



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
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Minutes

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Virtual

Friday 11 September 2020

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed all participants, including members from the European Commission the North Western Waters Member States Group, as well as members and observers from the NWWAC.

Apologies were received from John Lynch, Caroline Gamblin and Jim Portus.

The agenda was adopted.

There were no action points from the last virtual ExCom meeting in July, at which only the action points from the Working Groups were confirmed.

Actions arising from the Working Groups

WG 1-3:

1	Regarding the confirmation of the chair and vice-chair positions: the members of all three WGs deferred this decision until after the update by the FG Brexit at the General Assembly on 24 September.
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WG 3:

1	Review of ICES advice for undulate ray once released and then make a decision if the submission to the commission is needed at that stage
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WG 4:

1	Secretariat to prepare proposal for virtual Focus Group style meeting for WKIRISH discussion for late autumn.
2	Follow up letter to the COM mentioning that catches of cod, whiting and haddock in the two Irish Sea statistical rectangles, 33E2 and 33E3, are included in the relevant assessment for the Celtic Sea, not in the Irish Sea assessment. It is not clear how this translates into setting the TACs for these stocks in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea.

HWG

1	Fishing Opportunities: Reconfirm in ADG, Secretariat to reply to Enda Coneely's query
2	Keep the topic of how global environmental policy influences EU policy as standing topic on HWG
3	Review number of groups currently running in the AC, bring forward to ExCom
4	Invite EU Parliament rapporteur to NWWAC FG meeting (FG Control)
5	FG Climate and Environment (Chair Jacopo Pasquero): decision on participation in Ocean Energy Open Consultation, and International Ocean Governance consultation



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The ExCom approved all action points from the working Groups.

2. Work plan for Year 16 (2020 – 2021)

- Presentation by the NWW Member States Group, Anna O’Sullivan, Principal Officer, DAFM

Following the update made at the virtual ExCom meeting in July, an email was circulated regarding the dates of the upcoming meetings which are being finalised now. The next meeting of the MS Technical Group is scheduled for next week to which AC representatives are invited. After that then the next meeting will be a High Level Group meeting and the date proposed that is the 23 September.

The issues under discussion were circulated before the summer break, including an amended joint recommendation, updated on the basis of feedback received from the Commission. The group will also be looking at the issue of defining directed fisheries. The MSG would like to thank the NWWAC for the submission on their advice on this topic, which was deemed very useful and circulated to the other Member States in the NWW Group. Another issues that is being discussed is the proposal for measures to reduce cetaceans bycatch, and the MSG looks forward to receiving the NWWAC’s advice on that point as well.

The final issue was a proposal on measures for conservation of scallop which will also be discussed at the High Level Group.

- Commission update (Jonathan Shives, Policy Officer, DG MARE)

The Commission are still discussing with the MS the recent STECF outcomes before the summer, in particular the technical measures proposed for the Celtic Sea and the West of Scotland. This is an ongoing discussion following the publication of the STECF report.

The other piece of work is the exemptions to the Landing Obligation, which will now be going through the court decision going through the European Parliament stage. In addition, further work with the STECF looking at the calculations and the data for the calculations for the *de minimis* and survivability deductions is planned. The Commission is also following with interest the discussions around the directed fishing definition.

A lot of work is going with the Baltic Council, and my colleague gave an intervention already on cetaceans bycatch during the meeting of the NWWAC’s Advice Drafting Group.

The Commission is still discussing with ICES the release of that sea bass tool. Unfortunately, this has been delayed by the summer and hopefully, a written update in the next couple of weeks can be given, but currently, publication of the tool is still awaited.

Q: Could you elaborate a little bit on the state of play of regarding choke issues, the defined fishing definition and work in process regarding the technical measures in the Celtic Sea and what you expect, and if there is an expectation for advice from this AC on that particular topic.



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LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

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A: I think the biggest area of work may well be about the Celtic Sea measures, which are currently done under Article 13 in the fishing opportunities. The MS put forward a joint recommendation which would replace that. It also contains measures for the Irish Sea and the West of Scotland and has been through STECF analysis resulting in some positive and some negative comments. Particularly around the Celtic Sea, the STCF expressed concerns about using a percentage for bycatch limit because of the low amount of cod amongst a few other points.

We are currently in the process of communicating all of that back to the MS and then discussing with them the way forward.

Q: Particularly in relation to this AC, how are the pelagic and demersal fisheries bycatches going to be calculated in relation to the MS Discard Plans for 2019, on which these calculations are presumably based? Which data will be utilised?

A: Concerns about what data is going to be used are of course understandable because that can affect the numbers for any potential deduction. For this year, we are hoping to follow the same methodology as previous years whereby the STECF have done a data crawl over the summer. We always base our calculations on the proceeding years, but what they have to do is look at the exemptions for 2020. There is a mix of existing exemptions and there are some new exemptions as well that either did not exist previously or now cover a different area in a different fishery or fleet.

It is always a process of forecasting what will happen in 2021 using previous years' data. The request this year has been for the 2019 data because we always look at the most complete previous years' data. 2019 data is being used because we do not have a full year of data for 2020 yet, given the pandemic. We are all hoping fishing can return to a fairly more normal pattern next year, so it would be a bit difficult to use 2020s data anyhow.

The data requested will be subject of the STECF meeting next week for the STCF, for collation and analysis, and to try and arrive at an estimate of the discards. The big caveat being that if that data is incomplete or not considered usable, there will have to be an element of discussion involved.

If the data is too poor quality or it produces wrong numbers like ridiculously high discards compared to, for example, what ICES say, then we would revert back to the ICES information. This is the approach the Commission has followed in previous years.

Q: Can the Commission's text for the delegated act on the Discard Plan be shared or has it already been shared with the AC? My understanding was that it is now with Parliament and Council for review and approval. Also, are there any upcoming dates for hearings or meetings on this in parliament?

A: A written response on this will be provided to the Secretariat on this.

Q: As the publication of the sea bass tool is still awaited, should the NWWAC deliver its advice on seabass now or wait until after publication so as to be able to include the tool in its advice?

A: I hope it will only be a matter of a week or two before the tool is actually released. I know there was some frustration over the advice last year and some may think that the Commission did not use it and did not follow it. This is absolutely, definitely not the case. We found the advice that was produced extremely useful and we would encourage you to both produce an advice again this year and use the tool as well. Again, apologies that the tool has not been produced earlier, but I understand this to be a technical issue within ICES. I cannot tell you at the moment what the Commission proposal will look like around sea bass because it is very dynamic. It is also a stock that is shared with the UK. But yes, even if the advice comes in November, it is still very important to us.



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SEPTENTRIONALES

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Q: On sea bass, there is a situation in Cornwall where sea bass landings from nets have gone up considerably, and one of the things that has been flagged is that there is no definition of unavoidable bycatch. Last year the Commission did not put forward a proposal for a percentage restriction on bycatch which was one of the recommendations of this AC which is likely to be included in this year's advice again. If there as a directed fishing definition, is there scope for that to impact on bycatch definitions?

A: The Commission cannot comment on what the UK's interpretation of legislation is. The suggestion about a percentage bycatch should be considered by the NWW Member States Group if they want to insert a line for sea bass into the table and include a definition if they think that it is useful.

- Discussion of the NWWAC work plan

Update on Work Programme Year 15 available on the NWWAC website ([link](#))

The proposed Work Programme for Year 16 was presented to the ExCom members in July at the virtual meeting. It was submitted to the Commission as part of our grant application for the next year on 5 August. The Work Programme for Year 16 is also available in all three languages on our website, and nothing has changed for Year 16 since the July presentation.

This is a procedural point as the ExCom has approved this already in July and the Chair will present this to the GA on 24 September.

The reason the Secretariat brought this forward in July in the ExCom meeting is due to the Commission rule that any grant application for the following financial year should be submitted two months before the end of the current financial year. The GA gives final approval, so this will be presented at the GA meeting again. The application was submitted to the Commission who is reviewing it at the moment.

Budget update for Year 15 (01 October 2019 – 30 September 2020)

- Total forecasted budget approved by the European: €374,400
- Total spend so far: €311,600
- Actual spend on meetings down compared to forecast due to COVID-19
- Increased spend on interpretation
- Current underspend approx. €50.000

ACTION: ExCom members to advise the Secretariat regarding possibilities to spend remaining budget in Year 15.

Q: Did the ACs receive extra funding from the Commission following the financial seminar held in June? Are we going to lose the extra money if we do not spend it? Can we allocate more money for interpretation for example for Focus Groups that may need it?

