



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.C.1/AK/ms

Subject: New fishing gear for Baltic flatfish fisheries

Dear Mr Sverdrup-Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 5 April 2023 in which EAPO expresses its views about the preparatory work for the introduction of new mandatory fishing gears and devices for the flatfish fisheries in the Baltic Sea. You mention various technical issues that, according to you, will create practical problems with these new gears and devices. You therefore request a transitory period of at least one year during which the new gears/devices would be allowed to be used, but would not be mandatory.

The Commission welcomes the active participation of the fisheries sector in implementing the CFP and I am therefore grateful for this information. We will send it to BaltFish asking them to thoroughly analyse it. As you know, the legal acts adopted by the Commission under regionalisation cannot modify the substance of the underlying joint recommendation; that is the sole competence of the Member States concerned. Several of your suggestions, notably to postpone the mandatory introduction of the gears and devices, would modify the substance of the current joint recommendation on which BSAC was consulted in September 2021.

As regards the possibility to commercially test these new gears and devices, you might know that DG MARE informed BaltFish in July 2021 that these gears and devices did a priori not seem to be contrary to the Technical Measures Regulation. We hence invited the Member States to test the gears commercially, notably because the industry had asked for this. Our views have not changed and we will remind BaltFish of this.

I would also like to inform you that the stakeholders will be consulted on the technical specifications contained in a draft implementing act via the “Have your say” website once the draft will have been finalised, the exact timing of which is not known at this stage. I invite you and your members to participate in that consultation process. The outcome of the consultation may lead to the modification of the joint recommendation or of the implementing act, or to an additional STECF assessment.

Finally, I would like to stress that the increase of the plaice TAC for 2022 and 2023 was decided on the assumption of the mandatory introduction of these new gears and devices.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen
President of the European Association of fish Producer Organisations
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The current gears should not continue to be used given the historically very high by-catches of cod. As you know, the current gears were developed to target cod which under the current circumstances is not sustainable anymore.

I'm looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Ms Ieva Žundienė, Chair BaltFish