

Brussels, 31 October 2007

EU and North-Atlantic coastal states agree on 2008 fishing possibilities on 3 major shared stocks

Several agreements have been concluded in the past few days between the European Commission, on behalf of the EU, and the other coastal states concerned regarding 2008 fishing opportunities on three important shared fish stocks in the North-East Atlantic. The agreements relate to a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 1,250,000 tonnes (a reduction of 32% from 2007) for blue whiting, 1,266,000 tonnes (virtually unchanged) for Atlanto-Scandian herring, and 456,000 tonnes (a reduction of 9%) for mackerel. In each case, these totals will be shared out among the Parties concerned according to an agreed allocation key.

Welcoming news of the third arrangement, Joe Borg, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: "The three agreements reached with our partners from the North Atlantic on fishing possibilities and accompanying measures for these major shared fish stocks clearly show our common commitment to working together on the basis of scientific advice. We must continue to be guided by the same aim which is to ensure the sustainability of our shared fisheries."

Both Atlanto-Scandian herring and mackerel are fished in accordance with long-term management plans, which have helped keep these fisheries on a sustainable footing. In the case of mackerel, where the EU and other coastal states agreed a 9% reduction of the current total allowable catch, fishing mortality will be within the precautionary range advised by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Atlanto-Scandian herring, in particular, is now the largest fish stock in the North-East Atlantic and has benefited from a very low level of fishing pressure.

Blue whiting, however, has suffered from increasingly high fishing pressure along with low recruitment (small numbers of young fish entering the stock) in recent years, and the substantial reduction in the TAC also reflects the latest scientific advice from ICES. The contracting parties have therefore agreed to set up a Working Group to investigate possible new long-term management arrangements for blue whiting. This Working Group should report in time for its proposal to be discussed by ICES in advance of next year's consultations.

The TACs agreed by the coastal states will now form the basis for recommendations for the regulation of these same fisheries in international waters under the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), which will hold its annual meeting on 12-16 November, in London. The stocks are shared as follows: blue whiting between the EU, Faroe Islands, Norway and Iceland; Atlanto-Scandian herring between the EU, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation; and mackerel between the EU, Faroe Islands and Norway.

For 2006 see [MEX/06/1027](#) EU/Norway/Faeroes agree on mackerel measures for 2007, Blue whiting: EU / Iceland / Norway / Faeroe Islands agree on management measures for 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/press_corner/press_releases/archives/com06/com06_76_en.htm

NEAFC: <http://www.neafc.org/>