

## REPORT

Meeting: **NSAC/NWWAC Social Aspects FG**

Parties: **NSAC/NWWAC FG members**

Date and time: **27 July 2023**

Location: **MS Teams**

Chair: **Kenn Skau Fischer**

Rapporteur: **Kateryna Urbanovych**

### 1 Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed the participants of the joint Social Aspects FG, dedicated to presenting an overview of Generational Renewal projects for each Member State and discussing considerations of Recreational Fisheries. A total of 15 participants attended the Focus Group meeting.

Apologies were presented from Michael Andersen (DFPO) and Mo Mathies (NWWAC).

The agenda of the meeting was approved without amends.

### 2 Report from the previous meeting

Tamara Talevska read through previously agreed actions and elaborated on their status as follows:

Action	Responsible party	Status
Secretariat to circulate Flemming Christensen's presentation on Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Services and include a section of best practices in the draft advice.	Flemming Christensen, Secretariat	<i>Complete, presentation sent in follow up message and advice submitted on 11 May</i>
Members are invited to reach out to Flemming Nygaard Christensen: <a href="mailto:flemming@f-a.dk">flemming@f-a.dk</a> in case there is a wish to hold further presentations in individual organizations	Members	<i>Complete</i>
Consider inviting Glass and Risk Prevention Institute of France to deliver a presentation at future FG meeting.	Members	<i>Noted for future purposes</i>
Launch written consultation in appropriate for a (FG, WG) with aim to approve advice by end April 2023.	NSAC, NWWAC Secretariats	<i>Complete, advice submitted on 11 May</i>

Reconvene at appropriate time in the future – to be decided by the Chair and the Secretariat on advice by members.	NSAC Secretariat, Chair	<i>Complete</i>
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### 3 Overview of Generational Renewal projects

The Chair introduced the agenda topic by highlighting that the Commission had recently addressed the concept of generational renewal in the fisheries sector in their [Communication on the present and the future of the Common Fisheries Policy \(CFP\)](#).

Different Member States present different ways and programs to approach this topic. In order to create a comprehensive overview of all approaches, in the form of a joint NSAC/NWAAC Advice, the Chair prompted Focus Group members to share their insight regarding any type of perceived challenges concerning the recruitment of new fishers or technical constraints when pursuing a fishing business in their countries, as well as effective strategies or exemplary practices for ways forward (**Action**).

Patrick Murphy (Irish South and West Fish Producers Organization) took the floor pointing attention to the recent development in Ireland concerning a Watchkeeper Certificate, a competency certificate for vessel owners. The certificate is released in tandem with training and is taken on by skippers, who take on the responsibility to be more vigilant in terms of the crew that is taken on board (i.e., how healthy or competent they are). Murphy noted that the Commission has circulated an email addressing this matter. It's essential to recognize that in the case of newcomers entering the fishery sector, a significant portion of training occurs on board under the guidance of skippers and crew members. Unfortunately, this crucial acknowledgment is currently lacking within the industry.

Johnny Woodlock (Irish Seal Sanctuary) echoed Murphy's statement, providing additional endorsement to his perspective. Currently, a generational change within the industry is evident. The arrival of younger generation of fishers is compensating for the technological inexperience of older skippers and crew members in relation to contemporary technologies. The integration of more modern technology on board represents a significant advancement, enabling enhanced safety measures. Additionally, Woodlock emphasized that the implementation of a Watchkeeper Certificate throughout Europe would constitute a substantial leap forward.

The Chair noted that varying training methods are employed by different Member States and that such differences should be incorporated in the Commission's communications. The Chair also prompted Murphy to distribute the before-mentioned email from the Commission to the Secretariats and the Focus Group, to facilitate a more comprehensive discussion on this topic during the forthcoming meeting (**Action**).

