1. Opening of the meeting
The Chair, Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland, opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates.
All Contracting Parties were represented.

2. Appointment of the Rapporteur
The Secretary was appointed as rapporteur.

3. Discussion and adoption of the agenda
The agenda was adopted with a few amendments from the version circulated before the meeting.

4. NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement
The Contracting Parties explained, on the basis of documents circulated before the meeting, how the Scheme has been transposed into their domestic legal instruments and asked each other questions for clarification in this context. The EU had initiated this discussion, and stated that it considered it to have been a useful exercise.

4.1. Overall evaluation of 2012

4.1.1 Implementation review by the Secretariat
The Secretariat presented documents PE 2013-01-47, PE 2013-01-48 and PE 2013-01-52, regarding respectively Scheme implementation of FMCs, implementation and compliance with the Scheme and an evaluation of transhipment reporting.

The general trend was for a slight improvement in implementation, in particular regarding transhipment. The main problems were not new but rather a continuation of problems that had been identified in previous years.

It was agreed that these reports were very useful. There was a discussion on the best format for these reports in the future. It was considered important to maintain all the information in the current documents. However, it was agreed that the reports should be developed in such a way that they would provide a clearer overview over the performance of different Contracting Parties in implementing the Scheme.

It was agreed that there should be transparency in where the implementation problems are. These problems should be identified and made clear to PECCOE, and then to the Annual Meeting. Some delegations stated that the lack of good performance in this context was “dirty laundry” for NEAFC that should be “aired in public” rather than hidden away.
The Secretariat will develop a new format for the overall evaluation on the basis of the discussion. The revised form will be more detailed, and may include several annexes along with a main report that analyses the compliance performance of the Contracting Parties. The intention is to list all problems, and indicate the level of compliance, for each individual FMC. The report will also identify any problems at the Secretariat in implementing procedures required by the Scheme.

4.1.2. Annual reports by CPs under Art. 32 and 33
The Contracting Parties reported, on the basis of documents circulated before the meeting, on their surveillance activities in the Regulatory area in 2012. This included reporting on infringements and follow-up to infringements.

It was noted that the EU had the largest inspection presence in the Regulatory Area in 2012 and that two Contracting Parties had no inspection presence in the Regulatory Area in 2012. The importance of Contracting Parties having an appropriate inspection presence was stressed.

It was noted that some Contracting Parties maintain in their reports the infringements that they have identified until follow-up to them has been concluded. It was agreed that infringements from previous years should in this context not be put under the same heading as new infringements. They could still be included in the reports as a reminder, but it is the responsibility of the flag State Contracting Party, rather than the inspecting Contracting Party, to continue reporting on infringements by their vessels until the relevant cases have been concluded.

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It was pointed out that the EU’s sanctions following infractions regularly include fines, while the other Contracting Parties mostly issue written warnings. There was a discussion on the merits of these approaches and the effects they can have on the behaviour of those in the fisheries sector.

It was noted that two infractions had been reported for a cooperating non-Contracting Party, relating to catch on entry reports not being available. While it was noted that this stemmed from a temporary communication problem that had affected some Contracting Parties too, this led to it being identified as a gap in the NEAFC regime that cooperating non-Contracting Parties are not asked to present annual reports like the Contracting Parties present under this agenda item. In this context it was suggested that Article 33 of the Scheme might be amended to ensure that the relevant information is received from these parties.

4.1.3. Surveillance plans for 2013
The Contracting Parties presented their plans for surveillance in the Regulatory Area in 2013. Like in 2012, the EU is planning to have the largest inspection presence in 2013. The EU delegation called for other Contracting Parties to become more active in surveillance and inspection at sea, as all Contracting Parties should share the burden of this costly activity.

4.2. Port State Control

4.2.1. Overall evaluation of 2012
The Secretariat presented document PE 2013-01-43, an evaluation of PSC landings in 2012. This included the fact that 58% of cases had used the electronic forms.
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) recognised that their inspection levels had been below that stipulated in the Scheme. This would be addressed and the performance for 2013 would be consistent with the Scheme.

Norway stated that there was a slight mistake in their numbers. The overall number should be 15.6%.

4.2.2. Implementation of web based procedures
The Secretariat presented document PE 2013-01-44, a review of the implementation of the electronic PSC forms. The experience of the first few weeks has been generally very positive and no completed forms have been received by fax since the switch to electronic only was made in January. The main issues that have arisen were pointed out: cancellations, time validation, circulating catch data via email, conversion factors, single point of contact, number validation bug and possible system developments.

It was noted that AGDC had earlier in the year discussed the issue of cancellations, without reaching a conclusion on a recommendation.

4.3. Cooperating non-Contracting Party status

4.3.1. Compliance review of St. Kitts activities in the RA in 2012
The Secretariat presented document PE 2013-01-50, a report from St Kitts and Nevis. This included a reproduction of most of the information from last year.

