



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D3/PCO/mbe/Ares (2020)

Mr E. Brouckaert
NWWAC Chairman
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Subject: NWWAC advice on brown crab management

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

Thank you for your letter of 14 July 2020. Please let me start by assuring you that we much appreciate the efforts by the Advisory Council in looking at the management of Brown Crab. We fully understand the current difficulties we all face during the Covid-19 pandemic and in particular those facing the fishing sector. Let me also assure you that, whilst not managed by an annual TAC at EU level, the Commission fully recognises that brown crab is of great importance as a fishery. Therefore, we are in agreement that the stock should continue to be managed in a sustainable manner and we thus support and count on the work done by the Advisory Councils in recent years.

The development of a joint group with the North Sea is a commendable idea and I will instruct my services to participate wherever possible. Whilst there are indeed some management measures already in place at the European level, such as an effort regime and minimum sizes, the Commission would welcome further measures to be developed through the regionalisation process. Depending on the nature of your recommendations, this would most likely involve the drafting of a Joint Recommendation from the relevant Member States regional groups. Thus, I would strongly advise that the Advisory Councils also invite representatives from the Member States to attend future meetings on brown crab management.

On the subject of joint management with the United Kingdom, it is indeed too soon to tell what our future relationship will look like. However, I can assure you that the management of non-TAC stocks, such as brown crab are also important for us. Joint management for the future continues to be a key subject for our negotiation team.

I read with concern your report on the difficulties individual Member States are experiencing with the export and trade of brown crab, particularly with China. I will communicate your concerns to my colleagues in DG TRADE, who may wish to contact you further on this issue.

Let me finish by again thanking you and the members of the Advisory Councils for your commitment and invite you to please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General