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TO: Members of PECMAS

## EXISTING AND NEW FISHING AREAS

At the last Annual Meeting in November 2009 the Commission adopted amendments to the “new” and “existing areas” in accordance with recommendation XVI on bottom fishing activities in the NEAFC RA.<sup>1</sup>

These amendments were built on data from EU-Spain and DFG-Faroe Islands. Although these data were not in the format agreed it was possible to process them and add them to the data earlier provided in the agreed form by Iceland and the Russian Federation in 2008 and the NEAFC VMS database. The amendments were according to established procedures considered by PECMAS, which drafted the recommendation adopted by the Commission.

EU-Portugal had earlier submitted data, but not in a form that allowed processing. On 26 November 2009 Portuguese data were received in a form that could be processed. On 9 December 2009 EU-France submitted data, and Norway did so on 11 March 2010, although not in the agreed form, but it has also been possible to process them.

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### **Recommendation XVI: 2008 .....ON BOTTOM FISHING ACTIVITIES IN THE NEAFC REGULATORY AREA**

#### **Article 1. Use of terms**

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2. The term "**existing bottom fishing areas**" initially means areas where VMS data and/or other available geo-reference data indicating bottom fishing activities have been conducted at least in two years within a reference period of 1987 to 2007. This shall be revised regularly in accordance with Article 3.4.

3. The term "**new bottom fishing areas**" means all other areas within the Regulatory Area which are not defined as existing bottom fishing areas. ....

#### **Article 3. Identification of existing bottom fishing areas**

1. NEAFC shall proceed to map existing bottom fishing areas within the Regulatory Area for bottom fishing activities. Mapping of bottom trawling activity shall be given priority.

2. The Secretary shall develop a preliminary map based on VMS data and other geo-reference data presently available in the Secretariat and/or provided subsequently by Contracting Parties. The Secretary shall forward this map to PECMAS and ICES for review and comment no later than 15 September 2008 and thereafter to the Commission.

3. Contracting Parties with vessels involved in bottom fishing activities in the period 1987 to 2007 shall, for the purpose of paragraph 1, submit to the extent possible and no later than **1 September 2009** comprehensive maps of existing fishing areas to the Secretary.....



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It has been suggested that there is no reason not to decide immediately on these added data now they have been processed as they introduce some amendments to the “existing fishing areas”. If a decision is to be made now, PECMAS should consider the proposal and draft a recommendation which can be done by correspondence. A recommendation can be adopted by the Commission through a postal vote, according to Chapter 6, paragraph 27 of the Rules of Procedure. This recommendation will be drafted by the Secretariat based on the attached note.

It has now been agreed that PECMAS should be asked to make a proposal for a recommendation to be sent to the Commission.

Please, find attached a note describing the new information and its consequences. It would be appreciated if members of PECMAS will make their views known not later than Friday 9 July or at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Kjartan Hoydal  
**Secretary**