COM: The budget cannot be carried forward, however, this AC has already applied for its new grant so there is



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SEPTENTRIONALES

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nothing to worry about. At the financial seminar in June 2020 it was announced that some Advisory Councils got a little increase in the amounts due to the fact that the Commission decided to try to stop allocating the same amount to all ACs. It is a good question to ask yourself how to better use the funds available until the end of this year. For the Commission translation and interpretation are always a very good way to spend this money.

Sec: There is no problem at all spending money on interpretation. However, we need to have a request from the Focus Groups that they actually want this. So please let the Secretariat know if you want interpretation for your FG or Advice Drafting Group. Just to clarify, the Commission reviewed the budget provisions for all the ACs for their upcoming financial year. Our budgets has been increased, and instead of €300,000 as has been the case over the last years, for the next year, the Commission has committed €330,000 of a budget to the North Western Waters Advisory Council.

Q: is it still possible to reallocate the money in the proposed budget to reflect that there may be for more virtual meetings than physical ones next year?

Sec: Under the new rules that were provided by the Commission at the finance seminar that was held in June, the Commission has made moving allocated amounts within the budget much easier. In previous years if changes were to be made, the budget had to be amended and sent to the Commission. This has been made much easier and we have a lot more freedom than before to move amounts between the different lines.

COM: Just to confirm that you do not have to request any amendment to the budget and you can transfer money from one budget line to another. It will be applicable from your new grant and the new specific agreement.

3. Dialogue with OIGs ceasing their membership

The General Assembly of this AC received notice for the next financial year from the following other interest groups with the termination to not prolong their membership for next year:

- Dutch Elasmobranch Society,
- ClientEarth
- Oceana
- The Pew Charitable Trusts, and
- Birdwatch Ireland.

Although in the letters there are some explanations of why this has happened, as the ExCom Chair I took the initiative to write to these organizations to attend this meeting and perhaps give some input to generate a discussion about the decision that has been made.

I will also ask the respective representatives if they wish to elaborate a little bit on their decision and particularly on the issues that might be, or will be, or are related to this AC if any, and I suggest indeed that our acting ExCom vice-chair from ClientEarth will make a start.

ClientEarth: As the vice-chair for the remainder of this month, I'll make a few overarching remarks, and give a bit of my own perspective. Then I can hand over to my other colleagues if they want to add something.

First of all, thanks to Emil and to the Secretariat for the proposal to have this session. My understanding also aligns with what Emil just said is that the purpose is also to give an opportunity to the other ExCom members to get an update on what the situation is and understand the decisions a bit better.

To manage the expectations from the start, I just want to be clear that there is no secret reason or a list of solutions on any issues that have not been at some point already raised in the past. There was a letter and a meeting with the Commission last year, for example, and a presentation going back as far as at least 2017, where some of these points



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were made.

I hope if we can avoid some kind of tense trial situation where we are individually defending our organization's decisions and then going through an archive of past issues and then going into rabbit hole of pointing fingers regarding things that have happened in the past. I hope this is mainly for the purpose of transparency and to make sure we can have an honest and open respectful and constructive discussion.

As an overarching point we all have to consider from an organizational standpoint carefully where we put our time and the money to have the biggest impact in line with our respective priorities. These all somehow revolve around sustainable fisheries management, even though views might diverge a bit on what exactly that might mean in practice.

As the ClientEarth representative, but also my other NGO colleagues, I have engaged quite actively in this AC and also others for many years. We have participated in lots of discussions which have often been fruitful, but also often quite challenging for all of us. That is in the nature of the AC, whose is to provide a forum for stakeholder views to be exchanged, and to find consensus while still reflecting and respecting diverging views. Despite the challenges, I think we all agree that we have produced some good advice over the years, like the choke mitigation or now identification tool.

We can all see that the Secretariat that came in not too long ago has made some efforts to listen to whatever concerns came up and find some ways of addressing them. We have in fact actually had a discussion around some of these issues on the fringes of the Madrid meeting.

One of the key points is that all these NGOs have decided independently of each other to review the progress that we have been making towards achieving our priorities, overall and throughout this AC and other ACs as well.

