mackerel stock in the N E Atlantic waters. The EU pelagic industry firmly believes that we are now in an expansion phase where the stock is dependent upon wider feeding areas. However, ICES confirms that the core spawning area still remains the same, which is west and southwest of Ireland”.

He added: “Our solution which we put forward to Commissioner Damanaki covered a three-tiered structure where Tier One represents the existing arrangements between the Coastal States. Tier Two recognizes the expansion of the stock and the increased catches by Iceland and Faroe Islands and would allow for increased shares by these coastal states. When the scientific advice would be greater than the 2014 advice (which is 900,000 tonnes) a combination of the Tier One and Tier Two sharing arrangements would be put in place. We are pleased that Commissioner Damanaki agreed to examine out detailed proposal”.

The EU pelagic industry emphasized to Commissioner Damanaki that the Commission’s present thinking on sharing arrangements was flawed and not a fair, balanced and realistic solution.

The EU pelagic industry will be actively advocating this new approach with the European Commission and Member States at the forthcoming Coastal States negotiations starting in London tomorrow.

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