Murphy further informed the group that the IS&WFPO had extended its outreach to the Marine Survey Office. The objective was to ensure clarity regarding the purpose of the Watchkeeper

Certificate, which serves to validate specific qualifications attained by both the skipper and crew members, ultimately enhancing onboard safety assurance. Murphy noted that the competency certificate was collaboratively developed in partnership with skippers, the BIM, and representatives from the Marine Survey Office (MSO). Presently, it is undergoing the process of being adopted. While adapting the certificate for diverse countries necessitates adjustments to the program, Murphy expressed confidence in its efficacy.

Considering the challenges to generational renewal, Michael O'Brien from the International Transport Workers' Federation took the floor by directing attention to two recent North Sea case studies. These cases shed light on practical obstacles that European vessel owners encounter when navigating the process of staff recruitment. The first case (January 2023) involves the detention of two German-flagged and Spanish-owned vessels. Media coverage around the detention focused on fisheries-related offenses, while less attention was given to the conditions of the Indonesian crew on the vessels. One vessel, in particular, had a crew earning 800 EUR per month. O'Brien raised this issue with the German Maritime Authorities and discovered that the vessels were registered under a Second Vessel Register, which allowed the exemption from the German minimum wage. The second case concerned a more recent incident involving a Portuguese owned, Belgian flagged vessel. In this instance, the Indonesian crew members were earning 760 EUR per month. O'Brien is currently awaiting a response from the Belgian authorities regarding the possibility of applying the Belgian minimum wage in this context. The fundamental challenge arises: if European vessel owners can employ crews earning wages below European standards while operating in European waters, what incentive exists for them to hire local crews within Europe? Within the context of Ireland, progress has been made in terms of establishing a legal framework for non-Europeans working on Irish vessels to receive an equitable portion of the salary. Ensuring fair remuneration and working conditions is essential before advocating the industry to younger generations, as this approach would eliminate the motivation to hire crews at significantly reduced wages.

Murphy reiterated O'Brien's statement, stressing the work that has been done by the IS&WFPO in shaping legislation that ensures equal treatment for all individuals on board. The fishing industry has undergone significant changes, experiencing a reduction of 250 vessels in the Irish fleet over the past two decades. Consequently, the challenges extend beyond just recruitment, encompassing broader industry dynamics impacted by escalating fuel costs and regulatory mandates for vessel enhancements, such as improved onboard facilities and the installation of WiFi connectivity. Murphy highlighted the demanding nature of the fishing industry, characterized by strenuous work hours and enduring hardships. He advocated for the establishment of a system that accurately reflects the industry's demands, aiming to reduce misconceptions and shed light on the hazards associated with a fishing career. Providing education about the specific risks inherent to each vessel is vital to ensuring the crew's safety, a measure that Murphy suggested should be recognized in national legislation.

Peter Breckling (German Fisheries Association) responded to O'Brien's reference to the two German vessels. Breckling clarified that these vessels originated from a period when Germany extended its national water limit to 200 nautical miles. As an attempt to adapt, some German vessels moved to other countries, predominantly Ireland and Spain, continuing to fish under

the German flag. Presently, only two of these vessels remain in Spain, having never returned to German waters. Consequently, the German administration lacks the mechanisms to regulate and enforce minimum wages on board these vessels. Breckling emphasized that the vessel owners engaged in illegal conduct by falsifying the crew salaries, which were higher on the contract than what was obtained in the actual payments. In the context of training for fishing roles in Germany, Breckling noted ongoing discussions within the sector. He highlighted the need to incorporate the developments associated with the Green Deal and energy transformations into training activities. As fishing grounds are increasingly compromised due to the expansion of wind farms and challenges with Baltic Sea quotas, fishermen are compelled to diversify their activities. Breckling proposed that the marine expertise of fishermen could be employed by other stakeholders operating in the marine realm (i.e., scientific or offshore services). If demand exists, fishermen's competencies could be utilized. Acknowledging that these discussions are at preliminary stage, Breckling assured that he will share more information when sufficient data is available.