The conclusion was that the positive impact of this work in line with our priorities has overall just not been clear or big enough to justify the quite considerable time and effort that we are all investing. This is not saying that we are the only ones investing this time and effort. That applies to any active AC member and the Secretariat obviously as well. But particularly in recent times, it has become difficult to justify both.

One part of the issue is that a lot of the topics that we and the ACs specifically work on are revolving around quite contentious issues like TAC setting, landing obligation, implementation and control. Basically, what we have achieved from our perspective usually in quite a lot of the cases is maintenance of the status quo or advice that basically supports or at least does not contradict the principles and rules in place.

It is quite difficult to go beyond that because there are so many diverging views on these topics that make it quite difficult to reach tangible, actionable, and constructive consensus advice that everybody can agree on. Especially, since some of these deadlines around MSY and the landing obligation have passed. It has become more and more difficult to arrive at advice that does not just restate the positions that all of the members are making individually outside of the AC anyway.

To sum up, the key consideration has been, where can we best make the most effective impact? It is just not clear to us what the positive impact has been of our contributions to the advice in practice, how that has been adopted or not adopted.

I just want to make clear that these were all individual organizations decisions that have happened in parallel over the past few months.

For the time being the decisions have been made. While we are happy to be here and basically help transparency by saying where we stand, there should not be an expectation that we come up with a list of things that need to happen and once they have happened, then everybody will miraculously come back. That is left to each individual organization who might evaluate the situation and conclude at some point that it is worthwhile to come back.

Dutch Elasmobranch Society: The Vice-Chair explained in detail and this organisation has a similar reasoning following an evaluation where we make the best use of the time we have, and this is no longer this AC.

Birdwatch Ireland: BirdWatch Ireland's engagement with other stakeholders toft the NWWAC has been sanctioned to ensure the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and ensure that it delivered on its promise of a healthy marine



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SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
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environment and a more sustainable and prosperous EU fishing industry. Unfortunately, the failure of the CFP to deliver on its obligations has necessitated a review within our organization of what the barriers to progress have been, about future steps we could take to ensure our contributions served as a catalyst for positive change. BirdWatch Ireland very much considers that our engagement in the past with the NWWAC has been central to our work to ensure the full implementation of the CFP. Unfortunately, I suppose the failure of the CFP to deliver on its objective such as the MSY Obligation and the Landing Obligation has necessitated a review within our organization. As part of this review, we have consulted with other NGOs from across the AC network. After careful consideration and taking into account the barriers to progress experienced by ourselves and others, we have regretfully made the decision to leave the NWWAC. I would like to thank the Chair of the Celtic Sea Working Group, of which I've been a member of for a number of years, the ExCom chair, the Secretariat, and all the members of the NWWAC for your time and engagement over the years. I wish you all the best in your future efforts to progress the implementation of the CFP.

BirdWatch Ireland remains committed to engaging with decision-makers, scientists, and stakeholders on sustainable fisheries management and marine conservation issues across Europe's North-Western waters.

I think that the most constructive place for a discussion on the future of the ACs and the OIG representations probably in a more general overarching review of ACs. In general, I support what has been said on the wise use of our resources. The lack of space for consensus advice and queries of our work we feel undermines our ability to make the kind of progress that we would like to see in our investments in time.

Sec: We appreciate your assistance on a number of issues and the work put into various advice documents over the past year. As Matilde and I only joined in late spring last year, we were not aware of any ongoing issues until November last year and we very much tried to engage the OIG college overall, trying to figure out solutions and increase, not even just involvement, but maybe satisfactory involvement.

However, we did arrange the meeting in Madrid and then the COVID-19 crisis hit which has really derailed a lot of things. We are very sorry that we could not provide solutions in a very short space of time and we can only hope that we can find certain solutions or directions for solutions today with your help and also with the help of the industry members, to find a way forward and to improve the situation and to maybe make it more attractive for NGOs to be a member of the NWWAC.

Oceana: In our case, the resignation follows an internal assessment about if it is worth or not to be involved in this particular AC.

We found a the effort that we have to put in in order to build advices bit unbalanced including the final outcome in which our position and thoughts are transmitted to the different decision-makers. The reality is that the impact that we are having in the AC is not the one that I would like to have because of different issues that could be related with the way the ACs are functioning or the way they are structured. Also, a secondary thought is that in principle the AC should try or aim to facilitate and to guide the implementation of the CFP. Many times I perceive the role of the OIG as preventing that the ACs deviate from this mission. I appreciate the efforts that the different members do in the ACs, but for the OIGs it is more of a damage control effort rather than a constructive effort in which we are providing inputs in the best way of implementing the CFP.

