Killybegs Fishermen's
ORGANISATION LTD.

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New Common Fisheries Policy Agreed

The marathon review of the future of European fisheries and the fate of those who earn their living in the sector has entered the home straight. The debate has been three-pronged: the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Common Organisation of the Markets (CMO) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the EMFF being the only section still outstanding but scheduled for completion during the Lithuanian Presidency in the Autumn. The willingness of the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament to set aside their differences and work together illustrates the importance of concluding this process. Minister Coveney was determined to reach agreement during the Irish Presidency, which ended on June 30 and has successfully achieved this goal.

Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)
Throughout the four-year process the issue of **"discards"** was probably the most widely publicised item and, at times, acquired prime-time entertainment status. For the fishing industry the measures framing the requirement to land all catches, such as multi-annual plans, the *de minimus* allowance, the exemptions for those species which can be returned to sea alive, such as crab, and the use which will be made of unavoidable landings, will make the implementation more workable but there remains a huge amount of work to utilise strategies such as avoidance and minimisation of unwanted fish with improved selection techniques. Implementation starts for the pelagic sector from January 2015, while demersal species will come on stream gradually from 2016 to 2019.

Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) will also pose a challenge to industry and shares many of the problems associated with the "discard" issue. The final text of the CFP regulation acknowledges the difficulties of achieving MSY for mixed fisheries and, while reiterating the aim of MSY by 2015, allows for some flexibility particularly in cases of potentially severe socio-economic consequences or insufficient data. The relevant multi-annual plans *"shall be proportionate to the objectives and targets pursued and to the timeframe envisaged. Before measures are included in the multiannual plans account shall be taken of their likely economic and social impact."*

The EU-funded FP7 project "Myfish" in which KFO plays a significant role will continue to explore sensible and reasonable options to achieve the goal of MSY without un-necessary and damaging effects on the fishing sector and the wider industry community.

Relative Stability (percentage share of stock) remains, as expected, the mechanism whereby Member States are allocated quotas. It was disappointing that the Hague Preferences were not specifically enshrined in this reformed CFP but, nonetheless it has been strengthened by the inclusion of the word "full" account at the start of the regulation. Traditional inshore fishing activities will continue to be protected with a recommendation for preferential treatment for small-scale artisanal fishermen; the specific designation of special status for small offshore islands is particularly welcome in Ireland. While not mentioned specifically, the Biologically Sensitive Area – the **Irish Box** - and similarly designated areas, will continue to be protected under the requirement to safeguard juvenile fish and spawning grounds.

Regional Management of fishing activities has long been sought, particularly in light of the failure of the "one size fits all" governance endured to date. Finally, it would appear there will be a mechanism for Member States in relevant geographical areas to produce joint recommendations in consultation with the appropriate Advisory Council. Meaningful regionalisation should result in plans tailored to address specific problems in specific areas ensuring better success rates and fewer compliance issues. Additional Advisory Councils have been established, including a Markets Advisory Council while the functioning and funding conditions have been listed in detail; the species covered by the Pelagic Advisory Council have been extended to include boarfish.

Management of Fishing Capacity was a major objective of this reform of the CFP. A proposal to introduce mandatory transferable quotas **(ITQs)** was the simplistic solution put forward initially, which would allow market forces to drive rationalisation of structural fleet capacity. Ireland was vehemently opposed to this suggestion as it would probably have allowed the fishing industry to pass into the hands of large non-Irish fishing companies. Following the very forceful arguments put forward by a large number of Member States and MEPs opposed to this solution, transferable fishing concessions are **not** mandatory in the final agreed document as envisaged in the Commission's original proposal.
This CFP will enter into force on January 1, 2014. The EU Commission will produce an annual report for the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers regarding progress on the delivery of MSY and the situation of fish stocks as early as possible following the adoption of the yearly Council Regulation fixing the fishing opportunities available in EU waters and, where applicable, to EU vessels fishing in non-EU waters. The Commission shall report to the European Parliament and the Council on the operation of this CFP before the end of 2022.

Agreement on New Common Markets Organisation (CMO)
The CMO was agreed in the Trilogue discussions in early May without any major controversies. The CMO consists of five major components:

- Professional organisations;
- Marketing standards;
- Consumer information;
- Competition rules;
- Market intelligence.

