



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/C.5/AA/PV/ac/Ares(2023)5231372

Dear Mr Emiel Brouckaert (Chair of the NWWAC),
Dear Mr Kenn Skau Fischer (Chair of the NSAC),

Thank you for the letter of 02 May 2023 regarding the joint advice provided by the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) and by the North Sea Advisory Council Advice (NSAC) on skates and rays management.

Your letter provides useful background information on this subject and briefly summarises the main conclusions reached at the “*NWWAC/NSAC Joint Workshop on Skates & Rays Management*” held in Brussels on 09 February 2023, proposing several recommendations in terms of harmonisation on setting TACs (total allowable catches), establishment of sub-TACs for certain species, prioritisation of diverse research topics, best practices and socio-economic impacts.

This was a very interesting and highly productive workshop, attended by relevant stakeholders from the fishing sector, NGOs, research institutes, Advisory Councils, Member States’ fisheries administrations and the European Commission, joining efforts and working together on this subject of shared interest. Moreover, I also recognise the timely interlinkage between your efforts and the ongoing discussions between the EU and the UK, aiming to reach common approaches to skates and rays management, to be adopted both in the short- and in the medium/long-term.

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In this regard, and as already indicated by DG MARE colleagues at the recent Inter-AC Brexit Forum on 15 May 2023, both Parties intend to agree on a common approach to the setting of group TACs in time for the next annual consultations. Your specific recommendations have been very helpful here. We also intend to prepare a roadmap to set out the additional management elements that should be considered when developing medium- to long-term alternatives to the current group TACs. The additional recommendations you have provided will feed into these reflections.

As already stated on previous occasions, the Commission acknowledges the relevant information and advice provided by the NWWAC and NSAC, further confirming your commitment to improve fisheries management in the respective sea basins and the sustainability of the fishing sector.

Should you have any questions on this reply, please contact Mr Vincent GUERRE, coordinator for the Advisory Councils (Vincent.GUERRE1@ec.europa.eu; +32 229-57432), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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