



Ms. Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Rue Joseph II, 99B-1000
Brussels, Belgium

Dun Laoghaire, 16 December 2025

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Subject: NWWAC Advice on strengthening the role of the Advisory Councils in developing technical and remedial measures

Executive Summary

- The NWWAC emphasises the critical need for enhanced Advisory Council and stakeholder engagement with the European Commission and Member States to integrate expert knowledge before technical or remedial measures are adopted.
- The NWWAC recommends that the Advisory Councils must always be involved in developing technical and remedial measures, even when their preparation does not follow the regionalisation process, and are, for instance, decided in the TACs and quotas negotiations including in the EU-UK consultations.
- The Commission and Member States should provide clear and realistic timelines for Advisory Councils to contribute to the preparation or revision of delegated and implementing acts related to the Technical Measure Regulation, as well of the remedial measures, and allow sufficient time for such recommendations to be both formulated and then implemented by fishing operators.
- The Commission should consider direct consultation with individual stakeholders via mechanisms like the “Have your Say Platform” to complement the ACs' aggregated advice. This would help collect practical, on-the-ground knowledge.
- The NWWAC reiterates the need to better integrate fishers' local knowledge and observations into the development of scientific advice, noting that scientific analyses do not always reflect realities experienced at sea.

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) welcomes the ongoing dialogue with the European Commission, including through STECF, regarding the implementation of technical and remedial measures as foreseen in the Technical Measures Regulation (EU) 2019/1241¹ and the Western Waters Multiannual Management Plan (Regulation (EU) 2019/472)². Since their adoption in 2019, the NWWAC has provided:

- Recommendations submitted to the North Western Waters Member States Group, supporting the preparation of joint recommendations in the North Western Waters related to the Technical Measures Regulation³;

¹ [Regulation - 2019/1241 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

² [Regulation - 2019/472 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

³ [NWWAC advice on Joint Recommendation Technical Measures in the NWW](#) (04 June 2021); [NWWAC advice on Joint Recommendation Technical Measures in the North Western Waters](#) (30 June 2022).



- Letters and advice submitted to the European Commission concerning delegated acts adopted for the North Western Waters related to the Technical Measure Regulations⁴;
- A response to the Commission questionnaire evaluating the implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation⁵;
- A response to the questionnaire on the second report of implementation of EU Regulation 2019/1241⁶.
- Advice submitted to the European Commission related to the Western Waters Multiannual Management Plan and remedial measures.⁷
- Participation in STECF Working Group meetings on technical measures as observers, including EWG 23-15 in January 2024 and most recently in EWG 25-14 in October 2025.

In addition to the above, the issue of technical and remedial measures is also addressed in several other NWWAC recommendations, including those submitted annually on the Fishing Opportunities.

Notwithstanding this background, the **NWWAC would like to emphasise the importance of stakeholder engagement and the need for local knowledge to be heard and consider prior to the development and the adoption of technical and remedial measures.**

The NWWAC notes that the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts on different matters related to technical measures in accordance with Article 29 of the Technical Measure Regulation and Article 18 of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), thus following the regionalisation process. According to this, Member States having a direct management interest affected by the measures concerned may agree to submit joint recommendations. When shaping joint recommendations for Commission delegated acts under regionalisation, Member States must consult the relevant Advisory Councils.

The NWWAC also observes that in the Commission's Report on the delegation of powers under Article 29(2) of the Technical Measures Regulation (COM(2023) 520 final, 11 September 2023)⁸, it is stated that "Member States have consulted the relevant Advisory Councils when formulating joint recommendations, and that some acts have additionally been discussed during the Commission's regular coordination meetings with all Advisory Councils". NWWAC members believe that this statement is slightly misleading as consultations are generally not carried out with sufficient time for response or to allow constructive input by the AC.

Moreover, the NWWAC highlights that, under the current legal framework, Advisory Councils may be consulted by Member States if the latter decide to submit joint recommendations concerning the measures in question. In practice, the consultation process is not optimal and does not always allow sufficient time for stakeholders to contribute meaningfully. Moreover, when technical measures are decided by the Council in the framework of the TACs and quotas regulation, there is no formal procedure in place regarding the consultation of the Advisory Councils as it does not follow the

⁴ [NWWAC letter to the Commission regarding EU-UK technical measures](#) (27 August 2021); [NWWAC advice for a non-recurrent request to ICES and request for information on UK Technical Measures](#) (07 July 2022); [NWWAC advice on Technical Measures in the Celtic Sea](#) (22 July 2022); [NWWAC advice on Technical Measures in the Celtic Sea](#) (03 May 2024)

⁵ [NWWAC reply to COM questionnaire evaluating the implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation](#)

⁶ [NWWAC response to the questionnaire on the second report of implementation of EU Regulation 2019/1241](#) (24 Nov. 2023)

⁷ [NWWAC response to the targeted consultation on the Western Waters Multiannual Plan](#) (09 March 2023); [NWWAC letter on remedial measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea](#) (08 May 2020)

⁸ [REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT in respect of the delegation of powers under Article 29\(2\) of Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures - Publications Office of the EU](#)



regionalisation process. **The NWWAC therefore recommends that the Advisory Councils must always be involved in the development of technical measures, even when their preparation does not follow the regionalisation process and are, for instance, decided in the TACs and quotas negotiations including in the EU-UK consultations.** This would ensure stakeholder involvement, and improved implementation and ownership of the measures developed. **The NWWAC recommends that this approach should also be applied to the remedial measures,** which implementing procedure falls under article 12 and 13 of the CFP. This should be considered also bearing in mind that remedial technical measures are now on the agenda of the EU-UK bilateral consultations for 2026, making it urgent to have included stakeholders' opinions and views in the preparation for discussions.

