

**PROTOCOL
OF THE 45TH SESSION OF THE JOINT
NORWEGIAN - RUSSIAN FISHERIES COMMISSION**

1. Opening of the session

The 45th Session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission was held in Astrakhan from 6 to 9 October 2015.

The Norwegian delegation was led by A. Røksund, representative of the Kingdom of Norway on the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission, and Deputy Secretary General of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Industries.

The Russian delegation was led by I.V. Sjestakov, representative of the Russian Federation on the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission, State Secretary for the Russian Federation Ministry of Agriculture and Director of the Russian Federal Agency for Fishery.

The parties' respective delegations are listed in Annex 1.

The parties made reference to the extraordinary 41st session that was held in Moscow on 8-9 February 2012 and the protocol from that session, including section 4 relating to fishing in the territorial waters around Svalbard.

The parties emphasised the importance of the practical approach followed by the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission in accordance with the Fisheries Agreements of 1975 and 1976. This approach is based on an acknowledgement that fish stocks that migrate between the different zones in the Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea, are regulated in their entire extent of occurrence.

The parties stressed the importance of good communication and discussed practical measures involving the entire scope the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission in order to prevent misunderstandings that could result in unnecessary stoppages to fishing activities and serious loss of revenues for owners of fishing vessels.

2. Approval of the agenda

The parties approved the agenda, cf. Annex 2.

3. Working groups

In accordance with section 3 of the Order of Business of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission, the parties appointed joint working groups for:

- statistics
- controls
- research cooperation
- seals in the North-East Atlantic Ocean
- protocol

4. Exchange of catch statistics for 2014 and to date for 2015

The parties exchanged catch statistics for the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea for 2014 (cf. Annex 13) and to date in 2015 on the agreed form and discussed the information that was presented.

The parties specified new forms for statistical reporting (cf. Annex 14) and agreed to use these from and including 2016.

The Russian party made reference to the official catch statistics for 2014 showing that the Russian quota for Greenland halibut was exceeded by 1,436 tonnes, which was due to unavoidable by-catches when fishing for other species. The Russian party also reported that efforts were being made to reduce such by-catches to a minimum.

The Russian party noted that 1,240 tonnes of the cod quota, 402 tonnes of the haddock quota and 300 tonnes of the capelin quota for 2014 still remained.

The Russian party also reported that, to date in 2015, Russian vessels had not engaged in the direct fishing of beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*).

The Norwegian party reported that the Norwegian cod quota had been exceeded by approximately 5,300 tonnes, the haddock quota by approximately 1,000 tonnes, the Greenland halibut quota by approximately 300 tonnes and the capelin quota by approximately 1,000 tonnes in 2014.

The parties referred to the positive results achieved by the joint Norwegian – Russian efforts to combat overfishing of the cod and haddock quotas in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea. The parties noted that it is necessary to continue the work on calculating the total catch of cod and haddock in the Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea in accordance with the “Method for a comprehensive analysis of satellite tracking data and information on the transport and landing of fish products from cod and haddock”.

The parties agreed to prioritise the goal of using all possible means to detect and prevent illegal fish catches.

The parties shall exchange monthly information regarding:

- The parties’ landings in the other party’s ports at vessel level.
- The parties’ quotas of cod and haddock in ICES 1 and 3 at vessel level.
- The parties’ catches in each other’s exclusive economic zones (cf. Annex 5 and 6).
- Catch statistics for cod, haddock, capelin, blue whiting and shrimp in ICES I and II.

The parties have the right to transfer unused shares of research quotas and third-country quotas to their national quotas, and use the quota flexibility for parts of the cod and haddock quotas, cf. section 5.1 of the protocol. The parties will inform each other of these transfers at the annual sessions.

The Russian party requested to be given information from the Norwegian party regarding landings of Russian fish products in Norway that are sent on to third countries. The Norwegian party noted that all catches landed in Norway are registered as initial landings and reported to the flag state.

The Norwegian party reported that it had allocated quotas of 7,000 tonnes of cod and 300 tons of haddock for recreational fishing for both 2014 and 2015.

5. Regulating of cod and haddock fishing in 2016

5.1 Stipulation of total quotas and allocation of quotas

The parties confirmed that stocks of Northeast-Arctic cod are at a high level. However, stocks of some of the cod's prey, such as capelin and polar cod are at low levels. A cod catch in 2016 that is slightly higher than what is stipulated in the management plan would reduce the predation pressure from cod on capelin, polar cod, demersal fish fry and other cod prey.

In addition to the management plans for the cod stocks that have already been sent to ICES for evaluation, the parties have investigated an additional rule whereby fish mortality for cod increases if cod stocks are high and capelin stocks are low. This rule is described in more detail in Annex 19 and shall be sent to ICES for evaluation together with the previously submitted request to re-evaluate the management plan for cod and haddock.

