



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
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MINUTES

WORKING GROUP 2 – CELTIC SEA

Virtual meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday 10 March 2021

10:45 – 12:15 CET

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair (Suso Lourido Garcia) welcomed all the participants to the meeting. No apologies were received in advance of this meeting and the agenda was adopted as drafted. There was one action point from the last meeting of the Group in September 2020:

- Regarding the confirmation of the chair and vice-chair positions, decision was deferred until after the update by the FG Brexit at the General Assembly on 24 September.

Members had agreed to have Suso Lourido Garcia continuing his mandate until elections in September 2021. Members have the opportunity to elect an interim vice-Chair under item 2 of this agenda. The interim vice-Chair should be in charge until elections in September.

2. Election and appointment of interim Working Group Vice-Chair

Julien Lamothe proposed Jean Marie Robert for the position of interim Vice-Chair. The members accepted and confirmed this election.

3. Review of TACs in the Celtic Sea in light of bilateral EU/UK and Tri-lateral negotiations & comparison with NWWAC advice

Chair: Unfortunately, we have no COM presence to provide information on this as we are still waiting for the finalization of the EU-UK negotiations.

Secretariat: We had included this item on the agenda in the hope that there would have been more clarity regarding the negotiations. Unfortunately, because negotiations are still ongoing, the Commission is being extremely busy with TCA related meetings and could not attend our meeting today. They have advised to submit any queries we might have in writing. There was also an inter-AC meeting in February on Brexit and the ACs were able to submit questions on the topic in advance. NWWAC members were also consulted about this. The minutes of the meeting, including the answers to these questions, are available on the NWWAC website.



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4. Update on Celtic Sea Technical Measures Joint Recommendation

Marianna Monneau (Presidency of the NWW MSG): After the Joint Recommendation on remedial measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea adopted for 2021, Member States must now work on a new one for 2022, with deadline on 1 May 2021. This is a very complex issue due also to the Brexit negotiations, as we still don't know if and how the UK will align with these measures.

The MS have had two Technical Group meetings already and one of the main points discussed is the need for more data on catch composition and on fleets that catch cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea, hence the need of organising a data call before the end of the year. This data then needs to be provided to STECF which would be asked to do an analysis on catch composition, on the effectiveness of spatial/temporal closures and their impact on socio-economic and biologic aspects, and on the effectiveness and impact of the raised fishing line introduced in the Celtic Sea Protection Zone. The draft JR also includes the suggestion that a technical STECF Working Group is established to deal with these catch data. The MS will reach to the COM to see if there is the possibility to organise this working group this year, though the STECF working schedule is already full.

MS also discussed the type of data needed, if some priority species should be selected or if the data call should go through all the species caught in the area, to avoid missing important characteristics of the fleet. Both COM and Ireland mentioned the DAMARA project, which had similar objectives. The Group will take this project into consideration.

The MS Group Presidency distributed the draft JR to the MS and comments are expected around March 15. We also want to have feedback from the COM and are awaiting their communications.

Jean Marie Robert: I would like to thank the MSG for their work so far and also for the direction they have taken because on the one hand we know that Brexit is complicated and many doors are open regarding management, making it difficult moving forward, on the other we have suffered a lot due to a lack of data about the different fleets that are operating in the Celtic Sea. The framework has not been the most adequate: the Technical Measures in 2019 introduced more requirements with the aim of improving selectivity without a proper scientific base and complete information on what the shortfalls might be for example on the cod. I hope that this year we may be able to reinforce the list of applicable measures, reflecting the new scientific advice and the reality of bycatches situation in the Celtic Sea. We really need to have a good scientific foundation to make sure effective measures are enforced and, in that sense, I think we can all support the work carried out by the MS. The DAMARA project has already addressed very important elements: it would be appropriate to run the models prepared by the project with the most recent data and see the results.

Julien Lamothe: I agree with Jean Marie, the adoption of technical measures needs to be supported with sufficient scientific data. We won't be able to move forward based on partial studies without a global analysis of the implementation of these measures and of their impact on the objectives we aim at, i.e. the joint management of these stocks. I believe that the COM needs to understand that putting forward complimentary measures is good, but it should not take away from the objectives. We need to have proper measures if we want to protect the stocks. And we cannot provide specific and informed suggestions on these measures without a proper scientific base.