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New CMP Agreed

(continued from page one)

Producer Organisations (POs) are the cornerstone of the CMO. Going forward POs will play a major role in promoting viable and sustainable fisheries, which may include management of marine biological resources. This could involve a role in reducing and avoiding unwanted catches, contributing to traceability of fish products, providing good consumer information and contributing to the elimination of IUU fishing practices. POs will also play a part in the route-to-market of member's produce with improved conditions, better economic returns, stabilising markets, quality improvement and reduction of environmental impact of fishing activities. Most importantly, POs will produce production and marketing plans, compliant with detailed rules set out by the Commission, which will be eligible for financial support.

Marketing Standards and Consumer Information requirements are listed in considerable detail and cover the entire spectrum now expected by the consumer. In addition, scientific species names, production methods, area of catching and the gear category used will be mandatory. Additional voluntary information, such as environmental, ethical or social information, may be included but must be verifiable.

Competition Rules continue to be largely as originally defined in the Treaty but there are some mitigating circumstances regarding rules for storage and the use of joint facilities provided there is no compromise or manipulation of basic market conditions. The Commission will gather, analyse and disseminate economic knowledge of the market and will help co-ordinate the exchange of information throughout the supply chain. The Commission has already established the information service European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA) (http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/market-observatory/) which aims to:

- Increase market transparency and efficiency;
- Analyse EU markets dynamics; and
- Support business decisions and policy-making.

Similarly to the CFP, the CMO will be the subject of a report by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council before the end of 2022. It will apply, with a few exceptions, from January 1, 2014.

Deepwater Trawling

In its proposal for the new Deepwater Access Scheme, the EU has addressed the need to sustainably manage deepwater fish stocks and to protect vulnerable deepwater habitats. The main proposed mechanism to deliver on these objectives is to ban bottom trawling and gillnetting for deepwater fisheries. Fisheries targeting deepwater species are defined as those that use gear that is only used to catch deepwater species, or those that contain at least 10 per cent of deepwater species in a fishing day, whereby deepwater species are those listed in the annex of the regulation.

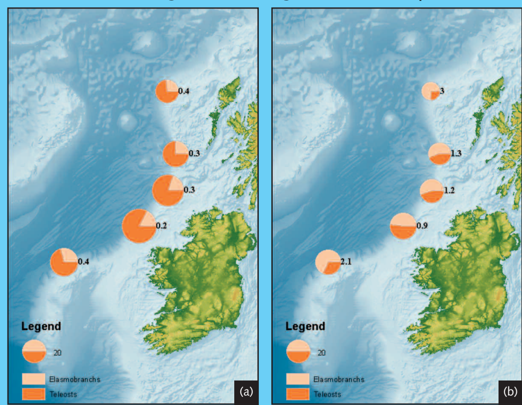
Bottom trawling is the common gear for deepwater fleets that fish for mixed demersal species dominated by roundnose grenadier, black scabbard and blue ling. A widespread alternative is the setting of bottom longlines, which are mainly used for fisheries on tusk, blue ling and historically on deepwater sharks. The fish species which are susceptible to each of these two fishing gear are quite different, and a legislation which favours one method over the other might not fulfill the aim of protecting and conserving the vulnerable deepwater ecosystem and supporting the management of sustainable fisheries.

Scientific deepwater surveys conducted in the 1990s to the west and north of Ireland show the vulnerability of different species to the two different fishing gears. These surveys were conducted during the early phases of deepwater fisheries and therefore the results are closer to natural conditions than in the recent years, when many species have already been overexploited. These scientific deepwater surveys used long-lining and bottom trawling in the same areas at the same time, thus allowing direct comparisons. The results revealed that the number of species caught by bottom trawling is much higher than those from long-lining. However, the proportion of deepwater sharks was much higher in long-line catches than in trawl catches. In bottom trawls, sharks contributed around 20 per cent to total numbers, while in long-line catches, the sharks dominated and made up around 60 per cent of total numbers. Sharks are slow growing and have a low reproductive output, which makes them particularly vulnerable to overfishing. The proposal for the new Deepwater Access Scheme classifies them as the most vulnerable deepsea species. While eight species of deepwater sharks are in this "highly vulnerable" class, only two species of bony fish — black cardinal fish and orange roughy — are included in this class.

The most recent ICES advice on deepwater species indicates that there has been some improvement of deepwater stocks in recent years. Several of the main commercial deepwater stocks to the west of Ireland such as roundnose grenadier, black scabbard and blue ling are now considered to be fished at sustainable levels and show a recovery of their stock sizes. For deepwater sharks the situation has not improved. Although the TAC has been set to zero for the last four years and no directed or by-catch fisheries are allowed, little is known about the current fishing mortality. The biomasses of these species are, however, still considered as severely depleted and "below any possible reference point". (See ICES advice of deepwater stocks in 2012.)

These factors need to be considered when regulating for deepwater fisheries.

The protection of vulnerable habitats is another important consideration. Bottom trawling is described in the proposal for the new Deepwater Access Scheme as carrying the highest risk for vulnerable marine ecosystems. However, studies have shown that when bottom set long lines are deployed over coral reefs, sponge beds and other habitats of similar structural complexity and vulnerability, considerable damage is done. The distribution of fishing effort that use different gears is very patchy and while bottom trawls are normally deployed in habitats with soft sediments (sand and muds) to avoid gear damage, long-lines can be set on hard substrates. Any fishing gear that comes in contact with the seafloor and overlaps spatially with vulnerable marine ecosystems can cause damage with long-term consequences. A



Ratio of deepwater elasmobranchs (mainly sharks) to bony fish on (a) trawl surveys and (b) longline surveys carried out in the 1990s by the Marine Institute.

management regime that aims to reduce the overlap between impacting fishing gears and vulnerable habitats as much as possible, rather than banning some gears and not others, might be more effective in conserving the deepwater environment. European research initiatives such as MESH Atlantic and EMODNET aim to compile and harmonise national data on seafloor habitat mapping, while ICES issues annual advice on new locations of VME indicators species in European and international waters.

BIM Launches Fisheries Management Map 2013

The 2013 edition of the Fisheries Management Map brings together for the first time, all of the areas around Ireland affected by closures, recovery plans or additional gear requirements.

Other significant changes to the map include a fully revised and extended mesh size and catch composition table. There are also new tables and diagrams covering the static year. A map for Nephrop Functional Units is also a new feature, as is the inclusion of six and twelve-mile fishing rights.

The quantity and scope of the information presented in the chart has been increased in order to make it more useful to Irish fishermen. The "table of mesh size ranges, catch composition and technical measures for demersal trawlers in Areas VI and VII" in particular has been extended to allow skippers to operate more efficiently regardless of where they are in areas VI and VII.

BIM is currently distributing copies of the 2013 Map. All registered vessels over 15 metres automatically one, and any other registered vessel owners interested in one should contact their local BIM regional office.

At the launch in BIM are from left to right: Sean O'Donoghue, KFO; John Coleman, La Tene Maps; Daragh Brown, BIM and Kieran Calnan, Chairman, BIM.

Third Boarfish Acoustic Survey Starts July 10

The third annual boarfish acoustic survey is scheduled to take place from July 10-31 on board the *MFV Felucca*. Similarly to previous years, the survey will link up with the *RV Celtic Explorer* off the west coast. This effectively extends the Malin Shelf Herring Acoustic Survey to the south, which will result in continuous coverage from approximately 58.5°N to 47.5°N. The combined survey transects will be over 4,500 nmi and cover an area of approximately 90,000 nmi^2. The primary aim of the survey is to determine the distribution and abundance of boarfish within the area covered. Over the past three years a comprehensive and adaptive survey design has been established to cover not only core abundance areas but also peripheral areas to 'contain' the stock.

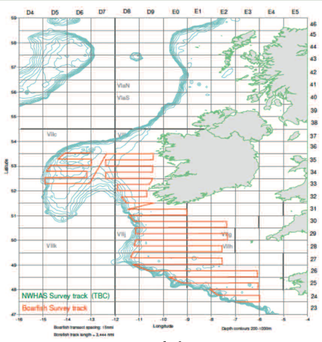


Figure 1: 2013 Boarfish Acoustic Survey

The importance of maintaining the survey series cannot be over emphasised and this year's survey is again funded by the industry. Though only in its third year, the boarfish acoustic survey and associated projects have significantly advanced the knowledge and understanding of this species. The survey biomass estimates have also become an integral part of the boarfish stock assessment which is presented to the ICES Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE) each August. Continuation of the survey series should ensure that the best possible data is available for use in the assessment.

