

Joint AC meeting on the future functioning of the ACs

13 April 2017

The Hague

The meeting on the future functioning of the ACs, organised by the Pelagic Advisory Council, followed up on the meeting organised in Dublin by the North Western Waters Advisory Council on the 13 October 2017. The aim of this series of meetings is to discuss the future of the ACs in a post-Brexit scenario.

Introduction by Mr Aguiar Machado, Director General of DG MARE

DG MARE's Director General, Mr Aguiar Machado, stressed the challenging nature of Brexit for the composition of the Advisory Councils. The Commission is exploring 1. the role of ACs after Brexit in terms of membership and whether members from the UK should be considered representatives of third countries; 2. the location of the North Sea Advisory Council, for which the Commission welcomes any input.

During the transitional period, fisheries will be dealt with on a status quo basis and provisions and conditions of access of water resources and markets, as well as the applicability of the CFP, will remain in force until the end of 2020. During this period, UK will not be a member yet their fleet will have to abide to CFP rules and they will count with representation in the EU. UK will also be able to negotiate their membership within RFMOs if they wish so. With regards to quotas, UK will sit at the Council of ministers but will no longer be a member as from December: they will be listened on the negotiations but will not be able to take any further decision.

Mr Aguiar Machado stated that it is in everyone's interest to have good relationship with UK as they have shares with the EU. With regards to the negotiations, they will aim at trying to consolidate principles that have been agreed and shared among members of the EU, UK included, until now: MSY, ecosystem based approach, multiannual management plans, alignment with environmental policies, strong discard policies...

In terms of regionalisation the future membership and the participation of UK representatives in the ACs, especially MAC and aquaculture due to their horizontal nature, needs to be discussed.

Presentation on the history of the ACs (Marta Ballesteros, CETMAR)

Ms Ballesteros gave an overview of the establishment and path the Advisory Councils have followed. (Presentation [here](#)).

In CETMAR's opinion, both the internal functioning of the ACs and the CFP governance system should be improved to ensure the robustness of the ACs and avoid the tendency to frustration that the ACs are experiencing at the moment (mostly regarding processes of elaboration of discard plans and challenges in terms of membership).

Some suggestions made by Ms Ballesteros during her presentation were, among others, to count on multiannual budgets for the ACs, to establish capacity building among members, to organise annual de-briefings with ACs to discuss the follow up of their advice and to expand the scope to marine and maritime affairs. ACs could also give voice to other bodies rather than replicating existing forums.

Finally she stressed the opportunity the Brexit entails for ACs in terms of their added value in monitoring and responding to the progress of negotiations, facilitating also scientist communication and input. In the new



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institutional arrangement a dual nature for ACs could be explored, as ACs within the EU but also as a Regional Stakeholder Organisation (opening the door for participation of Norway, UK...)

Attendees stressed the following items:

- ACs should be active observers in regional groups
- More money should be allocated to secretariats rather than rapporteurs and chairs
- Possibility of financing differently ACs as the challenges in terms of language and location of meetings are diverse

Outcome of the BREXIT questionnaire

The Pelagic AC presented the outcome of the Brexit questionnaire previously distributed to members of all ACs. (Presentation [here](#)).

Attendees stressed the following matters:

- All ACs could distribute the questionnaire and present the outcomes during the next Joint AC meeting
- The expectations lied on the ACs should be clarified so as to explore the possible interest of UK representatives in being part of the councils
- The position of UK towards EU nationals with regards to their consultation process also needs to be addressed
- A better consultation process was requested to Commission with regards to deadlines given for advices to be drafted
- It was suggested to draft a list of possible solutions/options for the future
- The structure of European organisations of the ACs also needs to be addressed: whether UK members will continue being members of those organisations
- Commission invited ACs to provide their inputs on the participation of UK members in order to influence from the beginning a possible modification of the CFP/future funds. The active participation of the ACs in this regard was praised by some attendees
- Next meeting will take place around November, organised by the LDAC with the help of the MAC

End of the meeting