



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.C5/CR/vr

Subject: NWWAC Advice on strengthening the role of the Advisory Councils in developing technical and remedial measures. Ares(2025)11520570

Dear Ms Philippe,

I would like to thank the Northwestern Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) for its detailed advice of 16 December 2025 on strengthening the role of Advisory Councils in the development of technical and remedial measures. The Commission values the continued constructive engagement by the NWWAC and acknowledges its extensive work in distilling stakeholder input and advising on fishing matters.

The Commission recognises the significant contribution made by the NWWAC since the adoption of the Technical Measures Regulation and the Western Waters Multiannual Management Plan. The NWWAC's recommendations, formal advice, questionnaire responses, and participation as observers in STECF working groups demonstrate a sustained and valuable commitment to evidence-based and inclusive fisheries governance.

Stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of effective fisheries management. The legal framework under Article 18 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation and Article 29 of the Technical Measures Regulation provides for the consultation of Advisory Councils when Member States prepare joint recommendations under regionalisation. The Commission notes the NWWAC's concerns regarding the timing of such consultations and will continue to encourage Member States to engage Advisory Councils as early as possible when developing joint recommendations and, to the extent possible, to allow sufficient time to consider stakeholders input. Moreover, the Commission informs Advisory Councils when a public consultation of relevance is published on the 'Have your Say' portal, both for their contribution as an Advisory Council as well as for circulation among their members.

Ms Alexandra Philippe
Chairwoman of NWWAC
Dun Loughaire, Ireland
info@nwwac.ie

The Commission takes note of the NWWAC's recommendation that Advisory Councils be systematically involved in the development of technical and remedial measures, including when such measures are adopted in the context of TAC and quota negotiations and consultations on shared stocks.

The Commission adopted remedial measures as a management and legal requirement following the ICES advice for 2026 that demonstrates the severe deterioration of a stock, and in line with orientations discussed with the Member States ahead of the consultations with the UK and Norway. Every year, the Commission engages actively with Advisory Councils once the ICES advice is delivered and ahead of the preparation of the respective EU positions, which is a key phase for stakeholders input prior to these negotiations.

Where technical or remedial measures are negotiated with third countries, the Commission acts on the basis of the EU position agreed by the Council, in close coordination with the Member States. Past exchanges with the NWWAC on these stocks, including on spurdog or skates and rays, have informed the EU position on this year's measures under the EU-UK consultations. Dedicated meetings with Advisory Councils have been regularly organised for this purpose, for example in the context of Northern Shelf cod.

The outcome of the consultations will be presented to the Advisory Councils at the next opportunity and will serve as the basis for advancing the work. Continued cooperation from the Advisory Councils will be essential to this process.

The Commission remains open to improving the way engagement is conducted. As we embark on the implementation work and follow-up under the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, it is important to ensure that commitments in the agreed records translate into concrete action early in the year and that the close cooperation with the Advisory Councils is maintained, including to support the rebuilding of stocks in critical condition.

The Commission welcomes the NWWAC's commitment to constructive cooperation and looks forward to continuing its close collaboration with the NWWAC and with stakeholders to support transparent, participatory, and evidence-based decision-making in the development and implementation of technical and remedial measures.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA