

Mr Costas Kadis,
Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans
Rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels

CC:
Ms Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General, DG MARE
Rue Joseph II 99, 1049 Brussels

Brussels, 3 March 2026

Subject: Relationship between the Advisory Councils and the European Ocean Board

Dear Commissioner Kadis,

On 11 February 2026, the European Commission launched a call for applications for the High-Level European Ocean Board, a new expert group established under the European Ocean Pact.

The Commission will select up to 25 members based on their demonstrated experience in areas related to the ocean, the maritime economy, and marine or coastal policies (including fisheries), particularly at the European and/or international level, and based on the skills, experience, and seniority of the proposed representatives.

In the view of the MAC, it is important that, in the selection of the members of the upcoming expert group, the key stakeholders are represented, including from across the fisheries and aquaculture value chain and from the other interests groups.

Besides the 11 Advisory Councils foreseen under the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation and the initiatives under the Commission's public consultation portal ("Have Your Say"), in the recent years, the Commission has established several new consultation and dialogue structures with relevance for fisheries and aquaculture policy, such as the Implementation Dialogues, the European Blue Forum, the Joint Special Group of the Marine Action Plan, the Energy Transparency Partnership, the EU4Algae platform, the lighthouses of the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030", among others.

In the view of the MAC, the setting-up of opportunities for stakeholders to engage, in a structured and transparent manner, with policymakers is welcomed and valued, as these contribute to informed decision-making. At the same time, it would be useful to clarify how the input from the Advisory Councils is considered and integrated in relation to the input from other stakeholder consultation platforms. In the context of the Advisory Councils, via ambitious annual work programmes, the participating stakeholders dedicate their resources with the aim of continuously providing relevant advice to the Commission and to the Member States.

The European Ocean Pact references several initiatives of relevance to our Advisory Council, such as the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy and of the Common Market Organisation, the Vision 2040 for Fisheries and Aquaculture, the communication on the EU fisheries external action, an EU-wide campaign on the benefits of aquatic foods, the amendments to Regulation 1026/2012, the WTO agreement on harmful fisheries subsidies, the sustainability of the Autonomous Tariff Quota regime, the continuance of the zero-tolerance approach to IUU fishing, the digitalisation of CATCH, among others.

As the European Ocean Board will advise the Commission on and contribute to the effective implementation of the European Ocean Pact, in the view of the MAC, collaboration between the new expert group and the Advisory Councils should be established. Collaboration could take place, with the encouragement of the Commission, for example, via a formal observer role for the Advisory Councils, the participation of observers from the European Ocean Board in the meetings of the Advisory Councils, regular exchanges of information, and periodical updates.

We would kindly request clarification on the expected collaboration and complementarity between the Advisory Councils and the European Ocean Board.

We remain available to discuss the above-described issues in further detail.

Yours sincerely,



Yobana Bermúdez
Chair of the Market Advisory Council