In addition to the standard biological and abundance data, genetic samples of boarfish will also be collected this year. These will be added to an existing collection of samples that have been gathered during the past three years of the boarfish project. It is hoped that these will be used in a future study on stock discrimination. This would help clarify some of the key remaining questions about boarfish including;

– Are long-term changes in abundance the result of population expansion within the northeast Atlantic or immigration from other stocks?
– Do the distribution limits of the current stock management unit match the genetic population structure of the stock?
– Is there fine-scale population structure within the current stock area?

These are some of the final pieces of information needed to ensure that the fishery is accurately and effectively managed so that its continued sustainable future can be secured.

ICES Issues Advice for Demersal and Herring for 2014

ICES released advice on demersal, herring and sprat fisheries on June 28, 2013. Advice on the remaining pelagic fish stocks will be released in early October, along with *nephrops* and haddock in VIb. There is a new ICES policy of giving advice in terms of catch (landed and discarded proportion). So if discards are well estimated, their projected level in 2014 will be subtracted from the catch to give the TAC advice. The same approach would apply to other additional mortality to the stock, such as unallocated landings.

Increases Advised
The advice for monkfish in VI and VII is for a 20 per cent increase to 37,450t, and a 49 per cent increase in hake is advised, to yield a landing of 81,846t. ICES advised an increase of 17 per cent for haddock in the Irish Sea (landings 572t in 2014). For herring in the Celtic Sea the advice is for 35,942t (109 per cent increase, rather than following the management plan's 30 per cent increase). However the management plan that has been approved gives a TAC in 2014 of 22,360t. The reason ICES does not follow the plan is that it has not been formally approved by the EC authorities. However, like last year, it is expected that the plan will be followed, and a 30 per cent TAC increase will ensue for 2014. Small increases are advised for VIaN herring (28,067t) and VIIaN herring (5,251t). A revision of the advice for megrim in VI-IV sees an increase from 4,700t to 5,950t (landings). A 20 per cent increase is advised for megrim in Rockall. Plaice in the Celtic Sea has an advised landing of 519t in 2014. For sole in VIIh-k a 20 per cent increase is advised (252t), and for plaice in VIIa the advice is for landings of 497t, after discards have been accounted for. Rockall megrim is subject to advice for 207t in 2014.

Decreases Advised
A decrease of 75 per cent was advised for haddock in the Celtic Sea, which is equivalent to landings of 3,602t after estimated discarded catch is subtracted. In the same general area, cod has advice for a reduction of 33 per cent to 6,848t. Haddock in VIa has advice for a five per cent reduction in TAC, plaice in 7h-k is a four per cent reduction (135t). Sole in VIIfg, is advised to be reduced by 16 per cent to 920t, whiting in the Celtic Sea a decrease of eight per cent to 15,562t. Angler in IV-VI advice is for a 20 per cent reduction to 10,231t, based on the data limited stock approach.

Stocks With Same Advice as Last Year
ICES do not give new advice if the advice last year was to reduce catch, by applying the 20 per cent precautionary reduction. These include cod in VIb (70t), megrim VII-VIII (12,000t), plaice and sole 7bc (both coincidentally 30t), pollack in VI and VII (4,200t), sprat in VI and VII (3,500t) and whiting in Rockall (11t). This also applies to grey gurnard, though no number is given because the catches are unknown.

Zero-catch or Equivalent Advice
No new advice is provided if the advice last year was zero: cod VIa and VIIa, herring VIaS, sole in VIIa and whiting in VI a and VIIa. The same type of advice applies to spurdog, though no new advice was issued in 2013.

New Advice on Seabass
The advice is to reduce the catch to 2,707t for VII (not including VIIj). Given that it is targeted by pelagic pair-trawlers in the Channel, catch advice was considered appropriate. However, ICES notes that whatever measures that are introduced, they should not lead to discarding of seabass in mixed fisheries, where seabass is an incidental bycatch. A separate catch of 18t is advised for VIIj, though there is not much information that this is s separate stock to the sea bass in the rest of VII.

