



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
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Ms Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Jozef II-straat 99
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Dun Laoghaire, 30 June 2025

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Subject: NWWAC Advice on the Vision for Agriculture and Food 2040 and the proposed Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) has taken note of the publication of the Vision for Agriculture and Food 2040 and warmly welcomes the recognition it gives to fishers as custodians of nature and as essential actors in ensuring European food security and sustainable food systems. This acknowledgment is both timely and important.

We also welcome the announcement by the European Commission of a forthcoming Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040. We believe this initiative would offer an essential opportunity to provide strategic direction for the sector, ensure its long-term competitiveness and sustainability through innovation, promote job creation and blue foods, and address the increasingly pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges that fishing communities face.

However, we regret that the Vision for Agriculture and Food 2040 did not contain concrete proposals or commitments specifically aimed at the fisheries sector. We count on this omission being corrected in the upcoming Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture, which we hope will offer a comprehensive and robust response to the sector's current needs and future ambitions.

Several of the measures outlined in the agriculture-focused Vision to improve the attractiveness of the farming sector are highly relevant to the fisheries sector as well, in particular:

- efforts to support producers in accessing fair returns from the market
- to provide fair and well-targeted public support
- to leverage entrepreneurial potential and new income streams are also necessary to support European fishers
- investing in the green and digital transition of the sector
- rewarding ecosystem services provided by fishers, and
- ensuring that future generations are attracted to the profession by offering decent working conditions and a viable future.



The NWWAC recalls several advice submissions in recent years which address the above issues, including

- NWWAC advice on the Energy Transition Partnership ([link](#))
- Joint NWWAC, PelAC and NSAC Advice on the implementation of the EU Fisheries Control Regulation ([link](#))
- NWWAC Advice on the CFP Regulation Evaluation ([link](#))
- Multi-AC letter on the future of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) ([link](#))
- NWWAC's feedback to future fisher profiles by the "Fishers of the Future" foresight study ([link](#))
- NSAC/NWWAC Advice on Generational Renewal ([link](#))
- NWWAC advice on Communication COM(2023) 103 final ([link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the Communication from the Commission "On the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector" COM(2023) 100 final ([link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the Marine Action Plan ([link](#))
- NWWAC/NSAC advice on social aspects in fisheries ([link](#))
- NWWAC response to public consultation on a sustainable EU food system ([link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the impact of climate change on fisheries in the North Western Waters ([link](#))

To ensure the competitiveness and resilience of the European fisheries sector within an increasingly challenging global landscape, the NWWAC considers it vital to promote fairer global competition, reduce critical dependencies, and enhance the sector's ability to adapt to climate change. It is also essential to improve risk and crisis management capacities, simplify and reduce administrative burdens, strengthen the resilience of the EU seafood market, and ensure that decarbonisation objectives are pursued alongside efforts to maintain the economic viability of the sector. Additionally, improving consumer awareness on the quality and sustainability of EU seafood is essential to support informed choices, educate on diversifying fish species consumption and address public perceptions of the fishing sector. Furthermore, the ecological transition must take full account of economic and implementation challenges faced by operators, while at the same time preserving healthy ocean ecosystems and conserving biodiversity.

The NWWAC would like to reiterate its call for fisheries to be treated on an equal footing with agriculture in EU policy. We appreciate the recognition of the fisheries sector within the Ocean Pact, as the NWWAC had recommended¹, and now urge the European Commission to ensure that the upcoming Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040 is clearly and explicitly linked to the broader food policy debate. In this regard, we support the establishment of a dedicated Blue Food Initiative to strengthen the position of aquatic foods as a cornerstone of European food security and a transition to sustainable food systems.

At the same time, we believe that the Ocean Pact could have more explicitly connected fisheries with the Clean Industrial Deal and the innovation and funding mechanisms it entails. Strengthening these

¹ NWWAC Advice on the European Ocean Pact ([link](#))





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connections will be essential to ensuring that the modernisation and competitiveness of the fisheries sector is properly addressed, and that operators are equipped with accessible, appropriate funding tools to support sustainability efforts. We call for this gap will be addressed in the upcoming Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040.

Finally, we underline the importance of ensuring coherence between the proposed Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), especially given the Ocean Pact's reference to the potential revision of the CFP. Any future approach must remain grounded in inclusive, transparent governance, with the Advisory Councils playing a central role in stakeholders' engagement.

The NWWAC stands ready to contribute actively to the development of the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040 and looks forward to continued dialogue with the European Commission on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Philippe
NWWAC Chair



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