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

The Chair stated that he had talked to the PECMAC Vice Chair regarding the situation that has come up now that the Vice Chair had taken on the office of NEAFC President. Their conclusion had been that PECMAC delegates should be asked at this meeting to start consultations on who to elect as a new Vice Chair, with the aim of electing a new Vice Chair at the September meeting of PECMAC.

The Chair further noted that he intended to retire from PECMAC at the end of this year. PECMAC delegates should therefore also start thinking about who to elect as the next PECMAC Chair, with that election likely to be held at the first PECMAC meeting of 2018.

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

3. Discussion and adoption of the agenda
The agenda was adopted without any amendments to the draft agenda that had been circulated before the meeting.

4. Scheme of Control and Enforcement
   4.1. Overall compliance evaluation of 2016
   4.1.1. Annual reports by the CPs under Art. 32 and 33
The Contracting Parties presented their respective national reports on control and enforcement. There were discussions on the documents. Some clarifications were made and
some of the documents were amended and resubmitted in revised versions. It was noted that the national reports would form an important input into the compliance report that PECMAC would submit to the 2017 Annual Meeting.

4.1.2. **Compliance report by the Secretariat**
The Secretariat presented a report on compliance by the Contracting Parties and cooperating non-Contracting Parties with NEAFC Recommendations in 2016. It was noted that the document was based on the national reports submitted by the Contracting Parties, and would therefore need to be amended pursuant to them being revised. It was also noted that the information in the national reports was not always consistent with the related information in the NEAFC databases.

The Secretariat presented a report on compliance by the Contracting Parties with the Scheme of Control and Enforcement in 2016. It was noted that there seemed to be incorrect numbers in some of the tables in the annexes. This was due to a problem that had been noted with the VMS and catch database, which will be corrected in cooperation with the Secretariat’s service provider.

The Contracting Parties were asked to submit any comments that they might have in connection with the document to the Secretariat following the meeting. It was noted in this context that the revised version of the document would form an important input into the compliance report that PECMAC would submit to the 2017 Annual Meeting.

4.1.3. **New form for Annual reports**
There were extensive discussions on the new form for annual reports. Several instances were identified where the form might need improvements. It was noted that it was useful to have dropdown lists to ensure that everyone used the same terminology, as this ensured that the information was comparable between different Contracting Parties. However, several of the dropdown lists needed to be amended to ensure that they enable correct reporting of all cases that come up.

At the end of the discussions, the Chair noted that he and the Secretariat had listed several improvements that should be done to the new form. **It was agreed** that the Contracting Parties should send comments and suggestions for amendments in writing to the Chair and Secretariat after this meeting. This should be done as soon as possible following the meeting to enable the Chair, supported by the Secretariat, to formulate a revised version of the new form in good time before the September meeting of PECMAC. Reporting for 2017, submitted to PECMAC in 2018, would use the revised form that would be adopted at the September meeting.

4.1.4. **Compliance report to the Commission**
There were extensive discussions on the format of the compliance report. It was noted that the format was still being developed, as the report submitted in 2016 was the first of its kind. The discussions used the 2016 report as a point of departure and discussed where improvements could be made to ensure that the information was set out in a manner that was clear and not likely to be misunderstood. Several instances were identified where the format of the report might usefully be amended.

**It was agreed** that the Contracting Parties should send comments and suggestions for amendments to the Chair and Secretariat after this meeting. This should be done as soon as possible following the meeting to enable the Chair, supported by the Secretariat, to formulate
a draft compliance report to be circulated in good time before the September meeting of PECMAC. It was noted that this draft would largely be based on the documents that had been discussed under agenda item 4.1, in amended versions as appropriate.

It was also agreed to circulate a questionnaire on the implementation of measures relating to the monitoring of bottom fisheries, similar to what was done last year, to ensure that the compliance report included up-to-date information on that issue.

It was noted that the September meeting of PECMAC would need to adopt the final version of the compliance report, to submit to the 2017 Annual Meeting of NEAFC.

