



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE A.4/MJ

Subject: NSAC Advice on general observations on simplification (NSAC Advice Ref. 03-2526)

Dear Mr Ronelöv Olsson,

I would like to thank the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) for its Advice on general observations on simplification. We appreciate the expertise and practical experience reflected in the recommendations, which provide valuable input to the ongoing work on simplifying the EU fisheries acquis.

Ensuring that the EU fisheries regulatory framework remains effective, proportionate and fit for purpose while continuing to deliver the environmental, economic and social objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is a key objective of the Commission. As highlighted in the Commission's Better Regulation agenda, simplification should improve implementation, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and support the competitiveness and resilience of the fisheries sector without compromising sustainability objectives.

I welcome the NSAC's emphasis on designing legislation that is simple, coherent and evidence-based from the outset. In line with Better Regulation principles, future initiatives will continue to be supported by impact assessments, stakeholder consultation and evaluations of existing legislation. Regularly reviewing the existing regulatory framework to identify outdated, overlapping or unnecessarily complex provisions is an important part of the Commission's work. Your practical examples highlighted in the advice are useful in this regard.

Stakeholder participation is essential for developing effective fisheries policy. Advisory Councils remain key partners in providing expertise and facilitating dialogue between the Commission and stakeholders.

I take note of the recommendations concerning fisheries control and digitalisation. Digital tools have the potential to improve efficiency, transparency and data quality while reducing administrative burdens over time. At the same time, the Commission recognises the importance of ensuring that implementation remains practical and proportionate. The Commission will continue to work with Member States, the European Fisheries Control Agency and stakeholders to ensure and facilitate the implementation of the revised Fisheries Control Regulation and to address practical challenges, including interoperability of systems and the reduction of unnecessary duplication where appropriate.

Mr Peter Ronelöv Olsson
Chair of the North Sea Advisory Council
Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË – Tel. +32 22991111

We welcome the NSAC's reflections on strengthening trust, encouraging innovation and promoting more adaptive fisheries management. The Commission agrees that scientific research, technological development and improved data collection are essential for sustainable fisheries management. Innovative approaches, including those mentioned in the advice, may provide useful opportunities to improve fisheries management and simplify existing practices. Their potential application will continue to be assessed on the basis of scientific evidence, practical experience and consultation with Member States and stakeholders.

Let me also thank you for the observations on the cumulative administrative burden faced by fishers. While simplification should contribute to a regulatory framework that is understandable, proportionate and supportive of the sustainable development of the sector, it must also preserve effective fisheries control, a level playing field and the achievement of the CFP objectives.

The commitment of the NSAC to provide further advice identifying concrete opportunities for simplification within the EU fisheries acquis is greatly appreciated. Such practical and evidence-based recommendations will be valuable in supporting the Commission's ongoing work to improve the coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory framework.

We are actively advancing our simplification agenda, including progress in stress testing and the follow-up to its results, the development of reality checks, and the organisation of implementation dialogues. In this context, your timely recommendations will be highly valuable in supporting our work.

The Advisory Councils will continue to play an important role throughout this process. I look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions, please contact Ms. Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA