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Ref: BSAC/2023-2024/26

Copenhagen, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Subject: Follow-up invitation to meet before the October Council**

Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,

On behalf of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC), I would like to thank you very much for the invitation to meet you and your staff on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023, prior to the October AgriFish Council.

The BSAC highly appreciated the opportunity to present the BSAC recommendations relevant for the Council meeting and to be able to exchange with you directly.

Let me sum up now the meeting from our perspective.

As mentioned during our intervention, the BSAC shares the Commission's view regarding the complex situation in the Baltic caused by several developments taking place, such as climate change, species interactions and fisheries.

The importance of the Baltic Multiannual Plan (MAP) was very clear in the Commission proposal for the fishing opportunities for 2024. Not only did the MAP have an important impact on the herring stock proposals but also on the sprat stock as part of the "remedial measures" put forward by the Commission. The BSAC has well noted this fact and will continue working on the topic to deliver valuable recommendations.

You had also noticed that a constant topic in the BSAC comments is the lack of scientific expertise, and we specifically mentioned the cases of the mixed fisheries and the impact of predators on the fish stocks; the BSAC has well noted that the issue does not only refer to the lack of experts working on the topic but also to the availability of data as well as relevant scientific surveys being conducted at sea. We will make sure to pass this information to the BALTFISH Member States. You also mentioned that ICES is working on information by the end of October on the possibility to fish sprat and herring separately. The BSAC workshop on predators (seals and cormorants) on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023 will also be an occasion to make a review of the available knowledge and the gaps to be filled.

We would like to repeat again our support for the setting up of the Joint Special Group and stress the importance to work across the institutional silos of environmental and fisheries authorities to address many challenges faced in the Baltic.

Finally, regarding the reduction of the carbon emission and energy transition of the Baltic fishing fleet, let us stress that the reduction would immediately occur if the fleet size in the Baltic were reduced. In view of the state of the Baltic fish stocks and the fishing opportunities it is important to point out that any effort made towards energy transition must be based on a solid and viable future for the business and companies at hand. Pilot projects focused, in particular, on the energy transition of the small scale coastal fleet also seem to be the necessary tool.

Let me once again thank you for your time. The terrible events that took place in Brussels did not allow us to meet in person this time, but we look forward to meeting you next time and wish you a very good Council meeting.

Kind regards,



Jarek Zieliński  
BSAC Executive Committee Chair