KFO AGM

The KFO held its Annual General Meeting on May 24, 2013 in Bruach na Mara. After the AGM the Board met to elect a Chairman and co-opt Directors onto the Board.

The new Board of Directors is as follows; Martin Howley, Chairman; Cathal Boyle Vice Chairman, Jens Bach, Pauric Conneely Michael Cavanagh, Tony Byrne, Pete Mc Bride, Ciaran Doherty, Eamonn McHugh.

Crustacean Sector Update

ACRUNET, the brown crab project, held its latest meeting in Paris, the hub of the crab market, courtesy of FranceAgriMer. This was a very productive meeting; indicative of the gathering pace of ACRUNET as the various project activities begin to evolve and complement each other.
The development of a European Seafood Standard specifically for brown crab is now more than an aspiration. Considerable progress has been made in reviewing existing standards in the partner countries, and a combined version which would encompass the most desirable elements of existing models is being constructed. KFO crabbers were the first in Ireland to achieve ISO65 accreditation through meeting the BIM RSS standard, which is currently the most developed standard available in the ACRUNET countries.
The partners learned that the crab producing countries – UK, Ireland and France – have been busy in the past months consulting with the various industry sectors; fishermen, exporters and processors have all contributed to this process. KFO had initiated this process for its own members several months ago by setting up the KFO ACRUNET Working Group which has been proactively engaged in the Irish industry dialogue.
Transporting live crab from peripheral fishing grounds to markets in France, Spain and Portugal has always been one of the more challenging aspects of the industry; ACRUNET will carry out a monitoring programme during the coming year to identify the critical "squeeze" points and possible solutions to improve the quality of delivered crab and thereby improve financial viability for the sector. Of course this work will also reflect favourably on efforts to improve fishery sustainability and environmentally sound exploitation of an Atlantic Area natural resource.
Initial responses to questionnaire-based research by FranceAgriMer reveals that the industry still favours marketing efforts focused in Europe; not surprisingly, the UK and French responses indicated a need for increased marketing effort in their domestic markets. The FranceAgriMer-led marketing campaign will be pursued in the short term with an emphasis on engaging with younger consumers, highlighting not only the health benefits of eating crab but its ease of preparation and its excellent environmental credentials.

Editorial

by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO

The reform of the CFP is done and dusted with the next review not scheduled until 2022 (see article page one.) Minister Coveney was determined to finalise the reform during the Irish Presidency which he successfully achieved at the end of May by reaching agreement with the European Parliament and Commission. Whether or not the agreement will deliver a truly reformed CFP, only time and its implementation will tell, but I do consider it an improvement on the existing policy. Two of the three documents — the basic regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the Common Markets Organisation (CMO) – are now agreed. The third document, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which is a key component in the financing and the implementation of both the CFP and CMO falls to the Lithuanian Presidency to try to finalise in the Autumn.

Most of the key CFP Irish industry areas of concern were met to some extent in the final agreement. These concerns were discards, MSY and management plans, regionalisation, Hague Preference, Irish Box, overcapacity definition and implementation procedures.

The discards debate has been the area that has got the most publicity. The final agreement has moved on from the simplistic view of ban all discards and the problem is solved. It tries to address the implementation of the highly complex and multi-facetted issue of banning discards which are often driven by regulations and restricted quotas.

The implementation of the policy however in a workable and effective manner is still a cause for concern. In this regard I welcome Ministers Coveney's initiative to set up a National Implementation Group. The starting date for the phasing in of a discards ban for pelagic species is January 1, 2015, with the more problematic demersal fisheries starting on January 1, 2016. The PRAC has already begun a detailed examination of the discards issue in all the pelagic fisheries under its remit.