4.2. Port State Control
The Secretariat made a presentation on importing information into the PSC system using an XML file that could be uploaded into the system without re-entering the information into the online application. Norway noted that they had used this method and that it worked well. They thanked the Secretariat for developing and adding this option into the system.

4.2.1. Overall implementation in 2016
The Secretariat presented a document showing the implementation of the Port State Control system in 2016, based on the information that was in the NEAFC database at the end of that year. Following some discussion, a few amendments were made to the document to reflect that there were no landings in some Contracting Parties.

It was noted that while some issues need to be addressed, in general the implementation of the Port State Control system continues to be good.

4.2.2. Practical issues relating to PSC
Norway presented a proposal to establish a small working group for discussion on the functioning of the NEAFC Port State Control system, building on discussions that had taken place in PECMAC in 2016 after the Secretariat had pointed out a few issues that needed to be addressed.

It was agreed to establish an Ad Hoc PECMAC Working Group on Practical Issues relating to NEAFC Port State Control on the following terms:

- The objective of the Ad Hoc PECMAC Working Group on Practical Issues relating to NEAFC Port State Control shall be to provide, in close cooperation with the NEAFC Secretariat, guidance with regard to:
  - the new obligation given to the NEAFC Secretariat by the NEAFC Extraordinary Meeting to “monitor reports and notify relevant authorities if reports are not being responded to by flag or port States, as well as deleting reports on request by their sender or if they have expired”
  - questions raised by the NEAFC Secretariat in document PECMAC 2016-02-08 rev 1 with regard to the functioning of the port State control measures in the NEAFC Scheme
  - other relevant questions relating to the functioning of the port State control measures

The Ad Hoc Working Group will work by electronic means, with the aim to provide guidance at the autumn meeting of PECMAC. The Secretariat will make a list of questions for the Ad Hoc Working Group by 12 May 2017.
The participants of the Ad Hoc Working Group will comment on the list of questions by 15 June 2017 and then conduct a phone conference 31 August at 11:00 UTC. If necessary, the Ad Hoc Working Group will also meet in the margin of the autumn meeting of PECMAC.

Iceland then withdrew a paper that they had submitted, noting that it would be more appropriately dealt with in the context of the new ad hoc working group.

4.3. Non-Contracting Parties

4.3.1. NCP activities in the RA – Annual reports by the CPs under Art. 43
The Chair noted that all Contracting Parties, and the Secretariat, had submitted papers on NCP activities, all of which stated that they have no such activities to report.

4.3.2. Cooperative NCP activities in the RA
The Secretariat presented reports from Canada and New Zealand, both of which stated that they had not had any activity in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

The Secretariat noted that the Contracting Parties would have to decide at the September meeting of PECMAC whether the cooperating non-Contracting Parties should continue to provide annual reports using the previous format, or whether they should be asked to start using the new format from 2018.

4.3.2.1. 2016 Annual report under Art. 35.4 and 35.5 by St Kitts and Nevis
The Secretariat presented the annual report from St Kitts and Nevis. The Secretariat pointed out that they had not detected any major problems with vessels flying the flag of St Kitts and Nevis.

4.3.2.2. 2016 Annual report under Art. 35.4 and 35.5 by Bahamas
The Secretariat presented the annual report from the Bahamas. The Secretariat pointed out that they had not detected any major problems with vessels flying the flag of the Bahamas. The Secretariat also pointed out that, for the first time, the Bahamas had had two vessels operating in the Regulatory Area in 2016 although their activities in the NEAFC Convention Area continue to be mainly within the areas under national jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties.

There was a brief discussion on a possible misunderstanding by the Bahamas regarding COE and COX reports. It was agreed that any Contracting Party that wanted the Secretariat to raise this issue with the authorities of the Bahamas should send the Secretariat a letter setting out clearly the items to be raised.

