



Ms Charlina Vitcheva

Director General
Directorate General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

20 July 2022

Joint-AC letter on bringing fisheries matters through to Specialized Committee for Fisheries (SCF) via existing advisory bodies (ACs)

Dear Director-General Ms Vitcheva,

This is a follow-up to our previous two letters¹² concerning stakeholder engagement in future management and governance post-Brexit, and Commission's response³ to these. In its letter the Commission states that although the TCA does not provide for direct stakeholder participation in Specialised Committees, it stands ready to explore possible avenues to ensure and strengthen the cooperation and engagement with stakeholders in the context of the SCF. The response suggested that DG Mare is ready to explore strengthened cooperation with the Advisory Councils, observing the principles of TCA and keeping in mind the stakeholder roles under the CFP.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for the positive stance towards just and inclusive engagement of stakeholders in the important topic of sustainable management of shared resources with the UK following their exit from the EU. We take it as a positive development that the Commission attended our meetings on 5 May and 2 June 2022, and contributed to the discussions with important details concerning developments in the SCF. The Commission's direct engagement has proven to be particularly welcomed by the members most affected by Brexit and critical for further endeavours to set the course of the Inter-AC Brexit Forum, the establishment of which your services clearly supported.

¹ Joint-AC letter on stakeholder participation in future management and governance structures post-Brexit from 30 April 2021 [link](#)

² Joint-AC letter on stakeholder engagement in Specialised Fisheries Committee from 4 April 2022 [link](#)

³ Commission's response to joint-AC letter on stakeholder engagement in SCF from 4 April 2022 [link](#)



On this occasion, the five constituting ACs of the Inter-AC Brexit Forum, namely the Pelagic AC, the North Western Waters AC, the Market AC, the Long Distance AC and the North Sea AC, would like to rise to this opportunity and take on the role, through the Forum, of a vehicle for structuring and transmitting stakeholder input to the SCF, and a forum that can be used by the Commission to centralise their communication with the involved Advisory Councils.

While some fisheries organisations are represented in the Domestic Advisory Group through EAPO, it is imperative that fisheries related matters relevant to the mentioned ACs are brought up and discussed within these multi-stakeholder bodies – individual/regional issues through respective ACs, and overarching topics through the Inter-AC Brexit Forum. To this end the Inter-AC Brexit Forum developed clear Terms of Reference and a list of horizontal topics in the interest of and dealt with by this body. As noted in our previous communication we will limit ourselves to input on management, scientific and market matters, data collection issues and will not hold discussions on quota allocations, exchange of fishing possibilities vis á vis the UK, both on bilateral and on trilateral level including Norway, or Coastal State negotiations.

At the meeting on 2 June 2022, the Commission endorsed further institutionalization of the Forum after initial imminent matters are resolved through the current informal framework. Your services indicated that further formalization of procedures could be launched after the summer. We remain open to establishing a framework for formal consultations on specific topics prior to relevant SCF meetings. As the Forum evolves organically from one meeting to the next, its structure and format are being determined through iterative, consensus-based processes.

One of the resolutions of the last meeting relates to the scheduling of Forum meetings within one week after every SCF WG meeting to allow for timely transmission of relevant information on SCF procedures through the Commission’s SCF debrief. In this view, we welcome Commission’s services to engage with the Inter-AC Brexit forum again in **September⁴ 2022**, virtually.

The members of the Inter-AC Brexit Forum reiterate their plea for structured stakeholder engagement in SCF proceedings and invite the Commission to actively support our ambitions towards transparent, just and sustainable management of shared resources.

Thank you for your consideration of the above. We look forward to further positive engagement on this matter.

⁴ *Date and time to be determined.*



Yours sincerely,

Jesper Raakjaer
Chairman Pelagic AC

Emiel Brouckaert
Chairman North Western Waters AC

Guus Pastoor
Chairman Market AC

Iván López van der Veen
Chairman Long Distance AC

Kenn Skau Fischer
Chairman North Sea AC