The Irish industry has long advocated for increasing our percentage share of the TAC (relative stability), particularly during the previous two reviews of the CFP going back to 1992. On both occasions we failed to achieve this, even though we had very good arguments and reports. Having learned fom these failures, this time around we (FIF) adopted a different strategy, involving more than just demanding an additional share. We were proven correct in this regard, as both the EP and Council as expected have agreed to maintain relative stability unchanged. One element of our strategy was the enshrining of the Hague Preference into the reformed CFP. "Hague Preferences," which have been in place since 1976, give Ireland an additional quota share in many key stocks. However this arrangement has to be approved annually at the Council of Fisheries Ministers. I have to give credit to Pat 'the Cope' Gallagher, MEP, against fierce opposition from the Council for at least improving the existing text by including the word "full" account to be taken of the Hague Preferences in the preamble to the text. Obviously, it would have been a much better outcome if it was enshrined in the articles but at least it is an improvement on the existing text.

The CMO was less contentious than the CFP and the Trilogue discussions concluded at the start of May. The CMO deals with the market organisation across the EU and identifies the key role that Producer Organisations play not only in the market but also the role they will play in ensuring that the objectives of the reformed CFP, including those in relation to conservation, are delivered. The CMO identifies what financial support may be available to POs to enable them to meet the new requirements, but the detail and conditions of such support are not yet decided and will be covered under the EMFF. One aspect that came as a surprise and was only agreed at the very last minute was the mandatory labelling of gear type under consumer information. One has to wonder the usefulness of this provision.

Commissioner Maria Damanaki at a recent industry meeting assured us that appropriate trade sanction measures will be imposed against the Faroe Islands within a month from now. These measures are a direct consequence of the country's irresponsible behaviour in their Atlantic herring fisheries. Earlier this year they stepped outside the long standing agreed management arrangements and set themselves a quota share more than three times larger than their traditional share (from 31,940t to 105,000t). This follows on the recent decision taken by the Marine Stewardship Council to suspend the MSC certificate for the Faroese Atlantic herring fishery. We are confident that associated species such as mackerel will be included in these sanction measures and we specifically requested that salmon also be included in the trade sanctions. The Commissioner also indicated that she has started the procedure to introduce mackerel sanction measures against Iceland and Faroe Islands. Let's hope that this is finally the start of a process that will stop the reckless and irresponsible mackerel fishing behaviour of both Iceland and Faros.

ICES issued its advice for demersal and herring stocks for 2014 on June 28 (see article page three.) A feature of the advice this year is the big year-to-year fluctuations in advised TACs. In the case of monkfish in VII and VIII, the advice is for an increase of 50 per cent relative to last year's advice, following a 25 per cent decrease on the previous year. There is an urgent need for a better approach to monkfish advice. Similarly for haddock stocks, work should be conducted to find an improved way of giving advice and management, to allow strong year classes to be harvested sustainably, rather than being discarded. Most importantly of all, there is a need for mixed fisheries advice, showing the effect of changing one TAC on the other species in the mixed fishery. This advice will make for very difficult end of year discussions particularly for certain demersal stocks, with the Commission's proposals expected in the end of October more than likely to reflect the ICES advice. The final decision on the 2014 TACs and quotas will be taken at the December Fisheries Council.

Important Dates July - September 2013

July 1	PRAC Executive Committee	Amsterdam
July 1	Northern Pelagic Working Group	Amsterdam
July 2	PRAC WG1 & WG2	Amsterdam
July 3	PRAC Discards meeting	Amsterdam
July 5	Minister Coveney's Discards meeting	Dublin
July 8	Ministers Coveney & Varadkar's Safety Launch	Union Hall
July 10	Extended Bureau EAPO	Brussels
July 11-12	Expert Group EUMOFA & Production & Marketing plans	Brussels
July 15	Fisheries Council	Brussels
July 17	Industry/Science Partnership	Galway
July 18	Whitefish Quota Management	Dublin
July 23	NWWRAC WG1, WG2 & ICES Advice	Dublin
July 24	NWWRAC WG3, WG4, EXCOM & FG	Dublin
August 3	Blessing of the Fleet	Killybegs
August 21	Pelagic Conference	Alesund, Norway
Aug 27-Sept 2	ICES WGWIDE (pelagic stocks)	Lowestoft, UK
Sept 3	SFPA Consultative Committee	Galway
Sept 12-13	EAPO AGM	Rugen, Germany
Sept 17-18	EU/Russian Federation Rockall haddock	Moscow
Sept 18	NWWRAC EXCOM.	Dublin
Sept 18-20	ICES ADGWIDE (pelagic stocks)	Copenhagen
Sept 23	Fisheries Council	Brussels

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