

*Northern Pelagic Working Group*



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**PRESS RELEASE**

**EU pelagic fishing industry calls upon EU Commission to take immediate action against Iceland and Faroe Islands**

*After Iceland has set an autonomous mackerel quota of 130,000 tonnes for 2010 last week the Faroe Islands decided to do the same by setting an autonomous mackerel quota of 85,000 tonnes. The EU pelagic fishing industry urgently calls upon the EU commissioner for fisheries, Mme Maria Damanaki, to act quickly and decisively in reaction to this irresponsible behaviour of the two countries.*

The EU pelagic fishing industry, organized in EAPO, is deeply concerned about the irresponsible behaviour by Iceland and Faroe Islands by setting large autonomous mackerel quota outside the existing mackerel management and scientific advice. This outrageous behaviour could seriously jeopardize the currently healthy mackerel stock with huge negative economic consequences for the EU industry as a result.

Therefore the EU industry calls upon the EU act quickly and decisively in reaction to this irresponsible behaviour by taking the following actions:

1. Immediate suspension of the current (2010) bilateral fisheries agreement between the EU and the Faroe Islands;
2. Request the same from the Norwegian government in the light of the existing 10 year mackerel agreement between the EU and Norway;
3. Publicly denounce the setting of a 85,000 tonnes autonomous mackerel quota by the Faroe Islands government and point out that this behaviour is akin to IUU fishing;
4. Develop and execute immediate EU trade sanctions against the Faroe Islands and Iceland. More precisely, set an immediate import ban for all seafood products originating from Faroe Islands and Iceland;
5. Close the EU ports and EEZ's for all Icelandic and Faroe fishing vessels;
6. Place Icelandic and Faroese vessels fishing for mackerel on the IUU black list;
7. Seek an immediate suspension by Iceland of its declared 130,000 tonnes mackerel quota in the accession negotiations starting today.

Gerard van Balsfoort, chair of EAO's Northern Pelagic Working Group: "The EU must be prepared to stand up for and protect Community pelagic fishermen against this outrageous behaviour. We are not prepared to stand idly by what is happening now and we will not accept any mackerel quota reductions, caused by the irresponsible overfishing carried out by both countries."

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