



Mr Bernhard Friess
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
1049 Brussel
Belgium

Dublin, 08th January 2020

Subject: Request for clarification on UK membership of the NWWAC after 31 January 2020

Dear Mr Friess,

The Advisory Councils play a significant role supporting the European Commission in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy. The North Western Waters Advisory Council is keen to continue and further improve this collaboration but realises that the exit of the UK from the European Union (Brexit) may present a major challenge to the engagement of stakeholders in the region.

In September 2017, the NWWAC initiated a discussion at Inter-AC level on the 'Functioning of the Advisory Councils', not only in the context of Brexit, but also in anticipation of an evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy. This subject has also received regular attention within the Executive Committee of the NWWAC.

In 2018 the NWWAC wrote to the then Director-General Mr Machado seeking clarification regarding UK membership of the NWWAC after the previously proposed date March 2019. A reply was received, however, the process of Brexit stalled.

As the situation has become much clearer following the results of the December elections in the UK, the NWWAC would like to confirm that the UK membership of the Advisory Council will remain unchanged after 31 January 2020 in line with a political agreement on a transition period, albeit on the apparent understanding that this has to be confirmed in a new withdrawal agreement.

In addition, the NWWAC would like to clarify its role in developing advice on any proposed policy changes regarding fisheries in the North Western Waters following the UK's exit from the EU, and specifically its ability to discuss these during the transition period while the UK members remain full AC members but are involved in negotiations on the UK side.





This topic will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the NWWAC Executive Committee (Madrid, 11 March 2020) where it is the intention of the Executive Committee to develop a clear position on the future functioning of the NWWAC during the transition period and after the UK has left the European Union.

I look forward to your response and thank you again for the collaboration we continue to receive from the EC, which is crucial for our work.

Yours sincerely,

Emiel Brouckaert
Chairman
Executive Committee