I believe that the ACs have a role to play, particularly in the context of the regionalization that is increasing power or is giving more relevance to the regionalization process. In our assessment, we have to decide where do we want to put our efforts, in which way they are more effective. Right now, we do not think that the NWWAC is the best place. I have to thank the AC for the past years of collaboration. In this particular sense, I hope that our decision does not affect the functioning of the AC.

COM: Most of the NGOs are aware of it, but to remind everyone that there will be a meeting with our new Director-General next week 16September and we hope that we will be able to tackle the problem. We are deeply hoping that NGOs can stay and can be convinced of the valuable input they provide in the ACs. This is really essential, in particular, in the context of the regionalization.



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LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

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We hope that all these NGOs which will be participating to this meeting come up with ideas and with solutions because, for us, we have always reminded them that their input is very important.

The Pew Charitable Trusts: Pew is not leaving all the ACs. Pew has been a member of the NWWAC, NSAC and PELAC. We plan to stay a member of the PELAC, and are planning on joining the Long Distance AC. This decision was taken on a case-by-case basis. We try to assess the benefits of each membership, of each AC and trying to have an overview and see if it was worth contributing to each AC depending on the objectives we have, i.e. trying to implement the CFP. In 2020 the deadline passed for ending over-fishing. We did not see any emergency on this topic within this AC, and that was probably one of the main reasons, at least for Pew, that led to this decision.

Regarding the functioning of the AC, there may a need to reflect and see that some NGOs work better in some ACs than others. Why? You might need to analyze that and see if maybe some lessons could be learned. We talked about the functioning because we reckon that the functioning does not abide by the rule of the CFP. We believe there is a problem in the implementation of the principles that should manage the ACs.

Despite the fact that we are a minority due to the 60/40 rule, I believe some things could still be improved and that they would not imply major changes regarding the CFP.

Despite the fact that we have always attended the GA and not of the different groups, Pew always tried to be an active member and to actively participate in some of the recommendations and on lending obligation, for example. I really wanted to thank the members who worked on this. I believe that we did some positive things.

Q: The first that I realized that there was this major issue with the OIGs was when they sent this letter in the start of July to the Director-General. Can I confirm that even though they did not specifically name the ACs in the letter other than referring to that some of them were functioning okay, that the NWWAC is one of those ACs that they consider is covered by that letter to the Director-General? If that is the case, I think it is highly disappointing and a very retrograde step that the first time we are discussing this at the deciding body of the AC at the ExCom is today. The second point is that I've been with the ACs from the very beginning, and with the NWWAC for the last 15 years. I have to say there are many times that I felt that I was wasting my time at the AC, but in the spirit of having a collective view on the sustainability of stocks, I always join in. My experience with most of the NGOs is that there were very few meetings where a compromise between both sides could not be reached. In addition, I note in the letter that though not all the ACs are covered with the same brush, there are some that are functioning well, but only with the caveat that they have chairpersons that are impartial and operating correctly. I would have to take exception if that is being applied to the NWWAC.

A: This is not the first time this has been mentioned. It has been an ongoing issue since 2015. The letter addresses all Advisory Councils and, yes, the NWWAC is one of those, but there have been numerous discussions, presentations. Remember when Bjorn Stockhausen gave a presentation on exactly this subject to all the ACs back in 2017? There was a presentation by Ann Cecil and Jean Christophe in Inter-AC of 2019, so it cannot be that this is a completely new subject. They have been discussed in the past and the reason we chose to send a copy of the NGO letter to all the Advisory Councils is for transparency reasons. We could have also chosen not to but then, you would accuse us now of doing this behind your back. That is why we thought, be upfront about the reservations because it is not the best use of our time to work in these Advisory Councils.