Murphy intervened addressing the challenges arising from the new training requirements for fishers in Ireland. He pointed out that these requirements now demand two skippers on board a vessel for watch duty, a condition that presents issues. The training process itself extends over a period of 14-16 weeks, which results in the absence of any earnings during that time, creating financial difficulty. This, in turn, acts as a deterrent for fishers to pursue training. Adding to this is the age factor, as many fishers perceive no incentive to return to formal education for concepts they have already mastered through years of on-board experience. Murphy conveyed a desire to see these barriers addressed within the requirements. Drawing from a personal experience, he highlighted that Irish authorities should contemplate considering a fisher's accumulated time served and skill set, potentially assessed through a test. This approach would help avoid unnecessary training where it may not be essential.

The Chair thanked Murphy for his input, highlighting the relevance of the solution he just proposed, which aligns thoroughly to the prospective joint advice.

Tamara Talevska (NSAC Secretariat) raised several points for consideration within the framework of the future advice:

- Addressing gender parity: She proposed exploring the concept of gender equality, as the factors essential for attracting a youthful workforce are closely intertwined with the recruitment of women into the fisheries sector.
- Referencing a [Norwegian initiative](#): Talevska highlighted a measure implemented in Norway in the context of fisheries study programs, which yielded improvements in the recruitment of young workers.
- Emphasizing social media use: She drew attention to the utilization of platforms like Instagram by young fishermen, where the fisheries profession is promoted to the younger generation through effective communication channels.

Additionally, Talevska also inquired with the participants regarding existing international guidelines from ILO, FAO and OECD. She requested members to share these guidelines with the Secretariat if available (**Action**).

In response, the Chair thanked Talevska for the additions to the advice, encouraging her to go forward with the proposed topics, and pointed to ILO 188 as a relevant guideline for the addressed topics. Additionally, the Chair proposed that a pertinent approach could involve directly consulting the younger generation to understand their motivations and reasons for pursuing a career in fishing.

Jan Kappel (European Anglers Alliance) pointed back to the suggestion proposed by Murphy and considered its applicability to pesca-tourism. He highlighted that a similar certification requirement could be explored for those intending to carry passengers on board for fishing-related activities. Kappel suggested that this avenue could be worth investigating, although it might vary from one country to another.

Murphy replied that in Ireland, obtaining a BIM (Bord Iascaigh Mhara) certificate is a prerequisite for taking passengers on board. However, this requirement creates financial barriers for the crew, exacerbating the challenges faced by marine communities, which already face a grim outlook due to the growing presence of new industry players.

Woodlock intervened on this matter, noting that gender bias isn't prevalent in pesca-tourism. He pointed out that the most prominent charter skipper in Ireland, Mary Gavin Hughes, is a testament to this inclusivity. Anglers generally support skippers regardless of their gender, fostering an environment where women can actively engage in pesca-tourism as skippers of their own angling vessels. Additionally, he reiterated Murphy's observation about the limitations and licenses necessary before passengers can be carried. Woodlock emphasized that creating a more uniform regulatory landscape across the EU would be advantageous.

#### 4 Recreational Fisheries considerations

Kappel took the floor presenting his drafted advice on recreational fisheries, produced following a contact by the NSAC Secretariat and based on previous deliberations within the Focus Group with the aim of publishing a joint NSAC/NWAAC advice in due course. Kappel drafted the advice with a view to the potential Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform.

When the CFP was first published, it did not encompass recreational fisheries within its scope. Recognition of recreational fisheries came about later, albeit in a gradual manner. An ongoing challenge is the linguistic delineation between the terminology used in commercial and recreational fisheries. For instance, the term "quota" still evident in the latest iteration of the Control Regulation, is regarded as a regulatory concept in commercial fisheries when implementing measures like TAC limits or seasonal closures. Conversations with the Commission have been held to address this issue, leading to the potential establishment of a "quota for anglers". However, this proposition has sparked discontent within the commercial fisheries sector, as there is a perception that such quotas might be subtracted from their own allocations. In reality, this isn't accurate. The recreational fisheries quotas will be developed based on fresh stock data, and they will have no impact on the quotas assigned to commercial fisheries.

Recreational fishing constitutes a large sector, with approximately 10 million Europeans engaging in sea fishing annually, generating an economic impact of about 10.5 billion euros and supporting nearly 100,000 jobs.

Recreational fishing is characterized by varied definitions provided by different organizations. In 2004, the EAA also proposed a definition for recreational angling due to the usage of various terms such as sport fishing, recreational fishing, and recreational angling. Additionally, the term "angling" is not universally recognized in Southern European countries, which has led to complications. Within EU legislation, recreational fisheries are defined as "non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine biological resources for recreation, tourism, or sport." However, this CFP definition solely encompasses the marine aspect of the sector, disregarding the significance of recreational fisheries in inland waters.

Within the EU's Data Collection Framework, recreational fisheries are encompassed within the definition of the 'fisheries sector': "'fisheries sector' 'fisheries sector' means activities related to commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, aquaculture and industries processing fisheries products". Notably, this is the sole instance in any EU document where recreational fisheries are incorporated within the definition.

Kappel then turned toward the term "subsistence fishing," which can pose challenges in definition as it might encompass aspects of both recreational and commercial fishing. EU legislation doesn't explicitly incorporate subsistence fishing; instead, it distinguishes between commercial and recreational fishing. The key distinction between recreational and commercial fishing lies in the fact that recreational fishers are prohibited from selling their catches. However, Kappel highlighted a complication arising in the context of pesca-tourism, where discerning whether the catch of a passenger onboard a fishing vessel for pesca-tourism qualifies as commercial or recreational can be intricate. The Commission does not currently differentiate between the two, categorizing everything caught during a pesca-tourism trip as recreational, which might not be accurate. Kappel pointed out that the reviewed Control Regulation will somewhat alleviate the issue, as all recreational fishers will be mandated to hold licenses or registrations. He emphasized that this change will be transformative, considering that only half of the European countries currently adhere to this requirement. If any portion or all of a passenger's catches remains on the fishing vessel, these catches will be recorded as commercial. This will allow for more transparency and better data collection.

Thirty years later, the CFP has yet to incorporate specific articles on recreational fisheries, with only a solitary recital acknowledging their significance: "(3) Recreational fisheries can have a significant impact on fish resources and Member States should, therefore, ensure that they are conducted in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the CFP." Kappel emphasized the need for this aspect to progress further in the future, as other legislations concerning marine fisheries at the EU level include numerous provisions pertaining to recreational fisheries. Kappel highlighted that the upcoming CFP reform is expected to address recreational fishing in a more comprehensive manner, thereby reflecting its current and future significance within the EU. He underscored that the inclusion of recreational fisheries should not only underline their impact on fish resources but also their contributions to the economy, individuals, and society at large. To some extent, this has already been

acknowledged in certain EU documents, most recently in the revised control regulation draft version dated June 15th, June 2023: “(30) Recreational fisheries play an important role in the Union, both from a biological, economic and social perspective...”.

Concluding his remarks, Kappel referred to a [RecFishing Forum event on the subject of recreational fisheries within the framework of the CFP](#) that took place in 2022, which includes more material with an in-depth exploration of the topics discussed, to be shared by the Secretariat (**Action**).

The Chair thanked Kappel for his presentation, and subsequently inquired about what Kappel envisions as the central message that this advice intends to convey upon its publication.

In response, Kappel clarified that the primary goal of the advice is to highlight the absence of adequate consideration for recreational fisheries in EU-level legislation within the context of the CFP and to push for improvement in this matter considering the future reform. Moreover, it aims to offer insights into the prospective trajectory of recreational fisheries at the EU level. Kappel added that certain improvements have already been implemented, as evidenced by the revised Control Regulation. Notably, Article 90 now includes specifications for serious infringements, enabling the imposition of substantial fines on recreational fishers who violate regulations.

Murphy inquired whether the advice would focus solely on vessels engaged in taking people out for recreational fishing, or if it also encompasses individuals fishing from the shoreline. Furthermore, he sought clarification on the specific entities targeted by the mentioned serious infringements, as enforcement might be challenging. However, he emphasized that enforcing such measures would be crucial for enhancing safety and reducing hazardous angling incidents.

