

**Baltic Sea RAC**  
**Chairman Reine J. Johansson**  
**Vice-Chair Ewa Milewska**

Copy: BALTFISH high-level group  
DG MARE

Dear Mr Johansson and Mrs Milewska,

Thank you for your letter on the important issue of a regionalisation of the Common Fisheries Policy. As you very well know the States in the Baltic Sea region and the European Commission have a long tradition of effective and fruitful cooperation in the management of fisheries. The cooperation has included a thorough consultation of the fisheries sector. This is a good foundation to build on.

I was happy to note the commitment of the BSRAC to have a role in the future regionalised policy for the Baltic Sea. I also agree with your consideration that the Baltic Sea region is in an advantageous position as we already have established a regional fisheries forum (BALTFISH). Your positive attitude towards developing BALTFISH and the will of the BSRAC to fully participate in its work is much appreciated.

Concerning the practicalities of regionalisation I can inform you that the Finnish BALTFISH presidency has recently prepared a preliminary draft on how the BALTFISH in practice could work to implement a regionalised CFP. This draft is being discussed within the BALTFISH high-level group and if it gains the necessary support of the Member States we may also forward a developed draft to the BSRAC for its internal deliberations and reactions.

Your proposal to meet in May with the Baltic Member States to discuss how regionalisation could work in practice is very welcome. Therefore I am happy to inform you that we have scheduled a BALTFISH meeting on the 21 and 22 May here in Helsinki. The plan is to have a discussion in the BALTFISH forum on May 21 and then continue with the high-level group on May 22. I therefore hope that the May 21 forum meeting date is suitable for you. I will also endeavour to arrange a separate meeting with the HLG and the representatives of the BSRAC at the end of that meeting. I will soon come back with an invitation and a detailed time schedule for the BALTFISH meeting.

With best regards,



Pentti Lähteenoja  
Director General  
Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry