



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/C1/AK/dsb/Ares(2021)

**Subject: BSAC's recommendations for the fishery in the Baltic Sea for 2022–follow-up with information on sprat**

Dear Mr Sverdrup-Jensen,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 August 2021 in which you relate the reactions of some parts of the fishing industry regarding the comments in my previous letter about the sprat fishery in the Baltic Sea. I would also like to thank you for sharing the scientific articles on that topic as well as the minutes of your recent meeting with the BaltFish presidency.

I have taken good note of the scientific articles, one of which seems to be a draft version. As you know, in science like in other areas, analysis and opinions between stakeholders, including experts, often diverge. This is a very natural and important dynamic, and it also enables to eventually make progress. The inherent relative uncertainty in scientific knowledge has as a corollary that the CFP provides that the EU has to base its decisions on the best available scientific advice. In the fisheries sector this usually means advice from ICES, because the ICES advice undergoes an internationally recognised thorough peer-review process with experts from the national scientific institutes of the various ICES members.

While the latest ICES advice on sprat in the Baltic Sea does no longer suggest spatial management measures, I would invite the BSAC members to note on page 3 under the section “issues relevant for the advice” that “sprat are an important forage species for Baltic cod, and multispecies interactions should be considered when managing the sprat fishery”. We therefore consider that we should continue to be prudent with the exploitation of sprat in the cod distribution area. Furthermore, in 2019 the Commission asked ICES for a special advice about the interactions of cod and sprat and the related fisheries. ICES was however not in a position to deliver such an advice, notably because of insufficient scientific knowledge and data.

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I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further question on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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