A: It might be that you were not aware of the gravity of the issues or about the extent to which they might lead to certain decisions until you saw that letter. Certainly there are no new issues in that have not been raised before. In fact, one might say maybe we should have collectively decided to have an open discussion like this one a couple of years ago already. These are things that go back a number of years. It is not to say that there is not value in trying, but on some of these issues, for example like how to handle stocks that are mainly taken as bycatch, whether there should or should not be a bycatch stock, it seems like a bit of a hopeless task to reach common ground.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
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Chair: This is the forum where such discussions and such information exchange should take place. Unfortunately, the decision to resign is already made, and this forum is no longer able to change anything. The main comment is about not having had the opportunity to debate this as ExCom because this is the forum. This is indeed the first time in the ExCom that this topic is coming up. I do agree that there have been other discussions and comments made in other fora, for example the specific meeting between the Secretariat, myself and some of the NGOs, but the ExCom is clearly the right forum that had to be used and that has not been the case.

Q: This is the first time that the ExCom of the nWWAC has actually discussed this issue, and it is very disappointing that this is the first opportunity after a fait accompli. Now that we have established that the NWWAC is one of the ACs that is referred to in the joint NGO letters, there are two specific items, the first that the ACs that are not functioning well have chairs that are not impartial, and the second that there was abusive language being used by the members. Is that the NGOs' view of the NWWAC?

If it is, why was this not raised before this or why did the OIGs not vote against the various chairs if that was the case. It is a bit unfair to say that just because the OIGs have 40% as against 60% industry, that that is the reason that you are not getting your way in the ACs.

If that is the case, why have the OIGs made those assertions because they are very serious assertions to make about the NWWAC. I would ask the OIGs even at this late stage to reconsider their position, as we have all felt at times that putting time into the ACs is a huge burden. I have often felt that I was wasting my time at the AC but in the overall goal of ultimately the sustainability of the stocks, I felt better to be in the Advisory Council rather than outside it.

A: One general point on the letter that went to the Commission is that it was basically capturing a lot of different situations across a lot of different ACs covering quite a long period of time. It is covering recent things and things that have happened a while back but that could well happen again as long as the setup stays as it is. That is also why the letter does not refer to specific ACs because we just tried to make some general points that will apply more or less in different ACs.

Some of these points will have been bigger or smaller issues in other ACs than in this one. As for the general point on the impartiality, I would just say that it is in principle, capturing both behaviour and meetings, as well as the affiliation of the person who is the Chair. That is not meant as an attack on anyone in particular, but is clear that it is a very difficult task for anyone who is chairing these meetings to take off the hat of who they usually represent and be completely neutral.

Maybe there could be some kind of impartiality training or external chairs that are not affiliated with any of the member organizations, or if something that is overseen by the Commission could be implemented, all of these things have been brought up previously and then I am sure there will be more discussions around this.

I would caution against seeing that as an attack on any particular person or referring to a particular situation. I am not sure how useful it is if we dig up examples in terms of the disrespectful language or behaviour. I can certainly think of a couple of examples from this AC either directly or that I have heard of, but I am not sure how useful it is to bring them up now. At least with the most prominent one I can think of was at my first ever NWWAC meeting. Somebody made a very, very inappropriate comment while wearing the headset thinking, "Well, if I do this in French, then probably nobody will hear it," whilst sitting next to an NGO representative who picked up that comment, and basically, then went to the chair and said, "This needs to be brought up at the meeting," which the chair then did but while that person who made the comment was not even in the room. That is just one example of what happened.

It might be that there is a collective failure on all of us to not have initiated a discussion like this in this forum sooner. There were attempts to do so at the start of this year when collectively and together with the Chair, the industry Vice-Chair, the Secretariat and the NGOs where we had a discussion around some of these issues and on the fringes of the Madrid meeting. But then the COVID situation was not conducive to investing more time on something that maybe at that point did not seem pressing enough and maybe that is something that we collectively should have addressed in the meantime.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
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ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
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A: I do not feel that getting into specifics of issues that OIG members may have had over the years is a very constructive way, and to take something positive from our existence. We would like our exit may be to be an opportunity for reflection and hopefully, there is an opportunity for and the powers that be to reach out to individual or OIGs across the AC network.

I would ask for ways that maybe we can improve the axe moving forward. It would be unfair to raise isolated instances over the years in this kind of forum because it would not give us the opportunity then to also present maybe some of the positive things that have happened. Maybe a separate forum should be established across as we can make constructive suggestions about how things can improve.

