

**The introduction of a ban on discards of fish in the Skagerrak**

Denmark, Norway and Sweden have long traditions of utilizing and managing fisheries resources in the Skagerrak. Sweden, Norway and Denmark thereby have a responsibility for the conservation and sustainable use of common fisheries resources in this area.

We, the Ministers responsible for fisheries in Denmark, Norway and Sweden – Mette Gjerskov, Lisbeth Berg-Hansen and Eskil Erlandsson – all consider that the practice of discarding fish is not consistent with a sustainable utilization of our common fisheries resources. It is a waste of healthy and good food and undermines the efforts being made to achieve a sustainable management of fish stocks. Therefore, the practice of discarding fish is completely unacceptable. It also leads to unrecorded catches and consequently lowers the quality of scientific advice which is the basis for the decisions we make. We have therefore jointly decided that discarding of fish should be banned in the Skagerrak.

We ministers have the intention of introducing the discard ban at the latest the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2013. This means that fishermen can and must land the fish being caught. As a consequence of the ban against discards we expect to be able to fix higher quotas in the area.

Denmark, Norway and Sweden will also work towards simplifying and harmonizing regulations in the Skagerrak to render the practice of fishing as rational as possible and that regulations do not contribute to discarding of fish. In this work we see the promotion of selective fishing gears as an important component.

The issue of discards is at the top of the international agenda, both regionally and globally. In that context Denmark, Norway and Sweden wish to be in the forefront. We hope that our common initiative will support the ongoing reform of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and pave the way for a general discard ban in other European waters.

Mette Gjerskov

Lisbeth Berg-Hansen

Eskil Erlandsson