The parties set a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Northeast Arctic cod of 894,000 tonnes for 2016.

The parties stipulated the management strategy for haddock at the 36th session. The management plan was evaluated by ICES and deemed to be in accordance with the precautionary principle. At the 40th session of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission, the parties modified the management strategy for haddock stocks in accordance with the advice from ICES. The parties set a TAC for haddock of 244,000 tonnes for 2016.

The parties confirmed what had been agreed to at the 44th session of the Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission concerning the option of transferring parts of national cod and haddock quotas from year to year (cf. section 5.1 of the protocol from the 44th session of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission).

The parties further confirmed that the option of transferring the quota year for year includes up to 10% of the parties' national cod and haddock quotas stipulated in Annex 3 of the protocol for the 44th session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission.

The parties also agreed to the option of transferring up to 10% of their cod and haddock quotas from 2016 to 2017. Such a transfer is in addition to the relevant party's quota for 2017. The parties can also grant their vessels authorisation to fish up to 10% more than their own cod and haddock quotas in 2016. Any quantity caught that exceeds the relevant party's quota in 2016 shall be deducted from the quota for 2017. In this instance, the maximum permitted share that can be transferred is 10% of the parties' national cod and haddock quotas as specified in Annex 3 of the protocol for the 45th session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission.

The parties also agreed that the options for transferring the national cod and haddock quotas from year to year referred to above do not entail adjustments to the quantities for mutual catches of cod and haddock in each other's zones as specified in Annex 5 of the protocols for applicable sessions of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission.

Furthermore, the parties agreed that, from and including 2016, they shall use new forms for statistical reporting (cf. Annex 14), which take into consideration the ability of the parties to transfer parts of the cod and haddock quotas from year to year.

The parties made reference to the decision at the 39th session that the management plans for cod and haddock shall remain unchanged and act as guidelines for the setting of quotas for a period of five years. At the end of the five year period, the management plans shall be evaluated by the Joint Norwegian –Russian Fisheries Commission. The evaluation shall be conducted in 2016. The management plans for cod and haddock can be found in Annex 12.

The parties noted with satisfaction that the Analysis Group had not detected illegal fishing in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea in 2014. Among other things, this was the result of the introduction of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission's (NEAFC) port state regime from 1 May 2007, as well as significant efforts on the part of Norwegian and Russian authorities.

The parties agreed to continue the cooperation on combating illegal fishing and arrive at the best possible estimate of actual catches of cod and haddock in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea.

The parties set total quotas for cod and haddock for 2016, as well as the allocation of these to Norway, Russia and third countries, cf. Annex 3, and allocations of quotas for research and management purposes, cf. Annex 10. The unused part of catches of each species used for research on living marine resources, the monitoring of these and collection of data for initiating management measures as referred to in Annex 10, can be transferred to the parties' national quotas without further consent from the other party. The parties shall inform each other of any such transfers of quantities during the annual sessions. The division of the third-country quota into zones for 2016 can be found in Annex 4.

The parties agreed to mutual quotas for cod and haddock in each other's exclusive economic zones, cf. Annex 5.

The parties agreed to inform each other during the annual sessions of quotas for shared stocks assigned to third countries, including the quantities assigned within commercial projects.

The parties agreed to reconcile issues relating to transfers of quotas that one party has assigned to third countries to the other party's zone.

5.2 Other measures for regulating fishing activities

The parties agreed that, in future, it shall be sufficient to obtain a permit to use newly developed sorting grid systems in waters that are under the other party's jurisdiction, and that the applicable specifications for these are approved by the Permanent Committee, with subsequent reporting to the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission.

The parties agreed to continue the exchange of information relating to the biological data for closing and opening fishing grounds on the agreed form prepared by the Permanent Committee.

Technical regulatory measures and joint conversion factors for fish products for 2016 can be found in Annex 7.

6. Regulation of capelin fishing in 2016

The parties confirmed the previously agreed taxation strategy for capelin, in which the TAC was set at no higher than there being a 95% probability that a minimum of 200,000 tons of capelin is able to spawn, cf. Annex 12.

The parties assessed scientific data on capelin stocks, which showed a low level of spawn due to natural fluctuations. The parties reached an agreement on the quantities for research and management purposes, cf. Annex 10.

The parties made reference to the decision at the 39th session of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission that the management plans for capelin shall remain unchanged and act as guidelines for the setting of quotas for a period of five years. At the end of the five year period, the management plan shall be evaluated by the Joint Norwegian –Russian Fisheries Commission. The evaluation shall be conducted in 2016.

The parties agreed to submit a request to ICES to re-evaluate current management plans for capelin. This shall be considered by ICES together with the previously submitted request to re-evaluate the management plans for cod and haddock. The request to ICES can be found in Annex 19.

The Norwegian and Russian researchers analysed new scientific data on the capelin's biology and extent and agreed that there are insufficient grounds at the present time for amending the current technical regulations.

7. Regulation of Greenland halibut fishing in 2016

The parties agreed that the joint research work of Norwegian and Russian researchers into Greenland halibut has been fruitful, and that this has resulted in knowledge being acquired about the biology and extent of these stocks.

The parties set a TAC for Greenland halibut of 22,000 tonnes for 2016. The allocation of quotas to Norway, Russia and third countries, as well as allocations for research and management purposes are stipulated in Annex 3, 4 and 10. The parties agreed to quotas for shared catches of Greenland halibut in their respective exclusive economic zones, cf. Annex 5.

The parties agreed to technical regulatory measures for Greenland halibut as stipulated in Annex 7.

8. Issues relating to management of Norwegian spring-spawning herring

The parties affirmed that their goal is to have a multilateral regime for managing Norwegian spring-spawning herring in 2016.

The parties took the population situation into consideration and did not address the possibility of amending the management plan for Norwegian spring-spawning herring during the 45th session.

9. Regulation of the fishing of other fish species in 2016

Quotas (quantities) of other fish stocks and technical regulatory measures are stipulated in Annex 6 and 7.

The parties agreed that the taxation of fish stocks that are not regulated by quotas or quantities may only take place as by-catches when fishing for fish species that are regulated by quotas or quantities. The parties agreed to mutual by-catch quotas (by-catch quantities) in their respective exclusive economic zones. These by-catch quotas (by-catch quantities) can be increased if the consideration of the practical execution of the fishing activities argues in favour of this. The parties will process requests to increase by-catch quotas (by-catch quantities) as quickly as possible.

9.1 Beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) and rose fish (*Sebastes norvegicus*)

The parties confirmed the following allocation for stocks of *Sebastes mentella*:

- Norway: 72%
- Russia: 18%
- Third countries: 10% (Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard: 4.1%, international waters in the Norwegian Sea (NEAFC area): 5.9%).

Norway and Russia can fish their national quotas in each other's exclusive economic zones, as well as the fishery protection zone around Svalbard, and in international waters in the Norwegian Sea (NEAFC area).

Russia has the right to fish its national share of 18% in Norway's exclusive economic zone.

The parties set a TAC for *Sebastes mentella* of 30,000 tonnes for 2016. The allocation of *Sebastes mentella* quotas for Norway, Russia and third countries can be found in Annex 3.

This allocation shall apply in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and then be renewed automatically unless one of the parties requests that shares be renegotiated.

The parties were in agreement that it is important to continue the current regulatory measures for *Sebastes norvegicus* until stocks have again reached an acceptable reproductive level.

Technical regulatory measures are stipulated in Annex 7.

9.2 Saithe

Catch quotas (quantities) and technical regulatory measures are stipulated in Annex 6 and 7.

9.2.1 Stocks of saithe

The parties noted that the targeted and rational management of saithe stocks has resulted in these being stabilised at a moderate level.

The Russian party reported that it will fish for saithe in the Russian exclusive economic zone. The Norwegian party took this into consideration.

9.2.2 Cross-border features of stocks of saithe in the Barents Sea

The Russian party presented data on the distribution of saithe in the entire Barents Sea and informed the Norwegian party of their intention to continue to research saithe in Russia's exclusive economic zone and Russian territorial waters.

10. Red king crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*) and snow crab (*Chionoecetes opilio*) in the Barents Sea

The Russian party informed the Norwegian party of the technical regulatory measures for harvesting red king crab in Russia's exclusive economic zone and that they had the intention of setting a Russian quota of 6,900 tonnes for 2016.

The Norwegian party informed the Russian party of the development of stocks of red king crab and of the national regulations for the harvesting of red king crab in 2015-2016. The national regulations include a quota-regulated area. The harvesting is not restricted outside of this quota-regulated area, with a ban on discarding of crabs. The Norwegian quota in the quota-regulated area for the 2015-2016 regulation year has been set at 1,300 tonnes of male crabs and 50 tonnes of female crabs. The Norwegian party reported that the regulation year for red king crab has been adjusted such that 80% of the quota will be applicable from 5 September to 31 December. The remaining quantity will be used in the 2016 regulation year, which starts on 1 January. The Norwegian regulation will thereafter follow the calendar year. The minimum measurement is set at a carapax length of 130mm.

The parties also agreed to hereafter inform each other of their technical regulatory measures during the annual sessions.

The parties agreed that the snow crab is a sedentary species in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982. It is thus the relevant coastal states of Norway and Russia that have sovereign rights and responsibility for the preservation and rational management of snow crab on their continental shelves.

The parties made reference to the agreement during the 20th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference (Valletta, Malta, 16-17 July 2015), at which Minister of Fisheries for the Kingdom of Norway E. Aspaker and State Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation and Director of the Russian Federal Agency for Fishery, I. V. Sjestakov, signed agreed minutes about the harvesting of snow crab in the NEAFC Regulatory Area in the Barents Sea (the minutes).

The parties agreed to send the the minutes and notes with identical content to NEAFC's member states and all flag states in the EU to inform them that fishing for sedentary species on Norway and Russia's continental shelves in the Barents Sea shall only be possible with the explicit consent of the coastal state.

Based on Norway and Russia's responsibility for initiating efficient measures with the aim of managing and preserving snow crab stocks on their respective continental shelves, the parties confirmed their intention to cooperate on research for preparing measures for the rational management and preservation of these stocks. This research is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining reliable assessments of the status of snow crab stocks on the continental shelves of each of the parties, setting TACs and ensuring sustainable exploitation of these stocks.

The parties agreed that the parties' fishing vessels shall be permitted in 2016 to harvest snow crab in the high seas in the Barents Sea on their parts of the continental shelf as defined in the Treaty between the Kingdom of Norway and the Russian Federation concerning Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean of 15 September 2010.

The parties will endeavour to stay within the number of vessels that have been permitted by their country's respective authorities to harvest snow crab in this area in 2015.

11. Regulation of shrimp fishing in 2016

The parties took into consideration the information from Norwegian and Russian researchers concerning the status of shrimp stocks in the Barents Sea.

The parties agreed that the closure of shrimp fishing grounds should be conducted based on data relating to by-catches of Greenland halibut, cod, haddock, beaked redfish and rose fish.

The Russian party reported that it is planning to conduct shrimp fishing in the entire extent of occurrence in 2016.

The Norwegian party noted that the current placement of checkpoints in Russia's exclusive economic zone prevents Norwegian vessels from engaging in effective shrimp fishing.

Quotas and technical regulatory measures for shrimp fishing are stipulated in Annex 6 and 7.

12. Regulation of seal hunting in 2016

The parties confirmed that the catch of harp seals in 2015 had remained at a low level.

The parties agreed that the number of seals on the eastern and western Svartisen have a considerable impact on commercial fishing stocks.

The parties will therefore carry out a joint research programme with the objective of clarifying the ecological role of harp seals in the Barents Sea, including their consumption of commercial species. The parties also agreed that there is a need for a joint research programme into grey seals.

Available data indicates that stocks of hooded seals on the western Svartisen are at such a low level that the catch moratorium introduced in 2007 will need to be maintained. The decline in harp seal pup production in the White Sea in recent years makes increased joint research and monitoring efforts necessary for determining the causes of this decline.

The parties set a TAC for 2016 based on advice from ICES. The start and end dates for hunting harp seals in Russia's exclusive economic zone are determined at the annual sessions of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission.

Quotas (quantities) and regulatory measures, including catches for scientific purposes, can be found in Annex 6 and 8.

13. Technical regulatory measures and draft

The parties acknowledged the fundamental importance of developing joint, technical regulatory measures for fishing activities. In connection with this, the parties emphasised the results of the work of the Working group for preparation of joint technical regulatory measures for fisheries on shared stocks in the Barents Sea that was established at the 37th session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission.

The parties agreed to task the Permanent Committee with continuing the work on issues relating to by-catches of cod when fishing for capelin and issues relating to the discarding of fish.

The parties emphasised the importance of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission's work in preparing the monitoring and control measures for the fishing of shared stocks.

Technical regulatory measures and joint conversion factors for fish products can be found in Annex 7.

14. Management cooperation within fisheries

The parties will continue the cooperation between the fisheries authorities of the two countries to further improve the efficiency of resource controls and regulation of fishing activities.

The parties agreed that all joint Norwegian-Russian projects, including research projects, in connection with the exploitation of shared stocks in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea, must be considered by the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission and approved by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Industries and the Russian Federal Agency for Fishery. Each of the parties pledged to inform the other party of the quotas that are assigned and received within the framework of these projects, and the quantities of fish landed in accordance with these quotas.

14.1 The implementation of measures concerning controls that were adopted during the 44th session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission

1. The parties summarised the control measures implemented in 2015:

- 1.1 The parties have continued the cooperation in NEAFC to further develop the agreed regime for port state controls in connection with the fish resources in the NEAFC Convention Area.
- 1.2 The parties have cooperated on the analysis of the total catch of cod and haddock in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea. The Analysis Group had a meeting in 2015. The meeting took place in Murmansk from 17 to 19 March.

The parties carried out a joint calculation of the total catch of cod and haddock in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea by Norwegian, Russian and third-country fishing vessels in 2014 in accordance with the "Method for a comprehensive analysis of satellite tracking data and information on the transport and landing of fish products from cod and haddock".

Based on the compilation of the Analysis Group's information on the catch of cod and haddock at vessel level for Norwegian and Russian vessels in 2014, the parties confirmed that there had been no violations of fisheries laws.

