



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS  
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

EP(21)21

Mr Guus Pastoor  
President  
Market Advisory Council  
Rue de la Science 10  
1000, Brussels  
Belgium

**Subject: Participation of UK stakeholders in the Market Advisory Council**

Brussels, 24 March 2021

Dear Mr Pastoor,

On behalf of the European fishing sector represented by Europêche, we would like to bring to your attention the latest correspondence with the European Commission concerning the participation of UK stakeholders in the Advisory Councils (ACs)<sup>1</sup>. In light of the clarifications provided by Director General Vitcheva and the minutes from the General Assembly held on 30 January 2020 (MAC elections)<sup>2</sup>, we believe it clear that the representatives from UK organisations (including those representing UK interests in EU-based consortia, which are AC members) should no longer be allowed to serve as chairs or working group chairs in the MAC.

The Brexit transition period has come to an end on 31 December 2020. From that date onwards, the UK, as a full sovereign country, is no longer bound to the EU's rules. There is no doubt that the UK will therefore pursue its own targets and objectives that may differ or even work against the interest of the EU and its stakeholders.

Against this background, we concur with the European Commission that ACs need to reassess their membership and structural organisation. Particularly, and we quote, *“Concretely, organisations from the UK industry and from UK other interest groups should no longer be members of the ACs. Similarly, it seems appropriate that representatives from UK organisations (including those representing UK interests in EU-based consortia, which are AC members) should no longer be allowed to serve as chairs or working group chairs.”*

It remains to be clarified (not explained in DG MARE's letter) how to deal with EU organisations with members and representatives from the UK and, by extension, from other non-EU countries within the framework of the Advisory Councils.

Needless to say, for Europêche it is fundamental that the experts representing the interest of the MAC in their specific roles and functions must be solely and unequivocally guided by EU interests. This is particularly true for working groups with a competence on Brexit-related issues and trade relationships with third countries, such as Working Group 2. Persons having a contractual relationship

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<sup>1</sup> Ref. Ares(2021)1960413 – 18/03/2021

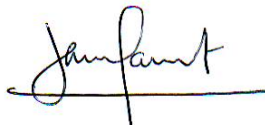
<sup>2</sup> [https://marketac.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MAC\\_GA\\_Minutes\\_30.01.20-EN.pdf](https://marketac.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MAC_GA_Minutes_30.01.20-EN.pdf)

with an UK organisation will certainly be faced with a conflict of interest in their role as chairs on a permanent basis. This may also trigger the reluctance from the European Commission to share sensitive information with the MAC stakeholders as highlighted by NGOs.

Furthermore, it is our understanding that to date the MAC is the sole EU Fisheries Advisory Council with a UK citizen holding a chairmanship position. All UK citizens who assumed in the past these roles and responsibilities decided to step down either before or during the Brexit transition period. This is of course regardless of their invaluable support and beneficial contribution to sustainable fisheries policies since the creation of the ACs.

In light of the above, as suggested by the President of the MAC during the past elections, *“the MAC could elect another member as Chair of Working Group 2, if the situation changes at the end of the transition period”*. We cannot but agree with this recommendation and request as soon as possible the call for new elections for the chairmanship of Working Group 2 of the MAC.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Javier Garat', written over a horizontal line.

Javier Garat  
President of Européche