



Nederlandse Elasmobranchen Vereniging

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The Netherlands

KvK-nummer 57410739

NSAC Secretariat
Louis Braillelaan 80
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Amsterdam, 01 September 2019

Re: ExCom chair position North Sea Advisory Council

Dear members of the NSAC,

I would like to take this opportunity to give some background to why, to me, it was a logical decision to me to apply for the ExCom chair position and why I think we should take the current opportunity to rethink how the North Sea Advisory Council functions. The ExCom chair is the most important function in the Advisory Council and it seemed wrong to just rubber stamp the one candidate put forward by the industry members. Not because I question Ken's capabilities as chair, but because this is one of the few times where we can have an open discussion on the route the AC should take in the future. The CFP basic regulation is clear on the role of the ExCom chair (Annex III): *"Each Advisory Council shall designate a chairperson by consensus. The chairperson shall act impartially"*. That's why, to me, it was important that there was a clear selection process with candidates giving their view on the future of the AC. In this way the incoming chair can start with a clear mandate and members have a say in deciding the course of the AC.

In the past five years the North Sea Advisory Council has changed a lot. The Other Interest Group membership has increased considerably, and this led to new ways of drafting advice. In this new form we had some big successes but also some of the worst behaviour I have ever come across in a professional setting. It is my strong hope that a new chair will ensure we see a lot more of the first and that we will not have to suffer through the second.

Brexit has been looming over the NSAC more than any other advisory council. It has already led to the forced relocation of the secretariat and we risk losing some of the most active members of the AC when Britain leaves the EU. This is bound to push our ability to adapt and be flexible and it is my sincere belief that only as a united group we can manage to ensure a viable future for the NSAC.

With these considerations in mind I came up with several recommendations and potential actions for the NSAC.

1. Ensure that the AC remains the strongest voice in the Norths Sea when it comes to relevant, professional expertise that is founded in a strong scientific and factual basis – in the world of fake news and a political landscape that is increasingly founded on opinions rather than facts it is of vital importance that an institute like the AC endeavours in the best way possible to be a voice of reason

ACTIONS

- i) The NSAC will continue to give advice of the highest possible quality, declining to give opinionated, quick and dirty input on short notice to suit a political appetite.



- ii) The chairman should at all times refrain from giving a partisan view when representing the AC. Making it clear to the world that the AC is a diverse stakeholder body where all opinions count but we base our advice on consensus.
 - iii) Change the status of the vice chairs so that when the chair comes from industry the 1st vice chair comes from the OIG and vice versa an industry 1st vice-chair if the ExCom chair is an OIG representative.
 - iv) Endeavour to have dual representation in all meetings where the AC is invited, it should be clear to all parties that an invitation to the AC will be interpreted as coming from at least two representatives.
2. Smooth post-Brexit transition – within the next 12 months the UK will likely leave the EU block resulting in a need to reassess the management of the North Sea. It is vitally important that the NSAC remains strong and stable during this period and not get caught up in national interests
 - i) The NSAC will keep an active dialogue with all Brexit partners, asking for clarification and providing input where needed in the run up to Brexit.
 - ii) After Brexit the NSAC will endeavour to keep an active working relationship with the former AC-members from the UK, including financial compensation for AC attendance.
 - iii) After Brexit the NSAC (possible together with the LDAC and the PelAC) will take an active role in preparing for a new relationship with all partners around the North Sea to come to a new stakeholder forum.
 - iv) The AC chairman needs to be at the centre of the debate, ensuring the AC is heard and that all AC members are informed about developments and that they have a chance to input.
3. Strengthen the role of the NSAC – even though there is a legal obligation to consult the AC and policy makers are verbally supportive of the AC this is still too often not reflected in uptake of advice nor are the timelines the AC needs to produce advice respected.
 - i) The NSAC developed a MoU with the regional groups to facilitate coordination and cooperation after the CFP reform in 2013. The AC will revisit this MoU and see which additional agreement is needed to improve working relationships
 - ii) The NSAC will maintain active communication with the EC officials and Scheveningen group to ensure the relation remains positive but also to effectively manage expectations both ways.
 - iii) The NSAC will actively engage the European Parliament by, for example, presenting our advice to the PECH committee meetings



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- iv) The NSAC will look at the performance review the LDAC did and assess if this should be done to look at the effectiveness of the NSAC advice over the past 10 years. Should the AC choose to carry out a performance review this will be the basis for a conversation with the EC and regional groups on potential improvements.
4. Strengthen cooperation with other ACs on horizontal issues like control, governance and environmental issues - Some of the most celebrated results from the AC came in cooperation with other ACs. The choke mitigation tool and the skates and rays exemption to the landing obligation are two recent examples.
- i) The NSAC will make cooperation with other ACs a part of the strategic annual plan outlining specific activities like organising joint workshops and identifying possibilities for joint advice
 - ii) The NSAC will actively share ToR's (Terms of Reference) on relevant advice subjects with other ACs inviting them to participate in the drafting process.
 - iii) The chairman will have an active role in approaching other AC-chairs in setting up cooperation and gathering information on what other ACs are doing.

In August Ken and I met in Amsterdam to discuss the future of the AC and found that we were very much in agreement on what such a future should look like. We decided that I would draft this letter to you to invite you all to give your response to these recommendations and have an open discussion on them at the next ExCom meeting and that if we would come to a constructive conclusion that would take away any reservation I have in supporting Ken's candidacy.

Kind regards,

Irene Kingma