The Analysis Group has prepared proposals for improvements to the "Method for a comprehensive analysis of satellite tracking data and information on the transport and landing of fish products from cod and haddock" which were agreed at a meeting of the Permanent Commission in Murmansk in September 2015.

1.3 There was a mutual exchange of inspectors from the Norwegian Coast Guard and the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Western Arctic Area in the parties' exclusive economic zones from 18 to 22 May 2015.

Inspectors from the Norwegian Coast Guard and the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Western Arctic Area were exchanged as observers in connection with port controls. The exchange of inspectors for landing controls of Norwegian vessels was carried out on 23-27 March 2015 in Ålesund and the exchange of inspectors for landing controls of Russian vessels was carried out on 14-18 September 2015 in Arkhangelsk.

1.4 Pursuant to section 14.11 of the protocol from the 44th session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission, the Permanent Committee continued its work on preparing new proposals for the "Approved protocol on agreement between Norway and Russia on matters concerning satellite tracking systems on fishing vessels" and with the implementation of the electronic exchange of catch and activity data (ERS, ECB).

During the most recent meeting of the Permanent Committee, the parties discussed and agreed on the mandate for the Working Group for Electronic Data Exchange and tasked the group with holding a meeting to agree on the wording and prepare a proposal for an agreed protocol before the next meeting of the Permanent Committee for the "Agreement between Norway and Russia on matters concerning satellite tracking systems on fishing vessels."

The parties agreed to continue this work, cf. section 6.2 and 7 of the protocol from the meeting of the Permanent Committee, September 2015.

1.5 Pursuant to section 14.9 of the protocol from the 44th session of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission, the parties tasked the Permanent Committee with continuing the work on comparing data for determining joint conversion factors when processing cod, haddock and Greenland halibut. The Working Group for conversion factors for products of shared stocks from the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea held a meeting in Murmansk from 31 August to 4 September 2015.

1.6 Pursuant to section 14.7 of the protocol from the 44th session, the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission tasked the Working Group for drafting guidelines for conducting inspections of fishing vessels in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea with continuing this work. The Working Group held two meetings in 2015 – in Tromsø on 16-17 February and in Murmansk on 5 -7 May.

As a result of these meetings, four of nine points were agreed to.

1.7 Pursuant to section 14.4 of the protocol from the 44th session of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission, the parties agreed to, in future, regularly review the Memorandum on cooperative arrangements for controls, between the control authorities, and, if necessary, insert amendments or additions.

2. The parties concluded that the following agreed measures had not been implemented:
 - 2.1 The parties have still not signed the Approved protocol on agreement between Norway and Russia on matters concerning satellite tracking systems on fishing vessels.
 - 2.2 The Working Group for drafting guidelines for conducting inspections of fishing vessels in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea has not prepared agreed guidelines in 2015.

14.2 Report from the Permanent Committee for management and control issues in the fisheries sector

The parties reviewed the report from the Permanent Committee of the work done in 2015 and found this to be satisfactory. The protocol of the meeting of the Permanent Committee in Murmansk from 8 to 10 September 2015 is enclosed, cf. Annex 9.

14.3 Formulation of rules for long-term, sustainable management of living marine resources in the Barents and Norwegian Seas

The parties discussed the work that has been carried out within the framework of the project for assessing the optimal harvesting of the primary commercial stocks in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea with regard to all ecosystem elements that are available for studies.

An agreement was reached at the 39th session that the applicable management plans for stocks of cod, haddock and capelin shall apply for an additional five years before they are evaluated. In accordance with this, the parties have prepared draft alternative management plans for these stocks, cf. Annex 19. A request has been submitted to ICES to evaluate these management plans and a response is expected in 2016.

The management plans will be a main topic at the Russian-Norwegian Fisheries Science Symposia in March 2016. The title of this symposia is "Long-term sustainable management of living marine resources in the Barents and Norwegian Seas".

14.4 Memorandum on cooperative arrangements between the parties' control authorities

The parties agreed that the Memorandum on cooperative arrangements for controls between the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, the Norwegian Coast Guard, Federal Agency for Fishery – Territorial Department for the Barents Sea and White Sea and Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in Murmansk County (hereafter referred to as the "Memorandum") serves as a good basis for improving controls and cooperation and noted that it is necessary to continue the work in accordance with the provisions in the Memorandum.

The parties agreed that Annex 7 to the protocol from the meeting of the Permanent Committee in September 2014 is part of the Memorandum.

The parties agreed to complement the Guidelines for cooperation on and implementation of exchanges between the authorised bodies as an annex to the Memorandum, with a section 3 relating to Exchange at Ports. The parties agreed that this section is part of the Guidelines and will use this as a basis when carrying out exchanges at ports from the moment the protocol is signed.

The parties agreed that, at the next meeting of the Permanent Committee, text for the Memorandum with pre-agreed additions shall be exchanged and that the document shall be signed at the meeting of the Permanent Committee in Murmansk in September 2016.

