

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate C - Quality of Life, Water & Air
ENV.C.2 - Marine Environment & Water Industry

Mr John Stansfield
By email:
john-stansfield@virginmedia.com

Brussels, 26.08.2014
ENV.C.2 AC/adl Ares(2014)

Subject: Fisheries information request

Dear Mr Stansfield,

Commissioner Potočnik has asked me to reply to your e-mail of 11 August 2014, where you are requesting information on the Commission's current descriptor 3 definitions of "Good Environmental Status".

In the Commission Decision 2010/477/EU on criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status (GES) of marine waters, for this descriptor on commercially exploited fish and shellfish, one of the three criteria for assessing progress towards good environmental status refers to "Population age and size distribution" (Criterion 3.3).

As mentioned in the same Annex, "Member States need to consider each of the criteria and related indicators listed in this Annex in order to identify those which are to be used to determine good environmental status. On the basis of the initial assessment, when a Member State considers that it is not appropriate to use one or more of the criteria, it needs to provide the Commission with a justification in the framework of the notification made pursuant to Article 9(2) of Directive 2008/56/EC (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), when relevant in relation to consistency and comparison between regions and sub-regions".

More information on the Article 12 Technical Assessment of the MSFD 2012 obligations for the United Kingdom and details regarding descriptor 3 can be found on the Commission's relevant website¹.

However I would like to inform you that the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on their draft recommendations for the assessment of MSFD Descriptor 3² provided after Commission's request, concluded: *"There is a need for further work to select and define indicators and associated reference levels for Criterion 3.3 that*

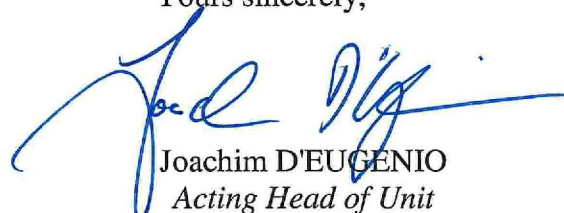
¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/implementation/reports_en.htm

² http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2014/Special%20Requests/EU_Draft_recommendations_for_the_assessment_of_MSFD_Descriptor3.pdf

respond to changes in the populations subject to fishing". That is why, not only for this criterion but for all the GES descriptors, and after the approval of MSFD Committee, the Commission is in the process of reviewing (and possibly revising) Commission Decision 2010/477/EU on GES criteria. The process for descriptor 3 is led by ICES and all the relevant material will be made publicly available³.

I remain at your disposal for further explanation.

Yours sincerely,



Joachim D'EUGENIO
Acting Head of Unit

³ <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/326ae5ac-0419-4167-83ca-e3c210534a69>