

Ms Marissa Giesen
Mr Peter Paul Mertens
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Team Fisheries
Bezuidenhoutseweg 73
2594 AC
The Hague
The Netherlands

Dun Laoghaire, 10 February 2026

Dear Ms Giesen and Mr Mertens,

Subject: NWWAC Letter to the North Western Waters Member States Group “Amendment to the Technical Measures Regulation for reopening the Channel scallop stock recovery area on the first Monday after 15 October”

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) has for several years discussed and provided advice on sustainable management measures for scallop fisheries, in particular via its Focus Group Scallop. The Focus Group brings together members from France, Ireland and Belgium, representing scallop fishers operating in the Channel.

Over the years, the NWWAC has produced multiple pieces of advice¹ and in 2024 also organised a dedicated webinar² prior to participation in the joint EU–UK workshop on scallop management in September 2024. In addition, in 2025 the Focus Group Scallop met twice to discuss possible improvements to management measures and the need for a harmonised approach with the UK. This is fundamental to ensuring the sustainable exploitation of scallop stocks and the socio-economic stability and interests of EU fishing operators targeting this species, most of whom are small-scale fishers. In light of the growing economic importance of the scallop fishery in the Channel area, the NWWAC strongly recommends the swift establishment of an effective management framework for the fishery that ensures fair competition and protects EU coastal communities dependent on scallop fisheries.

In addition, the Focus Group Scallop is closely following the development of the EU-UK King Scallop Multi-Year Strategy, particularly in view of an upcoming stakeholder meeting, which is envisaged to take place once the scientific report has been published.

During the last Focus Group meeting³, held on 04 December 2025, members discussed the need to amend the following measure of the Technical Measures Regulation⁴, related to the reopening of the stock recovery area in the Channel.

Annex VI (North Western Waters), part C – Closed or restricted areas, point 11.1:

11.1. Stock recovery area for the king scallop stock in Union waters of ICES division 7d in the eastern English Channel south of latitude 49°42' N and up to the limit of the French territorial waters:

(a) Each year, from 15 May to 15 October, it shall be prohibited to conduct any king scallop fishing with dredges.

¹ [NWWAC response to NWW MSG Joint Recommendation on King Scallop in the Channel](#) (15 April 2021); [NWWAC response to UK consultation on a fisheries management plan for scallop](#) (02 October 2023).

² [NWWAC Webinar Scallop Management in the Channel](#) (19 June 2024)

³ Minutes FG Scallop, 04 December 2025: [NWWAC Focus Group Scallop](#)

⁴ [EUR-Lex - 02019R1241-20250821 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) (Consolidated text)

The **NWWAC** recommends the following amendment, marked in red:

Annex VI (North Western Waters), part C – Closed or restricted areas, point 11.1:

11.1. Stock recovery area for the king scallop stock in Union waters of ICES division 7d in the eastern English Channel south of latitude 49°42' N and up to the limit of the French territorial waters:

(a) Each year, from 15 May to **00.01 hours on the first Monday after** 15 October, it shall be prohibited to conduct any king scallop fishing with dredges.

Rationale for the proposed amendment

The Focus Group Scallop recognises the importance of the stock recovery area and the related seasonal closure. However, the NWWAC recommends that biological considerations should be better aligned with operational ones. The proposed amendment is therefore driven primarily by operational, control, and management-consistency reasons with the biological objectives remaining unaffected.

The main reasons for the proposed amendment are as follows:

1. **Alignment with established national practices:** scallop fisheries traditionally reopen on a Monday rather than on a fixed calendar date, as fleet organisation, operational systems, and first-sale logistics are structured around Mondays. Reopening exactly on 16 October, which can fall on any day of the week, disrupts these long-established practices and poses operational challenges for the sector, while limiting the risk of tensions or conflicts between fleets.
2. **Avoidance of a “race to fish”:** a mid-week reopening may trigger an immediate “race to fish”, whereas reopening on a Monday allows for a more orderly and planned restart of the fishery.
3. **Improved effort management, safety and compliance:** reopening on a Monday is easier to communicate to control authorities, improves legal clarity for both operators and control authorities, and reduces the risk of inadvertent non-compliance.
4. **Formalisation of a precedent of successful consultation:** The proposed amendment is in line with a gentleman's agreement implemented during the previous campaign between French, Irish and British fishing operators. This concerted approach was carried out satisfactorily, without any major difficulties or identified negative impacts, and contributed to the peaceful and coordinated management of the area. Formalising this practice would provide legal certainty for a framework that has already been tried and tested and accepted by professionals on both sides of the Channel.

For the above reasons, **the NWWAC requests that the North Western Waters Member States Group propose to the European Commission the development of a delegated act under the Technical Measures Regulation, in order to amend point 11.1 of Annex VI (North Western Waters), part C.**

In conclusion, the NWWAC emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement and the integration of local knowledge in the development and adoption of technical and remedial measures, as highlighted in its recent NWWAC Advice on strengthening the role of the Advisory Councils in developing technical and remedial measures⁵. The Advisory Council remains fully committed to contributing constructively, particularly during the preparatory phase, to ensure that policies are

⁵ [NWWAC Advice on strengthening the role of the Advisory Councils in developing technical and remedial measures](#) (16 December 2025)



practical, effective, and informed by local expertise. The NWWAC also reaffirms its commitment to close collaboration with the North Western Waters Member States Group, supporting transparent, participatory, and evidence-based decision-making, and reiterates its full support for all subsequent steps in the implementation of this proposed measure.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Philippe, NWWAC Chair