The parties agree to, in future, regularly review the Memorandum and insert any necessary amendments and additions.

14.5 Rules for the parties' issuance of fishing licences and enforcement of the fisheries provisions

The parties adopted the revised "Temporary Norwegian-Russian simplified scheme for issuing licences for each other's fishing vessels", cf. Annex 15.

14.6 Control measures for fishing activities in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea in 2016

1. The parties informed each other of the control activities in their territorial waters in 2015, with a particular focus on illegal fishing and quota controls.
2. The parties agreed to continue the cooperation in NEAFC with a view to further developing the regime for port state controls in connection with the fish resources in the NEAFC Convention Area.
3. The parties agreed to continue the cooperation on conducting inspections of fishing vessels in the NEAFC regulatory area, cf. section 5 of the Memorandum.
4. The parties agreed to continue the work of the Analysis Group. The Group consists of representatives from the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries and Norwegian Coast Guard and the Russian Federal Agency for Fishery – Territorial Department for the Northern Sea Areas and Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Western Arctic. Experts may be engaged for the Group's work.

In 2016, the Analysis Group will meet in Murmansk on 15-17 March and otherwise when required or in accordance with a decision handed down by the chairmen of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission.

The objective of the Analysis Group is to conduct a joint assessment of the total catch of cod and haddock by Norwegian, Russian and third-country vessels in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea in accordance with the "Method for a comprehensive analysis of satellite tracking data and information on the transport and landing of fish products from cod and haddock" approved by the chairmen at the 45th session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission.

The Analysis Group shall complete the calculations of the total catch of cod and haddock in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea for 2015 before ICES commences its work with TAC recommendations for 2017, i.e. April 2016.

The parties agreed that the results of the analysis of the actual catch of cod and haddock, including the calculations of possible overfishing, must be agreed by the parties before being announced in the media.

The parties confirmed that statistics of the total catch shall be sent to ICES.

The Analysis Group shall also cooperate on the compilation of information at vessel level concerning Norwegian, Russian and third-country vessels in order to identify possible violations of fisheries laws.

The chairmen of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission approved the Analysis Group's proposed improvements to the "Method for a comprehensive analysis of satellite tracking data and information on the transport and landing of fish products from cod and haddock", cf. Annex 18.

The Analysis Group will submit reports of its ongoing work at the meetings of the Permanent Committee, and present reports of its work directly to the chairmen of the Commission.

5. The parties confirmed that the operative cooperation on controls will be conducted within the framework of the Memorandum and that, if necessary, the parties' authorised bodies may arrange meetings to discuss matters pertaining to controls, identifying violations and sanctions relating to violations of the fisheries provisions in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea. Representatives of the respective parties' police forces, as well as prosecuting, customs and tax authorities, can also be invited to these meetings.
6. The parties confirmed that, in order to achieve greater harmonisation of control measures, they will continue to conduct the mutual exchange of inspectors as observers, both at sea and in connection with landing controls of catches from Norwegian vessels in Norwegian ports and from Russian vessels in Russian ports.
7. The parties agreed to the timely exchange of information relating to fisheries regulations via diplomatic channels.
8. The parties agreed to continue the practice of arranging seminars for fisheries inspectors and representatives of the fisheries management authorities as required.

The Permanent Committee shall decide when these seminars are to be held.

9. The parties agreed that, when fishing in Russia's exclusive economic zone, Norwegian vessels will continue to use the fishing logbook as this appears in Annex 16. When fishing in Norway's exclusive economic zone, Russian vessels shall use the fishing logbook that appears in Annex 17.
10. The agreed control measures can be found in Annex 11.

14.7 Guidelines for conducting inspections of fishing vessels in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea

Due to differences in the national laws of the respective nations, the Working Group for drafting guidelines for conducting inspections of fishing vessels in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea has not been able to prepare agreed guidelines and the parties therefore agreed to temporarily suspend this work.

14.8 Third-country fishing and implementation of the Agreement of 15 May 1999 between Norway, the Russian Federation and Iceland concerning certain aspects of cooperation in the area of fisheries

The parties exchanged informed on the implementation of the trilateral agreement between Norway, the Russian Federation and Iceland and concluded that the agreement has functioned as intended.

In connection with a potential revision of the agreement or the bilateral protocols, the parties will inform one another officially and in sufficient time before the deadline for reporting revisions expires.

The parties again confirmed their agreement that, when entering into quota agreements with third countries, the third country shall commit to limiting its fishing activities to the quotas assigned by the coastal states, irrespective of whether the fishing activities take place in or outside of the fisheries jurisdictions of Norway and Russia.

The parties discussed third-country fishing in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea and agreed to continue active controls of these fishing activities to ensure that they are brought to an end when the assigned quotas are reached.

The parties confirmed their agreement that the regulatory measures for stocks of Northeast Arctic cod and haddock shall apply in their entire extent of occurrence.

14.9 Joint conversion factors for fish products

The parties agreed that the use of exact conversion factors is decisive for obtaining a correct overview of the resources that are caught.

The parties agreed to use the joint conversion factors stipulated in Annex 7.

The parties emphasised the necessity of continuing to conduct research expeditions to measure and calculate conversion factors.

The parties agreed that the research plan for 2016 (during the summer season) shall include a joint research expedition on a Norwegian vessel in Norway's exclusive economic zone and/or Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard for measuring and calculating conversion factors for the following Greenland halibut products:

- Gutted with head,
- Gutted without head (Round cut)
- Gutted without head, (Japanese Cut)
- Gutted without head, (Japanese Cut), without tail.

The parties tasked the Permanent Committee with continuing the work on obtaining comparable data for determining joint conversion factors when processing cod, haddock, and Greenland halibut.

14.10 Procedure for closing and opening fishing grounds

The parties assessed experiences with applying the "Joint Norwegian-Russian guidelines for closing and opening of fishing grounds for demersal fish and shrimp", prepared by the Permanent Committee in 1999 (Guidelines).

The parties agreed that the Guidelines are a vital element for optimal management and that they must include the following:

1. Criteria for closing fishing grounds, cf. Annex 7.
2. Procedures for sample taking.

The decision to close a fishing ground must be based on a sufficient number of samples, from a minimum of two catches in each area that can be expected to be closed.

The following methods for sample taking must be applied: A minimum of 300 individuals of cod and haddock measured unsorted, including saithe, in Norway's exclusive economic zone. If the catch is less than 300 individuals, the entire catch shall be measured. See also section 5 of the Guidelines.

Sample taking shall be carried out by the following representatives:

- For Norway: Directorate of Fisheries, Coast Guard, and Institute of Marine Research
- For the Russian Federation: Federal Agency for Fishery – Territorial Department for the Barents Sea and White Sea, and Polar Research Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanography (PINRO).

3. The decision to close a fishing ground must be made by:

- For Norway: Directorate of Fisheries.
- For the Russian Federation: Federal Agency for Fishery – Territorial Department for the Barents Sea and White Sea.

4. Opening of closed fishing grounds shall take place in accordance with section 8 of the Guidelines.

14.11 Electronic catch and position reporting

14.11.1 Status of proposal for Approved protocol on agreement between Norway and Russia on matters concerning satellite tracking systems on fishing vessels

The parties discussed the work on the proposal for the Approved protocol on agreement between Norway and Russia on matters concerning satellite tracking systems on fishing vessels.

The parties tasked the Permanent Committee with continuing the work on the proposal for the approved protocol.

14.11.2 Procedures for exchanging catch and activity data

The parties discussed the work on implementing the electronic exchange of data relating to the activities of the parties' fishing vessels in the other party's jurisdictional area (ERS, ECB).

The Russian party informed the Norwegian party of the measures that have been initiated with regard to implementation of ERS and ECB, preparation of regulations, and carrying out practical testing when using electronic fishing logbooks on Russian vessels.

The parties agreed that the Permanent Committee shall continue the work in this area.

15. Joint research of living marine resources in 2016

The parties made reference to the fact that the Norwegian-Russian marine research cooperation represents one of the longest and best traditions in the cooperation between the two countries. This research is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining reliable assessments of the status of shared stocks, and the parties agreed that scientific studies are required to determine quotas and ensure sustainable fishing.

The parties made reference to the cooperation on conducting joint expeditions and the work on collecting biological and oceanographic data. Both parties are working to harmonise the work processes and have the objective of preparing a joint description for carrying out these types of expeditions.

The parties emphasised the importance of making it simple for research vessels from one party to be able to work in the other party's exclusive economic zone and will continue the work on simplifying the procedures for issuing permits and conducting expeditions, including being able to make changes for vessels for which applications have been submitted and their captains.

The parties concluded that catching living marine resources while conducting research expeditions is unavoidable. With regard to the exchanging of information, the parties will continue the work on harmonising the legislation relating to conducting research on living marine resources which unavoidably results in the catching of resources for scientific purposes.

The Norwegian party expressed concern regarding the difficulties that have arisen in the collection of research data that is used for assessing stocks of living marine resources and determining the TAC in connection with the mandatory requirement stipulated in applicable Russian law to destroy living marine resources that are caught during research of resources in Russia's jurisdictional areas.

The Norwegian party informed the Russian party that Norwegian law stipulates a discard ban for living marine resources and prohibits the use of multiple fish species for measuring, and that this discard ban applies to living marine resources that are caught in all areas under Norwegian fisheries jurisdiction. However, the parties are aware of the contradictions in the laws of the two countries pertaining to catches of living marine resources taken as part of scientific studies and will continue to work to harmonise laws and rules for scientific studies into living marine resources when catches for research purposes are unavoidable.

