



Ms Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission Rue Josef II 99
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Dun Laoghaire, 09 December 2022

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Subject: Display of fisheries management related data

In 2020, the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) published its first Fisheries Management Chart, a paper-based approach to visualizing fisheries management measures in the North Western Waters ([link](#)). This chart was updated in 2021 in order to reflect the changes in TACs and quotas as well as updates to technical measures and requirements under the Landing Obligation ([link](#)).

While this paper-based tool is considered extremely useful within the NWWAC as well as by other parties interested in fisheries management in the North Western Waters, NWWAC members felt that an interactive web-based tool would assist in their own work. Such an interactive web-based chart is also considered useful for fishers while at sea. Therefore, the NWWAC embarked on the development of a WebGIS tool and initiated a scoping study in 2021 to identify the exact needs of its members. Using the results of this study, the development project was assigned covering a variety of data layers of interest to active fishers, fisheries managers and other interested stakeholders.

During the development of this tool, it became apparent that for European Commission publications relating to fisheries management, such as the spatial extent of technical measures including closures, exemptions etc., the translation of the information into a WebGIS tool appears to be very complicated. Currently legislative texts are published in formats requiring information to be extracted manually for inclusion in a web-based tool.

For a more accessible approach, information, and especially data related to geographical locations, would be better displayed in an agreed, standardised table format, using a tool such as Microsoft Excel. In addition, for spatially defined data, and especially where coordinates are used, the provision of shapefiles would provide immediate and easy access for the various providers of online mapping tools to access this data. The NWWAC believes that such an adaptation to publications would also contribute to increased compliance with the relevant regulations.





The NWWAC kindly requests the Commission to look into alternatives for displaying data and information in regulatory texts for fisheries management and would be happy to assist the Commission in assessing how to best progress this issue.

In the annex you will find some examples and a spreadsheet used in development of the NWWAC WebGIS tool, which can be considered when looking into our request.

We thank you for your continued collaboration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Emiel Brouckaert
NWWAC Chairman





Annex

In some cases, coordinates are not included in the legislation, which hinders both translation into a chart or map, as well as compliance. An example of this can be found in Annex 1 of Regulation ([EU 1380/2013](#)):

2. Coastal waters of ireland

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Geographical area	Species	Importance or particular characteristics
Irish coast (6 to 12 nautical miles)		
1. Erris Head north-west Sybil Point west	Demersal	Unlimited
	Nephrops	Unlimited
2. Mizen Head south Stags south	Demersal	Unlimited
	Nephrops	Unlimited
	Mackerel	Unlimited

We would like to commend the Commission on the way the coordinates are displayed in the annexes to ([EU 2022/1614](#)), though to make this data truly accessible with minimal processing needed, we would recommend that the Excel/shapefiles are made available for download in conjunction with the legislation.

Below are two examples from different pieces of legislation, both inserted into a table following the same format. This provides a demonstration of how data could be displayed in tabular form to ease spatial visualisation.

2019/1241: ANNEX VI: NORTH WESTERN WATERS: Part B

Type of regulation	Name	ICES areas	Months	Gear type	Mesh size	Description	Species/stock
Mesh Sizes	Mesh size derogations	7f, 7g, 7h, 7j1, 7j2	All	Seine nets, Trawls	At least 100 mm	1.3. This point applies by way of derogation from points 1.1 and 1.2 1.3.1. The following...	N/A





2020/2015: CHAPTER II: SURVIVABILITY EXEMPTIONS IN NORTH-WESTERN WATERS: Article 8

Type of regulation	Name	ICES areas	Months	Gear type	Mesh size	Description	Species/ stock
Survivability Exemptions	Survivability exemption for pelagic species	7e, 7f	All	Ring nets	N/A	6. The survivability exemption provided for in Article 15(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 shall apply to catches of mackerel and herring...	Mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>) Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>)

These accompany the Excel standardisation template, attached, that has been used for the development of the NWWAC WebGIS tool, which can also provide a useful template for presenting legislative information.