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Frank Le Barzic: I think the MS are working in the right way. We need to improve the situation in the Celtic Sea, measures are being implemented on top of other measures, making it all very confusing. We did some tests together with the producer organisation Pecheurs de Bretagne and the results are already showing some interesting information, which could constitute a good basis for discussion. For what concerns the timescale to 2022, it looks like we are quite tight. What can be done at the AC level? Would the MS need our inputs on this?

Marianna Monneau: The French Presidency of the Group is still waiting for the MS and COM feedback on the draft JR. We unfortunately do not have a lot of visibility regarding the ongoing TCA negotiations. The timescale will be very important, we may have to adapt it according to the feedback we will receive. At the moment, we have no indications to share.

Julien Lamothe: Just to precise something: the DAMARA project was not looking at cod and whiting, but at haddock, so all the scenarios developed by the project were aiming at protecting haddock. We know that now the situation is totally different. It is true that year after year we try to go a bit further with the measures, but we do not have the right perspective on the real situation regarding the stocks in the Celtic Sea. I think we need to learn from the past to ensure that we can adapt to the current situation.

Puri Fernandez: We are always referring to the Celtic Sea protection zone, but we also have another protection area and maybe the MS can clarify the different measures implemented in this zone for protecting cod and whiting, as mentioned in the TAC & quota Regulation. We would like to know more about discussions ongoing in the MSG, the data that are being collected, and feedbacks from COM and STECF. Moreover, I am not sure that the AC received the draft JR we are talking about and it would be better if the MSG could distribute it to the members, so that we can react better from an integrated point of view.

Marianna Monneau: To give you some context on our work, we are working with measures taken for the Celtic Sea MPA. Since the beginning of this year, we have not been working on other areas in the Celtic Sea and I would be glad to receive new input on TAC & quotas provisions to take a closer look at what you mention. The AC is participating in regional group meetings and right now we are consolidating the different feedbacks. Once the document has been agreed by the Technical Group, we will be able to circulate it to the AC.

Secretariat: Should the AC already consider working on this topic and put some thoughts together at least maybe by looking at previous regulations? While there are all these uncertainties, the deadline is already quite tight considering the time and procedures we need for preparing advice and having same approved. There are only two months left for the MS deadline. If they need time to consider our input, they would also need to receive the AC input well in advance of this.

Marianna Monneau: Any input we might receive from you will be welcome. With regards to the current status of the discussions, I would suggest that the MSG will come back to the AC shortly after 15 March, in order to give you further information. Also, the MSG could provide more information after the Technical Group meeting on 26 march.

Emiel Brouckaert: I agree with this proposal, but with the input given by members today we can already prepare a draft for further comments and then suggest to ExCom to put this forward to the MS. The Secretariat suggested to the MS Group that if there is a specific topic for which AC input is



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needed, the Secretariat should be able to attend the whole meeting, so it would be good to already have a written document by 26 March to assist in the Technical Group meeting.

Chair: To sum up, on 15 March we would have documents from the MS group and the members would provide feedbacks prior to 26 March, when the Technical Group meeting is scheduled. After this meeting, the members of this group will review the outcomes of the discussion with the MS and consider scheduling another Celtic Sea Group meeting before 1 May (deadline for MS to deliver the JR) to further work on the AC input to this JR.

Marianna Monneau: I would like to clarify that we will have the feedbacks from MS and COM on 15 March and we will be able to send you something around 16/17 March.

ACTION: Secretariat to consolidate in a document all the comments on Celtic Sea Technical Measures that members put forward during the meeting. This should be circulated to WG2 members for further comments.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate any document/feedback received by the MSG on the Celtic Sea measures (expected on 16/17 March), for members to provide comments.

ACTION: Secretariat to combine all the inputs received in a paper for discussion with the MSG at the Technical Group meeting on 26 March (Secretariat and ExCom Chair attending).

ACTION: Secretariat and WG2 Chair to consider the need for a meeting after 26 March, for further discussion and preparation of advice.

5. Input on how to improve the functioning of the NWWAC

Secretariat: As you know, this was discussed at the Horizontal Working Group meeting yesterday and will be discussed again at ExCom on Friday. The Secretariat will make sure that your comments will be brought to the attention of the ExCom.

