



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

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## **EU pelagic industry calls upon Commissioner Vella to stop Norwegian unilateral share increase in blue whiting**

**Just prior to the next round of the coastal states meetings on blue whiting and Atlanto herring, scheduled to take place next week in the UK, Norway has decided to increase unilaterally its quota for blue whiting by 40%. The pelagic Producer Organizations in the EU, organized under the banner of the Northern Pelagic Working Group, condemn this unilateral action by Norway as totally unjustified and as an act of bad faith. The industry has called upon EU's fisheries commissioner, Mr Karmenu Vella, to act swiftly and robustly by demanding his Norwegian colleague, Minister Elisabeth Aspaker, to reverse her decision.**

The coastal states for blue whiting (EU, Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland) are still discussing the joint management of this fishery for 2015. The last round of talks took place on 19 December where they agreed on a TAC level for blue whiting for 2015. As no overall agreement could be achieved for this fishery, the coastal states decided to continue their talks on 20 January.

In absence of a blue whiting agreement the EU has decided in the December Council to set a quota for the EU fishermen based on the share for the EU that has been in place since 2006, although the EU has expressed its wish to review this sharing arrangement based on the findings in the Report from the NEAFC Working Group on 'the Distribution of All Life Stages of Blue Whiting in the North-East Atlantic and the Distribution of Catches from the Stock'.

Gerard van Balsfoort, chair of the Northern Pelagic Working Group, said: "Apparently Norway has felt the need to pre-emptively and unilaterally increase its share in this fishery by 40% before the next round of talks commences next week. This is deplorable and we condemn this irresponsible behaviour by Norway in the strongest terms. The EU industry calls upon the parties to behave reasonably and discuss matters at the negotiation table in a civilised manner". Adding to this Mr. van Balsfoort said: "I have called upon Commissioner Vella to demand from his Norwegian colleague to reverse her decision. This would be the best outcome, but I also indicated to the Commissioner not to hesitate to increase unilaterally the EU share for blue whiting this year in line with the findings of the NEAFC report, if the Norwegian minister is not willing to reverse her decision. We have seen too many instances over the past years that a moderate attitude by the EC has led to big losses for EU fishermen in quota sharing arrangements with other coastal states".

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