To:

* His Excellency, Georges Friden, Extraordinary Ambassador and Plenipotentiary, Presidency-in-Office for the Council
* MEP Jaroslaw Walesa, Vice-Chair Fisheries Committee, rapporteur Baltic Sea multiannual plan
* Bernhard Friess, Director, Baltic Sea, North Sea and Landlocked Member States

Your Excellency

Dear MEP Walesa

Dear Mr. Friess

This is to follow up on the Expert Hearing of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament, held in February 2015 with the participation of representatives of the Commission and attendance by several Member States, where we and several other international fisheries scientists applauded the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the EU and firmly agreed that future fishing opportunities in waters under the jurisdiction of the European Union and applying to fishing vessels flying flags of EU Member States, should be less than the rates that would theoretically provide Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY). The sustainable catches thus ensured would be only slightly lower than the MSY yield, with profitability to the industry much greater, which would provide much improved living for fishers. Further, such a restrained intensity of fishing would have much less potentially deleterious impact on the ‘health’ and biodiversity of marine ecosystems.

The attached ‘Comment’ to this letter expresses our concern that in determining Fishing Opportunities in 2016 for the Baltic Sea, decisions have been taken that are contrary to the newly revised management policy regarding fishing. That declared policy was in accord with the progressive and economically and socially beneficial principles proposed by the European Parliament. It is, basically, that the fishing mortality rates of fish stocks in those waters must be substantially less than the rates that would theoretically provide MSY.

We are also concerned about the high fishing mortality rates being discussed in the context of the Baltic Sea multiannual plan.

Furthermore, we fear that the opportunity to greatly improve the fishery situation elsewhere in EU waters, such as in the North and Celtic Seas, by similar restraints on the intensity of fishing, will be lost if the agreed management policy of rational restraint is not implemented during the next few years.

We write this as an ‘open letter’ in the sense that the addressees and the authors are free to send copies to persons of their choice. We hope that is acceptable to you.

Please accept assurance of our highest consideration.

(signed)

**Dr Sidney J. Holt**

**Dr Rainer Froese**

c.c.

European Council:

* Marc Kreis, Fisheries Attache, Luxembourg

European Commission

###  Ilona Jepsena, Head of Unit, Fisheries conservation and control Baltic and North Sea

European Parliament

* MEP Ulrike Rodust - Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats Group
* MEP Marek Grobarczyk - European Conservatives and Reformists Group
* MEP Nils Torvalds - Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
* MEP Anja Hazekamp - Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
* MEP Linnea Engstrom - Greens/ European Free Alliance Group
* MEP Marco Affronte - Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group