Sec: We had hoped to get pointers for solutions on how to improve the situation within the NWWAC out of this discussion and it is agreed that going over past incidents is not helpful. Unfortunately, the opportunity of setting up a separate forum to discuss this is unfortunately gone due to the NGOs leaving. However, in personal discussions and phone conversations, we have put forward elements that could be looked at on improving the functioning of this AC if that is indeed the problem.

One of the things that was mentioned in the most recent meetings of all the Working Groups is that when the elections come next year for Chairs, we would encourage all WGs to have one member of the industry and one member from the OIG chairing or vice chairing to share the task.

That is something that the Secretariat can propose, and it is surprising to us that this may have not been proposed previously. Another solution that we put forward was that the mechanism of the AC itself could have been used better and a proposal could have been made to the ExCom for example, to approach the Commission from the AC itself requesting a sit down with the Commission and this AC and representatives from for example the Secretariat and the ExCom to identify what the issues are and to improve the situation. I am not sure why this mechanism was not used.

It would be very much appreciated if the NGOs had concrete suggestions for the Secretariat that we could propose possibly in a different forum, unfortunately in future without your participation, but that could improve the situation and maybe make the work in this AC more attractive and possibly entice some of you to return in the next financial year.

Chair: One personal comment regarding the chairmanships is if only there were more candidates. There is more to be said and to be learned and I would ask the members that have not taken the opportunity or did not wish to take the floor to submit their comments to the Secretariat, not only from the organizations for whom it is the last NWWAC meeting, but also for the other members of the ExCom to put in some ideas and some reflections based on the discussion and the dialogue we just had. We will have a close look at those and see what the next steps are.

ACTION: Members to send their views, observations, comments on this topic to the Secretariat.

4. Update on NWWAC Advice Fishing Opportunities 2020

The Advice Drafting Group is working on the fishing opportunities advice. The Secretariat is doing most of the work as the group could not nominate a candidate to chair. A draft has been put together by the Secretariat following the discussions in the WGs and distributed to the members of the ADG. Work is continuing with the input received to discuss all the input and to try to come up with the final draft advise to go to the ExCom for a written procedure.

5. Update on NWWAC Advice on 'Addressing Choke Risk in NWW after exemptions'

A very good Focus Group meeting was held on 04 September which has led to information coming in and being provided to finalize a draft. This is also work in progress, however, priority has been given to the tight deadline regarding the fishing opportunities advice. Subsequently, there will be more attention on this addressing choke risk



advice. There is no specific date yet and we will have a close look with the Secretariat to see when we will continue the work. We will also inform the ExCom members when they can expect the draft advise to come for the written procedure in due time. Last year this advice was submitted in the second half of October.

6. Upcoming meetings

- Inter-AC meeting
- MIACO January 2021, virtual

COM: We were hoping to have a physical Inter-AC meeting because we already had the financial seminar in June proving that virtual Inter-AC meetings are possible. Personally, I would prefer postponing this meeting and having, once again, a physical meeting between all of us. The Commission has had a very busy this year with the Farm to Fork strategy, the biodiversity strategy. The Outermost Regions AC was also set up and is now functioning. In addition, the head of unit left and we are unsure when we will get a new one.

7. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted (Chair)

1	ExCom members to advise the Secretariat regarding possibilities to spend remaining budget in Year 15.
2	Members to send their views, observations, comments on the topic of OIG involvement to the Secretariat.

NWWAC Participants	
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Jenni Grossmann	ClientEarth
Irene Kingma	Dutch Elasmobranch Society
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Jesus Lourido Garcia	OPP 77, Puerto de Celeiro
Despina Symons	EBCD
Sean O'Donoghue	KFO
Javier Lopez	Oceana
Purificación Fernández	ANASOL
Bruno Dachicourt	ETF
David Curtis	EAA
Geert Meun	Visned
Patrick Murphy	ISWFPO
NWWAC Observers	
Kenny Coull	Coull
Norah Parke	KFO
Gerald Hussenot Desenonges	BlueFish
Fintan Kelly	Birdwatch Ireland
Jean-Christophe Vandeveld	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Jacopo Pasquero	EBCD
Stavroula Kremmydiotou	EBCD



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Other Observers	
Pascale Colson	DG MARE
Jonathan Shrives	DG MARE
Caroline Alibert	DG MARE
Anna O'Sullivan	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Tamara Talevska	North Sea AC
NWWAC Secretariat	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary
Monica Negoita	Executive Assistant Finance and Administration