



North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council launches another year of challenges as member delegates meet in Dublin.

The 2007 World Seafood Congress provided a most appropriate backdrop to the recent North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (NWWRAC) meetings in Dublin. The NWWRAC Executive Committee and Annual General Assembly met on the 27-28th September 2007 to review a year filled with debates, challenges, and successes in the European fishing arena.

The NWWRAC, a representative body comprising of representatives from Spain, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, the UK and Ireland, was established in 2005 as part of the European Commission's 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. The general body of members and observers at NWWRAC meetings proves a unique platform, including representatives of fish producers organisations, environmental conservationists, marine science experts, key Government representatives, and of course – fishermen themselves!

In the course of its second year, the NWWRAC held a total of 15 meetings, which took place in venues which included Brussels, Bilbao, Edinburgh, London, Belfast, Dublin and Paris. Key topics covered by the NWWRAC agendas in the last year included, TACs and quotas for 2007, Cod Recovery, Long-term Management of Fisheries, Improving Technical Conservation Measures, Reducing of Discards, Management of Deepwater Gillnets Fisheries and advising on the Habitats Directive, to name but a few.

For the year ahead, the membership will build further upon their work already produced to date in the formulation of RAC advice on the various chosen topics, but items of work proposed for the coming year will include the improvement of fisheries based data advice, Technical Conservation Measures (TCMs) & Discards, Stock Recovery and Management Plans for different species (cod, hake), Long term Management and Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and advising on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – Marine Natura 2000 sites.

Forthcoming meetings include working group meetings in Brussels in October where the current year stock assessments will be reviewed with the intention of providing advice for TACs and quotas in 2008. All members of the industry and other stakeholders are welcome to attend these meetings, details of which can be found from the website www.nwwrac.org or by contacting the secretariat in BIM head office at 01-2144100.

---ENDS---