Kappel clarified that the advice includes all marine fishers, encompassing both those on vessels and those fishing from the beaches, as per the description of recreational fishing. Regarding serious infringements, he elaborated that it should involve a monetary penalty (approximately 50 EUR) for those who breach the regulations.

Breckling raised a question to Kappel regarding his stance on the necessity for greater harmonization and coordination of measures. In the context of the Control Regulations, it appears that the responsibility falls largely on Member States to implement measures. Similarly, in terms of catch statistics, Member States seem to possess a degree of decision, as long as they provide data. Breckling queried if the present state of rights for recreational fishers to catch fish is to Kappel's satisfaction, given the lack of a secure legal foundation for recreational fisheries. Breckling further inquired whether there are any ideas in place to enhance this situation and establish fairness within the industry. Additionally, he reminded everyone about disparities between Member States regarding catch and release practices for recreational catches, which also holds relevance for certain management decisions.

In response, Kappel pointed out that the EEA's position papers on EU matters have generally found consensus among all Member States except Germany, leading to a collective approach rather than individual actions by Member States. However, if harmonization were to extend beyond what is covered in the Control Regulation, Member States might withdraw their

cooperation. This hesitance is seen in episodes within other sectors where Member States are cautious about ceding too much authority to the EU level. Kappel highlighted that in the Mediterranean, commercial fisheries lack cohesion in management practices, despite attempts by the Commission to introduce standardization. Regarding data collection, the EAA has advocated for funding to develop a mobile app, which is now accessible in all countries. Notably, different countries have the option to adopt their own apps, as certain states already have operational apps in place. Although these apps are not obligatory at present, they might become so in the future. Kappel noted that the Commission has been granted implementing power under the Control Regulations, and the EAA is watchful of the potential implications this might bring. There are specific requirements for data collection on various species (e.g., eel, carp, sea bass, tuna), but some states fail to comply, leading to implementation issues. Kappel affirmed that the EAA intends to exert pressure on Member States to enhance their implementation of decisions made at the EU level.

Woodlock joined the discussion by inquiring about Kappel's perspective on the potential implementation of a Europe-wide size limit for various fish species. He highlighted the contrast between countries with no size limits for catches and those with regulations aimed at reducing the capture of larger fish. Woodlock drew attention to instances like in the North Pacific, where two halibut can be caught, but the second must be below 30 inches. He also noted that enforcing regulated size limits could pose challenges.

In response to the variety of shared opinions, the Chair reflected that there is undoubtedly a desire to progress on this subject by producing succinct, well-balanced, and concise advice. While more consideration is required regarding the content of the advice, it is apparent that the control aspects of recreational fisheries stand out as an important issue to address. Furthermore, the conversation surrounding substance and recreational fishing necessitates attention, as it emerges as a distinct discussion varying from country to country.

Breckling reiterated the notion of harmonization, pointing out that while enhanced coordination fosters uniformity, it might also entail sacrificing a certain level of local flexibility to proceed with specific opportunities. Breckling illustrated this with an example from Germany, where a federal state law rendered (recreational) fishing in coastal areas unrestricted solely for locals, but not for outsiders. With this example in mind, Breckling posed a question to Kappel: where would harmonization rather than local-specific regulations occur?

Alexandra Philippe (European Bureau for Conservation and Development) highlighted that while it's imperative for recreational fishing to find better inclusion in the CFP, the joint advice must elucidate the precise objective of incorporating recreational fisheries into the policy, whether the aim is recognition, creating a level playing field, or establishing legislative certainty. Philippe also suggested a contemplation of which species to focus on and an assessment of the implications of the advice for both commercial fisheries and fisheries management. She pointed out that recreational fisheries are also addressed in the Multi Annual Plan for the North Sea and North Western waters, which could be valuable information to include in advice tailored to those areas.

Murphy thanked the participants of the meeting for the stimulating discussion and concurred with Philippe's remarks, to reflect better about the framing of the potential advice.