The parties expressed concern that the basic data for assessing stocks of cod and haddock has worsened in recent years due to a decline in the number of samples of the age and length composition from commercial fishing. This has resulted in an inadequate scientific basis for management measures. According to ICES, the lack of information could have a negative impact on the quality of analytical assessments of stocks of commercial species in the Barents Sea and make such assessments impossible in the future. In consideration of this, the parties agreed to implement relevant measures, including additional financing, to increase the scope of collected research data and improve the information basis for assessing stocks.

The parties set catch quantities for some species when conducting research work on living marine resources, monitoring these stocks and collecting data in order to make management decisions. Out of consideration to transparency in Norwegian-Russian research cooperation, emphasis was placed on the importance of the entire catch for these purposes, including by-catches, having to be reported on the agreed statistics form (cf. Annex 13). The Institute of Marine Research and PINRO will, in sufficient time before the start of the expedition, exchange information in the prescribed manner that relates to the number and names of vessels that will participate in these studies and the monitoring of living marine resources, time for conducting these and catch quantities, cf. Annex 10.

The parties will grant the right to fish and catch their living marine research in their territorial waters to vessels from the other party in the volumes stipulated in Annex 10.

The parties agreed to exchange all biological and oceanographic data required for assessing jointly exploited stocks and for assessing the environmental status in accordance with Annex 10.

The parties confirmed that research of marine resources in the jurisdictional areas of both states shall be carried out in accordance with the rules of the state that has jurisdiction over the area in which such research is conducted, taking into consideration the Agreement of 11 April 1975 on cooperation in the fisheries sector and the Agreement of 15 October 1976 on bilateral relations in the fisheries sector.

The parties agreed to the joint Norwegian-Russian research programme for living marine resources for 2016, cf. Annex 10.

15.1 The extent of shared stocks in the Arctic Ocean

The parties considered the growing interest in the Arctic Ocean and the roles of the parties in this area. It was noted that, as coastal states, Norway and Russia shall demonstrate a fundamental interest in and have primary responsibility for the preservation and rational management of the wild marine resources in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean in accordance with international law. In connection with this, reference was made to the meetings between the five Arctic Ocean coastal states (Norway, Russia, Canada, Denmark/Greenland and the USA) in Oslo in June 2010, in Washington in May 2013, and in Nuuk in February 2014, as well the declaration (Arctic Ocean Declaration) on measures to prevent unregulated high seas fishing in the Arctic Ocean that was signed in Oslo in July 2015. The Arctic Ocean Declaration underlines the importance of scientific cooperation. Researcher meetings were held between the same nations in Anchorage in June 2011, in Tromsø in October 2013 and in Seattle in April 2015. The Seattle meeting laid the foundation for a joint programme for scientific research of the Arctic Ocean.

The parties emphasised that it is particularly necessary and important that researchers from the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research and PINRO participate at the coming meetings to implement the instructions in the Arctic Ocean Declaration and follow up the recommendations from the researcher meeting in Seattle.

The parties agreed to assess the conditions in the Arctic Ocean in connection with the joint ecosystem expedition every autumn. The parties agreed that it is important to monitor climate change, the composition of species and extent of plankton, fish and sea mammals in the Arctic Ocean.

16. Norwegian-Russian website for fishing activities in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea

In order to ensure the functionality and further development of the website, the parties confirmed the need to convene a Working Group for the operation and development of the joint website for fishing in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea. The mandate of the Working Group shall be agreed through correspondence between the parties. The parties shall be responsible for the technical equipping and financing of the Working Group's activities.

The Norwegian party confirmed that the Directorate of Fisheries is responsible for operating and developing the Joint Fish website on the Norwegian side. The Russian party reported that the Federal Agency of Fishery will be responsible for operating and developing the Joint Fish website on the Russian side.

17. Cooperation on aquaculture

The parties agreed to continue to develop the bilateral research cooperation within aquaculture, with particular emphasis on the potential impact on the ecosystem from aquaculture, including escaping, fish health, and preventing of disease outbreaks and the spread of infection.

The parties also agreed to facilitate the commercial exchange of experiences and transfer of knowledge within the framework of the Norwegian-Russian Government Commission for Economic, Industrial, Research and Technology Cooperation.

18. Conclusion of the session

The parties agreed to hold the next ordinary session of the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission in Norway in October 2016.

The parties agreed to hold a chairmen's meeting to discuss relevant matters in the bilateral cooperation on fishing in the period between the sessions. The time and place of the chairmen's meeting shall be agreed to by correspondence.

This protocol was drafted in Norwegian and Russian in Astrakhan on 9 October 2015 and both texts are equally valid.

*Representative for the Kingdom of Norway on
the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries
Commission*

**(sign.)
A. Røksund**

*Representative for the Russian Federation on
the Joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries
Commission*

**(sign.)
I.V. Sjestakov**