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SWWAC  
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6, rue Alphonse Rio  
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France

**Subject: Reply to the SWWAC opinion no. 87 — Review of points of reference for the exploitation of sole in the Bay of Biscay**

Your ref.: Jean-Marie Robert's letter dated 23 July 2014

Dear Mr Bilbao,

Thank you for SWWAC's opinion concerning the review of the points of reference for the exploitation of sole stock in the Bay of Biscay.

SWWAC's contribution to the development of the exploitation rules for sole in the Bay of Biscay has always been very constructive, and I would like to compliment you for this. The exploitation rules recommended by SWWAC have been assessed by the ICES, who consider that they comply with the precautionary principle for sustainable and responsible management of the sole stock. When the sole TAC was set for 2014, the Member States gave a commitment to follow the management strategy recommended by SWWAC.

Regarding your recommendation to assess the points of reference currently used, I would like to inform you that, but is 2014 meeting, the ICES' WGBIE working group considered this question without reaching a decision regarding any possible changes; A more in-depth analysis will be carried out in 2015 to clarify this point. If this analysis results in new values for the points of reference, the updating of simulations of management scenarios will of course be reconsidered.

I would like to thank you for this constructive contribution. If you have any further questions, I would ask you to contact Mrs Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu](mailto:evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.04.43).

See ICES, Special advice, October 2013 and March 2014.

Yours sincerely

Lowri Evans

Copies: J. Verborgh, R. Ataide, E. Bianchi, E. Georgitsi (DG Maritime  
Affairs and Fisheries)