



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/C.1/AK/ms

Dear Mr Zieliński,

Thank you for BSAC's recommendation dated 3 July 2023 asking the Commission to evaluate the effectiveness of all the measures to protect cod spawning areas. The Commission will discuss your recommendation with the Member States concerned.

I take this opportunity to recall that the objective of the measures is to increase the likelihood of successful cod spawning which is needed to recover the cod stocks. The measures therefore aim not only at protecting the cod spawning grounds but more widely the entire cod spawning process including the spawning migration to and from the spawning grounds. This explains why in principle all types of fishing are prohibited in the main cod distribution area during the spawning period.

The exemption for certain demersal fisheries up to 20m depth was granted because it can be excluded that cod is by-caught in these areas. As you rightly point out, according to ICES, this would not be the case anymore if the depth limit was increased. The exemption for the sorted herring fisheries for human consumption was granted because catch data was provided showing that these fisheries have almost no cod by-catches in absolute figures; and let me insist on the importance of the latter. The depth limit, which results in excluding fishing in and around the potential spawning grounds, is important to strengthen the unlikelihood of cod by-catches.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox [MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

Mr Jarek Zieliński  
Chair BSAC Executive Committee  
fpaski@me.com  
Axelborg Axeltorv 3,  
DK-1609 Copenhagen V  
DENMARK

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Guillaume Carruel [gc@bsac.dk](mailto:gc@bsac.dk)