4.3.2.3. 2016 Annual report under Art. 35.4 and 35.5 by Liberia
The Secretariat presented the annual report from Liberia. The Secretariat pointed out that although Liberia had notified vessels to NEAFC, their activities in the NEAFC Convention Area continue to be only within the areas under national jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties.

4.3.2.4. Compliance report by the Secretariat
The Secretariat presented a report on compliance by cooperating non-Contracting Parties with the Scheme of Control and Enforcement in 2016.
The Secretariat pointed out that in 2016 a total of 40 vessels were notified by CNCPs to operate in the Regulatory Area and the notifications and authorisations took place without major problems. Furthermore, CNCPs did not authorise any vessels flying their flag to fish in the Regulatory Area in 2016. The Secretariat also pointed out that no infringements by CNCP vessels were reported by the Contracting Parties in 2016 and that there was improvement in the handling of TRA reports by FMCs of the CNCPs.

**4.3.3. IUU activities in the RA**

It was noted that no new IUU activities had been reported since the last PECMAC meeting.

The Secretariat presented a letter that had been sent to NEAFC from the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), regarding their list of IUU vessels.

**It was agreed** that NEAFC should cooperate with other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) in the fight against IUU fisheries. In this context it was noted that the Scheme of Control and Enforcement already has provisions on including vessels on the NEAFC IUU B List that are notified to NEAFC by specific RFMOs.

**It was agreed** that NEAFC should engage with all RFMOs in this regard, provided that this was done on a reciprocal basis and provided that NEAFC was satisfied that the procedures within the relevant RFMO for listing and de-listing IUU vessels was satisfactory.

The Chair, supported by the Secretariat, was asked to formulate a document before the September meeting of PECMAC which could form the basis of further discussions on this issue.

The Secretariat presented a document from the government of Cambodia regarding their recent action against IUU fisheries. It was noted that no vessel on the NEAFC IUU B List was known to be flying the flag of Cambodia.

**4.3.3.1. Review of the IUU Lists A and B**

The Secretariat presented a document containing the IUU B List. The Secretariat noted that no changes had been made to the list since the last PECMAC meeting, and that there were no vessels on the IUU A List.

There was a discussion on the fact that most of the vessels on the IUU B List have been on the list for many years without any new activities being noted. **It was agreed** that at the next PECMAC meeting, the Contracting Parties should discuss whether it might be appropriate to review the rules regarding the removal of vessels from the IUU B List, for example if there are no reports of IUU activities by a listed vessel for a set number of years.

**4.3.3.2. Possible amendment of IUU Lists A and B**

No issue was raised under this agenda item.

**4.4. Amendments to the Scheme**

**4.4.1. Implementation of the amendments**

The Secretariat presented a document that explained the implementation of Recommendation 18: 2017, which required IMO numbers to be included in Annex II messages (NOT AUT, IT, LIM, SUS), as a separate data element (IM). The document also explained the issues that have
been noted as needing to be addressed in this context. **It was agreed** that the relevant amendments to the Scheme and message validation should be made as part of the changes required by ERS, along the lines set out in the document (PECMAC 2017-01-22).

### 4.4.2. Proposed amendments

#### 4.4.2.1. Amendments of Article 23

Iceland presented a joint Icelandic-Norwegian proposal to amend Article 23 of the Scheme, aimed at ensuring that landing before the originally stated ETA can only begin if they get formal permission of the competent authorities to do that.

The Russian Federation stated that they had some concerns regarding the proposal. They pointed out that several different factors can affect the actual time of entry into ports, and that it was perfectly normal for this to occasionally happen before the notified ETA. They noted that captains would not be able to correct their ETA as they got closer to port, and was concerned that this might create unnecessary problems for the vessels intending to land catches.

All other Contracting Parties supported the proposal, after minor amendments had been done to the drafting of the proposal. Some of them stated that they considered the proposal merely codifying and making explicit the current practices.

After some discussion on this issue, both formal and in the margins of the meeting, the conclusion was that the Russian Federation agreed to consider this more carefully domestically and see if they could support the proposal in its current form or in some amended version. The issue would be revisited at the next PECMAC meeting.

#### 4.4.3. Possible amendments

The Chair presented a document that outlined different options regarding the definition of “fishing trip”. Following a discussion, **it was agreed** to ask the Ad Hoc Working Group on ERS to come up with a suggestion in this context and include a conclusion on this issue in their proposals for amending the Scheme, if they considered it useful to include such a definition.

### 5. Evaluation of the redfish fisheries special control measures in 2016

#### 5.1. Irminger Sea

The Secretariat presented a document on compliance by the Contracting Parties with special control measures regulating catches of pelagic redfish (REB) in the Irminger Sea in 2016. They pointed out that some improvements have been noted compared with previous years regarding the data transmission. However, no information was received by the Secretariat about quota exchange between the Contracting Parties prior to the fishery period. Also, only Iceland fulfilled the requirement set out in paragraph 7.f of the Recommendation on communicating weekly landings of catches.

It was noted that in 2016 no infringements to this Recommendation were reported.

It was noted that while the Russian Federation objected to this Recommendation and is therefore not bound by it, they continue to largely implement the control provisions of the Recommendation.
5.2. ICES I & II
The Secretariat noted that there was no Recommendation on the management of Sebastes mentella in the Regulatory Area (ICES sub-areas I and II) in force for 2016 and that there were therefore no special measures to report on.

6. Annual Meeting issues referred to PECCOE
6.1. ERS – Ad Hoc Working Group on ERS
The Chair, who is also the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on ERS, informed the meeting on the work of the group. Two meetings had been held earlier in the year. A third meeting had already been scheduled for 6-7 June and the Chair stated that a fourth meeting might prove necessary.

The Chair went over the substantive issues that were the main points being addressed, and the Secretariat added details regarding some of the issues.

The Chair pointed out that the instructions from the NEAFC Commission had been to finalise a proposal for amending the Scheme to be adopted at the 2017 Annual Meeting. This meant that it was not an option to delay decision making on what option to choose for the various issues, and it also meant that waiting for technological solutions that might be operational within a few years was also not an option.

The Chair noted that this affected several issues. In this context, he noted that an international standard was being developed under UN/CEFACT and that it would not make sense for NEAFC to build a system that did not utilise that standard. However, it would only become fully operational in a couple of years and the Contracting Parties could not be expected to commit themselves to a solution that had not been demonstrated as working. The NEAFC ERS system would therefore need to have a transitional period before moving to the international standard once it is operational. An explicit end-date could be set at the outset, for when the transitional period would end and only the international standard would apply. The only alternative to having a transitional period would be to postpone the whole ERS project for a few years, which would not be consistent with the instructions from the NEAFC Commission.

Other issues relating to the ERS work were discussed. The format to be used was considered to be a technical issue that the Working Group could finalise without guidance from PECMAC. Regarding how ERS would be implemented, it was noted that the most straightforward way of presenting the rules would be to have all the relevant points in the Scheme and annexes to the Scheme, similar to what is currently done for the VMS and catch reporting, even though there would need to be significantly more technical details included than in the current systems. In that context, it was noted that a conclusion would have to be reached regarding the location of the official logbook, and that inspectors would need to have access to the full logbook and not just a series of reports and messages.

In the context of the inspectors’ access to the full logbook, the Chair pointed out that the best solution to that issue might be to move away from the current approach of catch reporting altogether, and rather have the whole logbook transmitted to the Secretariat from the FMC and thereby accessible to inspectors. How the vessels reported the information to their flag state FMC would remain outside the scope of this system. Advance information on entry, exit, transhipment, etc. would however still be in the form of reports as they are generated by the masters and are to be for the immediate attention of the inspectors. This would increase the
information available for inspectors to base their risk assessments on, without adding a burden to the captains as the logbooks would be sent from the FMC in an automatic process. This was not what was done under the existing bilateral ERS agreements, but it might be the most sensible approach to do this at least from the end of the transition period.