Puri Fernandez: I would like to know the groups opinion on the topic raised in the HWG regarding the topic of third county observers, specifically from the UK. The COM specified that UK observers could be invited if a topic needs their assistance. Since we do not know the UK position yet on the Technical Measures in the Celtic Sea, does the group think we need to hear the views of UK organisations and invite them to a meeting?

Jean Marie Robert: The topic is very complicated, but AC meetings are public and everyone can ask to attend, which implies that we can have observers that can represent the UK. However, this is a problem as we are talking about trust in the information we are exchanging, and this may mean that we are not disclosing everything in this European forum. We could have discussions with the UK observers, but then agree on NWWAC decisions in a separate moment.

Jose Beltran: This is a rather delicate issue which has also been raised in other ACs. I understand that UK representatives participate as observers, but I think there should be a different format. It would be more about bringing together some form of a Focus Group or of a workshop between the AC and the UK to assess specific topics, but not to have them as regular guests in our meetings. There are



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issues of confidentiality and we should not feel limited when discussing certain issues. We could meet twice a year for example to discuss issues of interest for both parties, but all other meetings should continue without the participation of UK observers.

Julien Lamothe: Regarding the participation of the UK organisation, I agree with what has been said, we have to find the right format. We know that the UK does not need to stick to current EU regulations, but since we fish in the same areas we will have interactions with them. The “observers” status is quite ambiguous, as it is not legitimate for them to be included in the debate. If it is necessary to keep them engaged in the AC, we will need to do so in a forum which will allow a balanced conversation between UK and EU fishermen. We also have to make sure that the COM is aware of the AC member organisations representatives, to make sure that we have the proper structures in the EU and find the proper UK representatives for this debate. Regarding the functioning of the NWWAC, it depends on the members, we need to be more proactive to move forward once we have the information that we need. We need to prepare our information prior to the meeting so discussions can focus on the technical aspects and have elements that are interesting to the MS or the COM.

Chair: Concerning AC member organisations and their representative, some time ago we had prepared a declaration on who we were representing, so all members were properly registered. I am not sure if this needs to be done for observers too, so that we can have a public register?

Secretariat: All our ex-members were put on our observers list last year. However, they need to have specific invitations to attend our meetings. As part of the TCA, a Specialised Fisheries Committee will be established but we have no clear idea on the role of the ACs in this forum. Also, another idea that has been put forward is that the UK establishes a structure similar to the ACs, with which we might get in contact. However, we still don't have information about this. From an overall point of view, it is important that all AC's members agree on how the collaboration with ex-members from the UK should continue. In any case, we will inform the ExCom of today's comments. Changing subject, at the HWG yesterday the Chair of the Focus Group Brexit presented some proposals for restructuring the NWWAC after Brexit. These are now available on the members area of our website and we are kindly asking members to provide comments on the topic before the ExCom meeting on Friday.

6. Review of progress, summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted (Chair)

1	Secretariat to consolidate in a document all the comments on Celtic Sea Technical Measures that members put forward during the meeting. This should be circulated to WG2 members for further comments
2	Secretariat to circulate any document/feedback received by the MSG on the Celtic Sea measures (expected on 16/17 March), for members to provide comments.
3	Secretariat to combine all the inputs received in a paper for discussion with the MSG at the Technical Group meeting on 26 March (Secretariat and ExCom Chair attending).
4	Secretariat and WG2 Chair to consider the need for a meeting after 26 March, for further discussion and preparation of advice



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7. List of participants

Name	Organisation
Caroline Gamblin	CNPMEM
Dominic Rihan	NWW Member States Group (IE)
Egon Patteew	NWW Member States Group (BE)
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Enda Connelly	IIMRO
Erwan Quemeneur	CDPMEM 29
Franck Le Barzic	Cobrenord
Jean Marie Robert (Vice-Chair)	Pêcheurs de Bretagne
John Lynch	IFO
John Ward	IFPO
Jose Beltran	Organización de Productores Pesqueros de Lugo
Juan Carlos Corras Arias	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
Julien Lamothe	ANOP
Marianne Monneau	NWW Member States Group (FR)
Matilde Vallerani	Secretariat
Mo Mathies	Secretariat
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO
Puri Fernandez	ANASOL
Suso Lourido Garcia (Chair)	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. OPP-77