The Secretariat noted that St Kitts had been very forthcoming in approaching the Secretariat and ensuring that they had all the relevant information needed to ensure that they are living up to all their obligations as a cooperating non-Contracting Party.

It was noted that the report stated that there had not been any complaints regarding their VMS implementation, which was not consistent with the two reports of infringements reported by the EU. Furthermore, it was noted that there were significantly more COE reports than COX, which indicated a lack of COX reports. The number of POR reports were also small compared to TRA reports, but as vessels often engage in several transhipments before entering port this was seen as not necessarily being an indication of a lack of compliance. However, the lack of POR reports from some vessels that had spent a significant accumulated time in the Regulatory Area would need an explanation.

The Secretariat pointed out that there is no agreed format for such reports, and St Kitts were willing to provide the information in a different form if the Contracting Parties so wished. In the discussions that followed, it was pointed out that the main purpose of the report from St Kitts was to show that they comply with the provisions of Articles 34, 35 and 36 of the Scheme. The Secretariat was asked to convey to St Kitts the preference of PECCOE to receive an annual report that builds more directly on the relevant parts of these Articles. This will include information on how any infringements were dealt with and explanations for any apparent inconsistencies between the number of different types of reports. This should be available before the October meeting of PECCOE.

It was noted that it might be useful to have before the October meeting also a draft by a Contracting Party for how Article 35 of the Scheme might be amended to clarify the reporting duties of cooperating non-Contracting Parties.
4.4. Non-Contracting Party activities in the RA in 2012
No issue was raised under this agenda item.

4.5. IUU activities in the RA in 2012

4.5.1. Annual reports by CPs under Art. 43
No issue was raised under this agenda item.

4.5.2. Review of IUU Lists A and B
It was noted that there were no vessels on the IUU A list. No information was presented for adding or removing vessels from the IUU B list.

In discussions under this agenda item, it was noted that no new information had been received on several vessels on the IUU B list for a long time, and that it was considered likely that some of them had sunk. **It was agreed** that PECCOE should consider initiating a general overhaul of the IUU B list, where such vessels might be removed from the list. This will be discussed further at the next meeting of PECCOE.

**It was agreed** that the format in which the IUU B list is presented should be amended, to include further information. The IUU B list itself was not amended, but its standard presentation was adopted as presented in document PE 2013-01-45rev2. This included some updating of the information presented, including regarding the name of one vessel, on the basis of available additional information forwarded by the EU (document PE 2013-01-60rev1).

4.6. Security and Confidentiality of data exchange
The Secretariat pointed out, for information, that it would soon circulate to all NEAFC Committees and Working Groups documents regarding security and confidentiality regarding the information that these Committees and Working Groups work with. This was based on the new overarching Recommendation, and there would be a further discussion on this at the October meeting of PECCOE.

4.6.1. Possible amendment of Appendix 1 of Annex IX
It was noted that PECCOE had decided last year to update Appendix 1 of Annex IX to the Scheme once the overarching Recommendation on security and confidentiality had been adopted. This Recommendation had been adopted at the 2012 Annual Meeting, and this work should therefore now go ahead.

It was noted that the Secretariat had prepared a document on this, which AGDC had looked at and made some amendments to. **It was agreed** that the document, as amended by AGDC, document PE 2013-01-55rev1, would be the basis of PECCOE’s work on this issue. Discussions on the substance on this matter were postponed until the next meeting of PECCOE.

4.6.2. VMS data transfer to ICES
The Secretary pointed out that at the Annual Meeting in 2012, it had been agreed that NEAFC should make VMS data available to ICES. The Secretariat had worked with ICES to formulate an arrangement for doing this and had consulted the Contracting Parties regarding what should be included in the data transmitted to ICES. The conclusion of the consultations with ICES, as amended by the consultations with the Contracting Parties, was presented in
document PE 2013-01-54. It was noted that one Contracting Party had requested that this issue be discussed in PECCOE before any arrangement with ICES was implemented.

Some delegations considered that it would be appropriate to include catch information in what ICES was provided with, but conceded that this would probably go beyond what the Annual Meeting had decided. This issue could therefore be revisited at the next Annual Meeting in order to extend the information NEAFC would make available to ICES.

It was pointed out that the presented arrangement stated that vessels’ randomly generated identification number would remain constant between years, to make it possible for scientists to compare their activities from one year to the next and to look at patterns in that context. Russia considered this inappropriate, and inconsistent with the decision of the Annual Meeting, as this would lead to it being reasonably easy to identify the vessels. Rather, a new random number should be generated for each vessel every year. Some delegations opposed the view of Russia, but the conclusion from the discussions was to go along with the Russian position to ensure that there was a conclusion that the Secretariat could start implementing.

It was agreed to accept the arrangement with ICES as presented in document PE 2013-01-54rev1.

