



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

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## Focus Group Landing Obligation

Virtual meeting (Microsoft Teams), 13 January 2021 10:00 – 11:30 CET

### MINUTES

#### 1. Welcome

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed the participants and opened the meeting. Apologies were received from Puri Fernandez. The agenda was adopted as drafted.

Action points from the last meeting (11 december 2020):

- Secretariat to prepare Doodle to identify date for availability for meeting in January addressing the TMR evaluation and following up on 2021 TAC & Quota and Joint Recommendations on Discard Plan and directed fishing definition.

Closed.

- The Group will check back on the directed fishing advice and clarify Commission's query on the document's closing sentence.

The sentence this action point refers to is: "The view of the AC is that the chosen approach to define "directed fishing" should be easy to follow for all concerned." With it, the AC wanted to ask that the language chosen to explain the approach and the application of the definition are clear for stakeholders, especially fishermen, to understand.

Input by the Member States Group (MSG) is expected to clarify a few points discussed at the meeting in December. The Secretariat will send another reminder to Anna O'Sullivan and keep the members informed.

Updates on the next MSG presidency were reported by Caroline: the Netherlands and France would like to switch the chairing of the North Western Waters and Scheveningen Group. This means that France would chair the NWW group from January 2021, while the Netherlands will chair the Scheveningen Group. As France was intended to chair the NWW group in the fall, this means France would chair the NWW group for the whole of 2021 and the Netherlands would, as is the custom in the Scheveningen group, chair the whole year the Scheveningen group. This arrangement is very likely to be implemented but still has to be confirmed.

#### 2. Follow up on:

##### a. 2021 TAC & Quota and Brexit deal

Emiel: The December Council has set provisional TAC & quota for the first three months of this year, based on 25% of 2020 quota. For what concerns Brexit, there is a EU-UK Trade & Cooperation Agreement which was finalised on 24 December 2020, with a fisheries chapter including the following items:



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- 25% of EU turnover from British waters to be transferred to UK by 2026.
- Transition of TAC split EU-UK for 87 shared stocks out of 124 mentioned in Agreement.
- Reciprocal access mainly unchanged for 5½ years.

The dedicated NWWAC Focus Group on Brexit will take into account and discuss these items and all other topics of relevance to the AC. The next meeting is scheduled on 25 January.

Sean: the provisional quota issue needs to be resolved as a matter of urgency. This is a very unusual situation, and we need to have the definitive fishing opportunities as soon as possible. There is a declaration from the December Council that there would be significant effort to resolve this early in 2021. We should request that we are not waiting until the end of March before this is resolved. It should be a simple reminder, quoting the declaration and pointing out that this is an issue that needs to be resolved urgently. For completeness on the bullet points listing the relevant items in the fisheries chapter of the EU-UK agreement, the non-quota species issue and the 6- and 12-miles zones are also topics to be considered and that the FG Brexit will discuss.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to draft a letter to the Commission, mentioning the urgency of setting definitive annual TACs and quota for 2021 well before the end of the provisional quota period, referring to the declaration at Council.

Emiel: Currently the EU-UK-NO trilogue is in process on North Sea TACs. A similar EU-UK bilateral on NWW TACs is expected as well. In preparation of the final setting of TAC & quotas for the NWW, the Secretariat should revisit the NWWAC *Fishing Opportunities 2021* and *Addressing choke risk in the NWW after exemptions* advices to see if there is any useful reminder that could be sent to the Commission in the same letter mentioned above.

#### **b. Joint Recommendation Discard Plan**

Emiel: The Discard Plan for the Western Waters was published [(EU) 2020/2015] and was taken into account in the preparation of the NWWAC 2020 Choke advice.

There is going to be a new Joint Recommendation on the Discard Plan with deadline on 1 May 2021. Thus, it would be worthwhile to liaise with the new presidency of the MSG regarding the timeline for the preparation of the Joint Recommendation. At the same time, it is important to review the Discard Plan and assess the need for further AC input on the topic.

Mo: At the moment, Brexit is going to overshadow any other file and we have seen that the level of engagement from the MS has seriously dropped off. What is going to be the impact of any advice the AC might be preparing to the MSG on this in preparation of the next Joint Recommendation? In the past, a lot of work has been put into this task by the members of this AC, but little to no feedback was received. A suggestion could be to prepare an advice directly to the Commission, in the hope of having more of an impact.

Emiel: The option of sending an advice directly to the Commission is a good suggestion. In light of this, I reiterate my proposal that members should review the Discard Plan and forward their suggestion to the Secretariat, also taking into consideration the advice we sent last year to the MSG. It would be worthwhile sending a recap of the material we have already produced on this topic.

**ACTION:** The Secretariat should liaise with the Commission and the MSG asking for the timeline and work



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programme on the Joint Recommendation, referring to the advice previously delivered by the AC on the topic and proposing to be involved in any further work if required.

Emiel: Members should also review the current Discard Plan and last year's advice on the Joint Recommendation to see if there are any points to discuss and bring forward to the MS and the Commission. In case there is no further advice to be expected from the AC, the Secretariat will review the previous advice and prepare a recap document for the MSG and the Commission.

### 3. AC input to Technical Measures Regulation evaluation

The Focus Group worked directly on the questionnaire document. The chosen approach in replying to the questionnaire was to use previously AC approved material. In the absence of any work done on specific topics mentioned by the questions, the reply would be that the AC is not in the position to answer.

### 4. Summary of actions agreed and planning (Chair)

Concerning the Technical Measures questionnaire, the Secretariat will prepare a first draft with the outcomes of today's discussion and send it to the Chair for a first review. Then, members will receive the draft for comments and suggestions. The final draft should be delivered to ExCom by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February the latest. No further meetings are planned on this, but a written procedure will be launched.

Actions agreed:

1. Secretariat to draft a letter to the Commission, mentioning the urgency of setting definitive annual TACs and quota for 2021 well before the end of the provisional quota period, referring to the declaration at Council.
2. The Secretariat should liaise with the Commission and the MSG asking for the timeline and work programme on the Joint Recommendation, referring to the advice previously delivered by the AC on the topic and proposing to be involved in any further work if required.

### 5. Participants list

Name	Organisation
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Sean O'Donoghue	KFO
Stavroula Kremmydiotou	EBCD
John Lynch	Irish Fishermen Organisation
Caroline Gamblin	CNPMEM
Luis Francisco Marin	OPPAO
Loeiza Lancelot	FROM Nord
Mo Mathies	Secretariat
Matilde Vallerani	Secretariat