



Ms Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Jozef II-straat 99
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Dun Laoghaire, 03 February 2026

Subject: NWWAC response - European Ocean Act: Call for evidence for an evaluation and impact assessment run in parallel

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this call for evidence. Introduced in 2025, the European Ocean Pact is a comprehensive strategy to unify ocean governance under a single framework. A critical component of the Pact is the commitment to propose a legally binding Ocean Act by 2027 which aims to improve the coherence and effective implementation of maritime governance in the EU by building on the revision of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (Directive 2014/89/EU).

In this call for evidence, the Commission identifies several problems the Ocean Act initiative aims to tackle grouped under the headings of (1) Ocean Governance and (2) Climate, pollution and environmental pressures.

Following review of the information provided and based on the recommendations made by this AC over the past years, the **NWWAC strongly supports the parallel running of an evaluation and impact assessment** in order to ensure that the Ocean Act is built on real-world evidence as provided by regional authorities, scientific institutes and most importantly stakeholders, rather than theoretical goals. This approach would help improve on and avoid replication of various shortcomings of previous policies.

Since its inception, the NWWAC has addressed issues under the identified problem headings and provided consensus advice to the Commission and the NWW Member States Group. Therefore, the NWWAC wishes to recall its main advice papers and **recommends that the issues raised, and recommendations made in these are reviewed and evaluated by the Commission** as part of this call for evidence.

- NWWAC advice on Fishing Opportunities 2026 (August 2025, [link](#))
- NSAC/NWWAC Advice on STECF Work on the Social Data in Fisheries (August 2025, [link](#))
- NWWAC Advice on the Vision for Agriculture and Food 2040 and the proposed Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040 (June 2025, [link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the Energy Transition Partnership for EU Fisheries and Aquaculture (June 2025, [link](#))



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- NWWAC/PelAC Advice on the impact of Offshore Renewable Energy Developments on commercial fisheries (June 2025, [link](#))
- NWWAC Advice on the CFP Regulation Evaluation (April 2025, [link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the European Ocean Pact (March 2025, [link](#))
- Joint NWWAC/PelAC advice to the NWW Member States on renewable energy developments in the marine space (February 2025, [link](#))
- NWWAC feedback to the Commission's call for evidence for an evaluation/fitness check: Common Fisheries Policy evaluation (September 2024, [link](#))
- Joint NWWAC/PelAC letter calling for increased policy coherence between environment and fisheries dimensions (June 2024, [link](#))
- NSAC/NWWAC Advice on Recreational Fisheries (January 2024, [link](#))
- NWWAC advice on Communication COM(2023) 103 final (December 2023, [link](#))
- Joint-AC letter on ACs stakeholder input (December 2023, [link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the Communication from the Commission "On the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector" COM(2023) 100 final (November 2023, [link](#))
- NWWAC advice on the Marine Action Plan (August 2023, [link](#))
- NWWAC letter to DG MARE on climate change implications in the scientific assessment for cod stocks in the Celtic Seas ecoregion (May 2023, [link](#))
- NWWAC/NSAC advice on social aspects in fisheries (December 2022, [link](#))
- NWWAC response to public consultation on a sustainable EU food system (July 2022, [link](#))
- NSAC/NWWAC Advice on the MSFD Review (March 2022, [link](#))

The above list represents a selection of the most relevant advice papers submitted by the NWWAC since 2022 and is by no means exhaustive as multiple advice submissions have been made each year since 2005. All advice submissions can be found on the NWWAC website [here](#).

In addition, the NWWAC emphasises that the concept of regionalisation must be reinforced in any future structure aiming at bringing cohesion to maritime governance in Europe. European waters are incredibly diverse, and management must be tailored to the unique biological and socio-economic realities of different sea basins.

The NWWAC stands ready to continue its involvement with and contribution to the work of the European Commission in their efforts to improve the governance and management of the European seas, an in particular by contributing to the proposed public consultation as part of this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Philippe
NWWAC Chair



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