5. Compliance review of the redfish fisheries in 2012
The Secretariat presented document PE 2013-01-61, on compliance by vessels targeting redfish.

In the discussions under this agenda item it was noted that the problems identified in the context of the redfish fisheries mostly related to the performance of FMCs, and that they should be addressed in conjunction with addressing that performance generally. It was also noted that the problems were the same as had been identified in these fisheries in previous years.

It was pointed out that although the problems relating to FMC performance were the same for these fisheries as for others, they had a greater significance in this case due to the provision in the management measures that states that the authorisation to fish is only valid if the relevant information is made available to the Secretary in accordance with the Scheme.

The EU stressed the importance of compliance being verified during inspections at sea, and all apparent infringements being mentioned in an inspection report as provided for in the Scheme.

6. Annual Meeting issues referred to PECCOE

6.1. Results of the AHWGPSC meetings
The Chair updated the delegates of the progress being made in the Working Group, which he also chairs. Further meetings are planned, and the aim is to have a conclusion ready to present to the October meeting of PECCOE. The Chair pointed out that the group’s work was based on the decision made at the Annual Meeting in 2012 to expand the scope of NEAFC’s Port State Control to include fresh fish.

The Contracting Parties that have not yet ratified the FAO Port State Measures Agreement were encouraged to complete their ratification process as soon as possible.
6.2. Results of the AHWGERS meetings
The Chair updated the delegates of the progress being made in the Working Group, which he also chairs. Further meetings are planned, and the aim is to make significant progress by the October meeting of PECCOE.

The Chair pointed out that while several key issues were still unresolved, many important issues had already been settled within the Working Group. Among the things that had been agreed on were that all communications should be via the Secretariat and that certain reports (time-critical) would be automatically forwarded to the inspecting Contracting Party and possibly also to the inspectors directly. The Working Group has not reached a common understanding on where the data should be kept and there are also different views on communications procedures (pulling and pushing).

The Chair noted that 2015 and 2016 have been identified as possible dates for the introduction of NEAFC’s ERS. However, the general blueprint would have to be ready reasonably soon for that to be practically possible as other relevant actors, including AGDC, would have to do most of their work on the basis of an agreed general framework.

6.3. Review of NEAFC Recommendation of Bottom Fishing
The Chair pointed out that PECCOE had been given a clear mandate at the Annual Meeting in 2011 to look at specific issues regarding the regulation of bottom fishing. This was discussed in PECCOE last year, but no specific proposal was formulated.

The Chair noted that in preparation for this meeting, a questionnaire had been circulated, which focused on the points PECCOE had been mandated to look at and which PECMAS had developed further in 2012. He presented document PE 2013-01-40rev3, an overview document showing the responses to the questionnaire. He noted that most Contracting Parties had procedures for reporting VMEs, but only about half already had in place automatic flagging for detecting possible bottom fishing outside “existing” areas, despite the agreement at the October 2012 meeting of PECCOE that such automatic flagging should be implemented by all. The responses regarding buffer zones were also mixed. However, it was pointed out that in some cases the reason for the expected system not being implemented was that there was no activity for the relevant FMC to monitor.

In the discussions on this issue it was concluded that PECCOE should provide the Annual Meeting with a more explicit response regarding control and enforcement regarding bottom fishing. This included the conclusion that it might be useful to amend the Scheme to mandate increased monitoring relevant to area management, e.g. by adding a new paragraph to Article 11. It was agreed to mandate the Chair to formulate in good time before the October meeting of PECCOE a draft of the PECCOE response to the Annual Meeting. This document should be based on the discussions in PECCOE and should include a draft of a clear response to each item mentioned in the mandate from the Annual Meeting of 2011, and should include draft language for amending the Scheme, as appropriate. To enable the Chair to have as good a basis as possible for his draft, those who had not yet responded to the questionnaire were encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

The Secretariat presented document PE 2013-01-25, on the mapping of VMS positions. It was explained that this exercise had been carried out at the request of PECMAS but it was also being presented to PECCOE as it was also relevant for PECCOE’s work.
In the discussions that followed the presentation, it was noted that it was not acceptable that some Contracting Parties did not provide speed and course in their VMS messages. The Secretariat explained that this was not a new issue. The Secretariat had previously made efforts to increase the inclusion of these mandatory data elements, and PECCOE had also previously agreed that their exclusion should be addressed. However, PECCOE had also agreed that it would be better to get whatever information was available and that messages with these data fields missing should therefore not be rejected but made available to inspectors.

The EU delegation reminded that speed and course are mandatory data elements in the position report and asked that the NEAFC secretariat takes this issue up with the FMCs in question.

It was stressed that speed and course are mandatory data elements according to the Scheme. It was agreed that the Secretariat should make another effort to get Contracting Parties to include speed and course in their VMS messages, including by taking this up with the FMCs in question, and that compliance with this should be included in the compliance report that the Secretariat will do in a different format, as discussed under agenda item 4.1.1. It was also agreed to revisit this issue at the October meeting of PECCOE.

7. Any other business

7.1. AGDC as a joint NEAFC/NAFO body
The Secretary presented the results of the meeting of the joint ad hoc NEAFC/NAFO Working Group on the possibility of making AGDC a joint body of NEAFC and NAFO, which was held in January 2013. He noted that the meeting had agreed on the following three recommendations to the Annual Meetings of NEAFC and NAFO:

1. NEAFC and NAFO jointly establish a “Joint Advisory Group on Data Management”, JAGDM, as a joint body of NEAFC and NAFO, with the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure as they were formulated at the meeting of the joint working group.
2. JAGDM be a successor body to the current AGDC.
3. The establishment of JAGDM will become effective on the next 1 January after both NEAFC and NAFO have formally agreed to its establishment.

The delegations stated their appreciation of the work of the joint working group, and their wish that the respective Annual Meetings act on the recommendations. It was noted that AGDC would continue to work as normal until any change has been formally adopted.

7.2. Information on INTERPOL and NACGF meetings
The Secretariat presented the results of two INTERPOL meetings, the International Fisheries Enforcement Conference and the Fisheries Crime Working Group. Document PE 2013-01-27 is the official summary of the former.

It was pointed out that INTERPOL is increasing its focus on fisheries related issues, and is likely to develop tools that PECCOE will find interesting. This will not least be in the context of gathering information that will be relevant for fisheries enforcement. It was also pointed out that the INTERPOL Fisheries Crime Working Group is establishing two sub-groups, on intelligence work and capacity building.

The Secretariat presented the results of the meeting of the Fisheries Enforcement Working Group of the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum. The issues addressed there that were most
relevant for NEAFC were the issue of ERS systems and the training of inspectors to deal with working in international waters.

7.3 Discard ban in the Regulatory Area
The EU pointed out that its Common Fisheries Policy was in the process of being reformed, and that one of the changes that this would likely result in would be a discard ban which would be gradually introduced. It was likely that the discard ban would apply to pelagic fisheries already from 2014.

As this constituted a significant change for the EU, its representative stated that there was an interest in hearing about the experience of the other Contracting Parties with implementing the discard ban in the Regulatory Area and about estimated discard levels in the Regulatory Area.

The other Contracting Parties welcomed this domestic development within the EU. They noted that they had not prepared to make any presentations regarding their implementation of a discard ban at this meeting, and suggested that this issue be revisited at the October meeting of PECCOE. This was agreed.

7.4 The International MCS Network
Norway pointed out that the International MCS Network would hold a training workshop in Costa Rica, 17-21 February 2014. He expressed the hope that there would be good participation, including from NEAFC Contracting Parties, and noted that any funding for the workshop would be well appreciated. He pointed out that the program of the workshop will be a mixture of artisanal and high seas IUU issues.

7.5 Sharing of catch data between NEAFC and NAFO
Iceland presented document PE 2013-01-34, a proposal that Iceland has made within NAFO on sharing information with NEAFC. He noted that in some cases the same fish stocks are fished in both the NEAFC and NAFO Convention Areas, but the respective organisations only have information on the catches that are taken on their side of the borderline. The proposal was aimed at correcting this by sharing information between the two organisations.

Iceland pointed out that the proposal was being presented to PECCOE for information only, and that it would be discussed in NAFO-STACTIC at its next meeting. However, the issue was relevant for PECCOE, as there would have to be reciprocity in the relationship and NEAFC would also have to share information with NAFO.

The other Contracting Parties welcomed the proposal and noted that they would follow its progress within STACTIC with interest. They also agreed that this would not be an issue of NEAFC getting information from NAFO, but rather of the two organisations sharing relevant information with each other.

8. Report to the 32nd Annual Meeting (November 2013)
The draft report of the meeting was circulated on 30 April 2013, and the final report was adopted through correspondence on 10 May 2013.

9. Closure of the meeting
The Chair stated that he considered the discussions at the meeting to have been fruitful. However, he noted as a long-time PECCOE member that there had not been sufficient progress in Contracting Parties fulfilling their obligations under the Scheme. Several issues of
non-compliance were being raised year after year, without significant progress, and most of them were due to a bad performance by the Contracting Parties’ FMCs. He stated that this was possibly contributing to the creation of a situation where cooperating non-Contracting Parties were being discriminated against. NEAFC expected them to fulfil all their obligations, but the Contracting Parties got away with having the same non-compliance problems for years. The solution would not be to be more flexible to non-compliance by cooperating non-Contracting Parties, but to stop tolerating non-compliance by Contracting Parties.

The Chair thanked all the participants for a fruitful meeting and wished everyone a safe journey home.