The Chair echoed Philippe's sentiments and encouraged all participants to clearly reflect on the elements that need to be incorporated into the recreational fisheries paper. The Chair also brought up the discussion taking place in Denmark regarding the differing estimates of the recreational fisheries sector, highlighting the value of having thorough estimates throughout Europe. Specifically, the Chair called for a more comprehensive overview of the economic impacts of recreational fisheries (**Action**). Further deliberation about the paper's direction is slated for the forthcoming Focus Group meeting.

## 4 AOB & date and time of next meeting

### 4.1 LDAC Letter of Support to the Resolution of the Social Partners on Fight against Forced Labour in Fisheries

The Chair drew attention to the Letter of Support to the Resolution of the Social Partners on Fight against Forced Labour in Fisheries, circulated by the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) a few weeks ago. The Chair clarified that this issue pertains to fisheries beyond EU waters and is unrelated to the North Sea and North Western waters. The Chair emphasized that no progress should be pursued on this matter, as it could inadvertently send misleading signals about how fisheries are managed within the EU.

O'Brien intervened highlighting that the letter holds indirect relevance to certain deliberations within the Focus Group, as it addresses the social dimensions of the fisheries sector, including working conditions within Europe. He contextualized that much of the produce originating from forced labour or human trafficking that enters the EU market, is linked to China. O'Brien further noted that European-owned companies operating outside of Europe also exhibit questionable practices. He cited a recent strike involving 64 French and Spanish tuna vessels in the Gulf of Guinea and the Indian Ocean, primarily manned by workers from Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire. A key debate in the strike was the application of the ILO minimum seafarers rate, specified in the sustainable fisheries partnership agreement within the EU, which is set at \$658 per month. In practice, the workers were receiving far less than half of that wage. Hence, if statements are to be made, they should address the current situation, particularly in China, where vessel conditions are appalling, and conditions on European vessels operating globally.

The Chair thanked O'Brien for his input and commented that he would like to see support on this matter from the Market Advisory Council (MAC), as the NSAC and the NWWAC primarily deal with issues relevant to their respective waters. The Chair recommended investigating whether the MAC is working on an advise paper or a supporting letter regarding this topic (**Action**). This document could then gather support from the NSAC and other advisory councils.

### 4.2 Date and time of the next meeting

The next Social Aspects FG is to take place on **Monday, September 18th 2023, at 13:00 CET, online.**



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LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES



## 5 Actions

Action	Responsible
FG members to share their insight regarding perceived challenges concerning the recruitment of new fishers or technical constraints when pursuing a fishing business in their countries, as well as effective strategies or exemplary practices for ways forward, for incorporation in upcoming advice.	Members
Patrick Murphy to distribute the email from the Commission regarding updated Watchkeeper certification to the NSAC Secretariat for distribution to Focus Group members.	Patrick Murphy, NSAC Secretariat
Members to share existing ILO/ FAO/OECD guidelines concerning generational renewal to be incorporated in upcoming advice.	Members
NSAC Secretariat to distribute the link to the RecFishing Forum event concerning recreational fishing within the framework of the CFP.	NSAC Secretariat
Jan Kappel to produce a more comprehensive overview of the economic impacts of recreational fisheries.	Jan Kappel, Secretariat
NSAC Secretariat to investigate whether the MAC is working on an advice paper or a supporting letter concerning Fight against Forced Labour in Fisheries (connected to previously distributed LDAC Letter of Support).	NSAC Secretariat

## 6 Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Gerald	Hussenot	Blue Fish
Michael	O'Brien	ITF
Bruno	Dachicourt	Syndicat National des Marins Pêcheurs CFTC
Peter	Breckling	German Fisheries Association
Kenn Skau	Fischer	NSAC
Johnny	Woodlock	ISS
Tamara	Talevska	NSAC Secretariat
Matilde	Vallerani	NWWAC Secretariat
Norah	Parke	Killybegs Fishermen Organization
Jan	Kappel	EAA
Alexandra	Philippe	EBCD

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Jasmine	Vlietinck	Rederscentrale
Semi	Kilic	EFFOP
Patrick	Murphy	IS&WFPO
Kateryna	Urbanovych	NSAC Secretariat