

# Merry Christmas

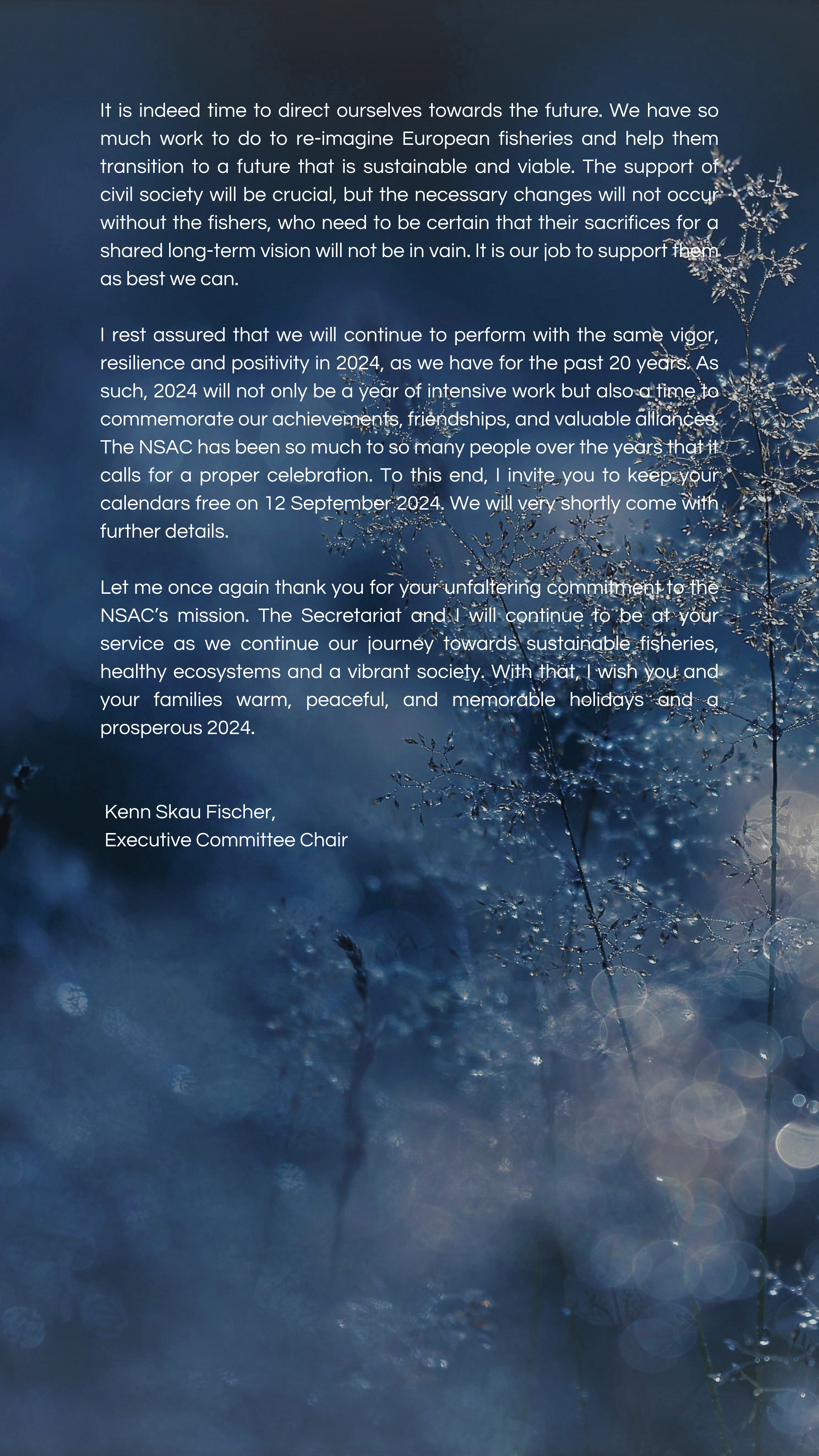
Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to wrap up yet another year of committed and inspiring NSAC work. Despite the hurdles that haven't subsided in 2023, but have instead compounded, you have shown extraordinary resilience that reflects in the work completed over the year. I want to thank you for providing the necessary effort and enthusiasm to continuously improve fisheries management in line with the objectives of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It is now more important than ever that these three objectives are strengthened, as they are mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting.

The 2023 hasn't been easy. We had to spread ourselves very thin in the face of an increasing number of commitments and initiatives. But that did not stop us from completing some of our most impactful advice. To mind comes advice on decarbonisation of the fishing fleet, advice on the functioning of the landing obligation, and on marine spatial planning and stakeholder engagement, among others. We have been steadily increasing our visibility among the Commission officials, Member States, and the European Parliament, as well as other stakeholders. And though I have always known we were one of the most committed Advisory Councils, it is nevertheless nice to know that the view is shared by our external partners.

I very much hope the NSAC has been equally valuable to you and your organisations. I am a firm believer in collaboration and efforts placed in shared understanding. The spirit of the European Union and its fishing communities has always been one of camaraderie, support for each other's endeavours, and empathy even when our objectives seemingly oppose. I say 'seemingly' because, in the end, we all strive for healthy oceans and vibrant (human and non-human) communities. It is what we depend on, after all. I do hope that the somewhat diminished relations between fisheries and civil society are just a hiccup and that those who decided to part will reconsider their decision. We cannot and should not let past resentments pave our way forward.





It is indeed time to direct ourselves towards the future. We have so much work to do to re-imagine European fisheries and help them transition to a future that is sustainable and viable. The support of civil society will be crucial, but the necessary changes will not occur without the fishers, who need to be certain that their sacrifices for a shared long-term vision will not be in vain. It is our job to support them as best we can.

I rest assured that we will continue to perform with the same vigor, resilience and positivity in 2024, as we have for the past 20 years. As such, 2024 will not only be a year of intensive work but also a time to commemorate our achievements, friendships, and valuable alliances. The NSAC has been so much to so many people over the years that it calls for a proper celebration. To this end, I invite you to keep your calendars free on 12 September 2024. We will very shortly come with further details.

Let me once again thank you for your unfaltering commitment to the NSAC's mission. The Secretariat and I will continue to be at your service as we continue our journey towards sustainable fisheries, healthy ecosystems and a vibrant society. With that, I wish you and your families warm, peaceful, and memorable holidays and a prosperous 2024.

Kenn Skau Fischer,  
Executive Committee Chair