A clear example of the importance of prior consultation before adopting a technical or remedial measure is the NWWAC advice on Technical Measures in the Celtic Sea⁹. This advice was developed following presentation of the STECF EWG-21-18 report at the meeting of NWWAC Working Group 2 in July 2022, during which an action point was approved to establish an Advice Drafting Group to provide advice to the Commission and the Member States Group on technical measures in the Celtic Sea. The Commission Response of 28 February 2023¹⁰ states, in the final part of its document, that "...This is an essential element and may help refine our current measures noting that the current EU Delegated Act (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2588) is due to expire on December 31, 2023. Your detailed advice is therefore timely and useful for these forthcoming discussions".

Although the NWWAC notes that its recommendations have been only marginally integrated into the extension of the later adopted Technical Measure Delegated Act, this nevertheless, demonstrates that advice from an Advisory Council can play an important role in shaping future measures, particularly when revisions are given due consideration. Furthermore, **the NWWAC recommends that the Commission and Member States should provide clear and realistic timelines for Advisory Councils to contribute to the preparation or revision of delegated and implementing acts related to the Technical Measures Regulation, as well of the remedial measures, and allow sufficient time for such recommendations be formulated. Moreover, the NWWAC recommends that, in light of operational and economic realities, the implementation of new technical measures should be phased in over a reasonable timeframe to enable fishing operators to adjust accordingly.** This would enhance transparency, stakeholder participation, and the overall quality of decisions during the implementation of delegated and implementing acts, as well remedial measures.

In addition to an improved involvement of Advisory Councils, **the NWWAC recommends that the European Commission also considers direct consultation with individual stakeholders through the "Have Your Say Platform"**. This would provide a more practical and effective implementation of technical measures, and the corresponding delegated acts provided proper consideration is given to the responses to such platforms. While the current Technical Measures Regulation does not explicitly provide for stakeholder consultation, and although it is not mandatory, the European Commission has established a well-recognised practice of engaging stakeholders through public consultations, including online mechanisms such as the "Have Your Say Platform". The NWWAC acknowledges that stakeholders have been given the opportunity to provide input during the preparation of the implementation report¹¹, which evaluates whether technical measures have contributed to achieving the objectives and targets set out in the Technical Measures Regulation. However, in this instance,

⁹ [NWWAC advice on Technical Measures in the Celtic Sea](#) (22 July 2022)

¹⁰ [Commission's response to NWWAC advice on Technical Measures in the Celtic Sea](#)

¹¹ [Targeted stakeholder consultation on the Technical Measures Regulation \(fisheries\) 2023 - Oceans and fisheries ; REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL](#)



the consultation was carried out after the decision-making and implementation of the measures and delegated acts.

While recognising the central role of Advisory Councils in providing aggregated and representative advice, it is considered useful to complement these consultations with direct engagement with individual operators. This approach allows for the collection of detailed information on actual operational conditions, facilitates the assessment of the practical feasibility of proposed measures, and promotes a higher level of acceptance and compliance among operators. The European Commission is encouraged to provide such complementary consultation mechanisms, in line with established practices for technical measures, to ensure a more transparent, participatory, and effective decision-making process.

The NWWAC would like to reiterate the value of practical, on-the-ground knowledge from fishing operators, and the importance of sharing and incorporating so-called local knowledge as a key element in developing measures that reflect real-world conditions. For this reason, the integration of fishers' local knowledge must begin with data collection, as these data form the foundation for developing management measures, as well as delegated and implementing acts related to Technical Measures Regulation. **The NWWAC recommends to better integrate fishers' local knowledge and observations into the development of scientific advice, noting that scientific analyses do not always reflect realities experienced at sea.** This point has been raised by the NWWAC in several previous advice submissions, and the most recent example can be drawn from the NWWAC's advice on Fishing Opportunities 2026¹². In that instance, a discrepancy was identified between the ICES TAC advice and the observations reported by fishers on the fishing grounds, particularly for the following stocks: cod 6b; haddock 7b-k; pollack 6 and 7; sole 7fg; lemon sole 4, 3a, 7d; sole 7d; whiting 7d; sole 7a.

Strictly related to the above, the NWWAC re-emphasises that its members are experiencing the effects of climate change through changing environmental conditions on the fishing grounds, which in turn affect the reference points used to assess the state of fish stocks. The NWWAC encourages scientific bodies to investigate how environmental changes are influencing recruitment patterns and stock dynamics. It also recommends that fisheries managers request ICES to prioritise work on assessing climate change impacts on key stocks, as fishing pressure alone no longer sufficiently explains some of the observed declines in fishing opportunities.

In conclusion, the NWWAC remains fully committed to contributing constructively to the development of technical and remedial measures. The AC emphasises the importance of providing input particularly during the preparatory phase, prior to the adoption and implementation of measures, to ensure that policies are practical, effective, and informed by local knowledge. The NWWAC further reaffirms its commitment to continuing its close collaboration with the European Commission and the North Western Waters Member States Group, supporting transparent, participatory, and evidence-based decision-making processes.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Philippe, NWWAC Chair

¹² [NWWAC advice on Fishing Opportunities 2026](#)