**It was agreed** that the Ad Hoc Working Group should continue its work along the lines that the Chair had presented, including on the basis of there being a transition period. It was noted that all Contracting Parties needed to ensure that their delegates at the meetings of the group had a full mandate to finalise the issues that were still outstanding. This might include ensuring the availability of opportunities for quick consultations with capitals during the groups’ meetings so that delegates could respond to issues that arose at the meetings and for which they therefore did not have explicit mandates. The tight time-schedule would not make it possible for delegates to have a position of postponing concluding on particular issues to a later meeting.

6.1.1. *Report from the February 2017 meeting*
6.1.2. *Report from the March 2017 meeting*

These two sub-items were addressed together with agenda item 6.1.

6.2. **Expansion of the role of the Secretariat in monitoring the activities of fishing vessels operating in the Regulatory Area**
It was noted that issues under this agenda item relating to port state control had been addressed under 4.2. No other issue was raised under this agenda item.

7. **Advice from JAGDM**
No issue was raised under this agenda item.

8. **Data security and confidentiality – ISMS**

8.1 **Access to documents**
The Secretariat presented a letter from the JAGDM Chair regarding the decision of the NEAFC Heads of Delegation to make all meeting documents public apart from explicitly excluded types of papers.

JAGDM had noted that it might be appropriate to develop the ISMS further in light of this new approach. The letter from the JAGDM Chair included proposed changes to the existing ISMS, which PECMAC was being consulted on.

Following discussions on the issues raised in the letter, **it was agreed** that the Contracting Parties will examine these changes formulated by JAGDM before the September meeting of PECMAC, with the aim of the ISMS being amended at the 2017 Annual Meeting, in line with the draft by JAGDM.

9. **International cooperation**
The Secretariat made a presentation on its cooperation with other international organisations and fora, regarding issues directly relevant to PECMAC. This included cooperation with the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum; the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and, the South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement.
10. Any other business
Iceland made a statement regarding its system for automatically monitoring possible unauthorised bottom fishing activities in closed areas and areas outside existing areas. They noted that Iceland had reported last year that they were not able to fulfil their obligations in this context at that time, but from March 2017 an automatic system for this purpose had been operational for Icelandic vessels.

The Russian Federation presented a proposal to add the following text to Article 4 of the Scheme:

*None of the Contracting Parties shall authorize its fishing vessels to harvest fishery resources which correspond to definition of a sedentary species under Article 77, paragraph 4, 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea without an explicit permission of the Coastal State concerned.*

The other Contracting Parties noted that they had not seen this proposal before the meeting, and had therefore not been able to study it properly or consult internally on it. Some also stated that they were not convinced that there was a need for having such a rule in the Scheme, or that Article 4 was the appropriate place for such a rule if it was to be added to the Scheme.

The Russian Federation acknowledged that the other delegations had not had enough time to study the proposal. They pointed out that the proposal was being presented now mainly to have an initial discussion on it. They stressed that the intention was not to eventually have NEAFC Conservation and Management measures for sedentary species, but rather to reflect this ban in the NEAFC Scheme. This would, *inter alia,* make it a part of the task of NEAFC inspectors to monitor possible unauthorised activity and failures to comply with the provision would formally constitute a serious infringement under NEAFC, with all the follow-up that this entailed.

The Russian Federation stated that they were happy to have a more in-depth discussion on the proposal at the September meeting of PECMAC, when everyone had had the chance to study it.

11. Report to the 2017 Annual Meeting
The draft report of the meeting was circulated on 5 May 2017, and the final report was adopted through correspondence on 19 May 2017.

12. Closure of the meeting
The Chair thanked participants for their work and the interesting and fruitful discussions. He also thanked the Secretariat for their help. It was noted that this was the current Secretary’s last PECMAC meeting and he was thanked for his efforts for PECMAC. The Chair wished everyone a safe and happy journey back home. He then closed the meeting.