

Ms. Charlina Vitcheva
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Date: 10 December 2020
Our reference: 2021PAC10
Subject: Functioning of the Advisory Councils

Dear Ms. Charlina Vitcheva,

On behalf of its members, the Pelagic AC wishes to share some commentary on the subject of the functioning of the European Advisory Councils, in light of the letter addressed to you from a number of NGOs, dated 22 July 2020, subject line: 'Participation of NGOs in Advisory Councils'.

The Pelagic AC has a tradition of respectful, collaborative working and across our history has worked to ensure we only issue consensus-based advice. Wherever necessary, members and Chairs will engage in additional rounds of review and feedback, or extend meetings, to reach a consensus position. We acknowledge the role of Advisory Councils in developing agreement between the full spectrum of stakeholders, and see that advice is at its strongest when all members can come together in agreement around recommendations.

In requesting feedback from members on our functioning as an Advisory Council, we were reassured that our OIG members feel that their views are heard and respected within the forum of the Pelagic AC. Specific feedback on the structural and cultural aspects that secure this revealed the following points, which we consider best practise – and to be valuable for your consideration in examining this matter more broadly.

- Ensuring that Chairs are seen to be impartial, and act in a way that reinforces this – respecting both industry and OIG views during policy and advice discussion.
- As a result, the ability for OIG representatives to take the floor during meetings without any difficulties;
- Appropriate representation of OIG positions in meeting notes, reports and Pelagic AC recommendations;



- Proper representation of OIG and industry representatives and views of the Pelagic AC at external meetings and events, where it is ensured that solely established Pelagic AC positions are transmitted by any individual attending on behalf of the AC, regardless of their organisation;
- A culture of respecting each other's views.

These are ways in which the Pelagic AC is already functioning well. We acknowledge that the NGO letter to the Commission outlined that even well-functioning Advisory Councils should consider ways in which the best practises already in existence can be further, and more formally, enshrined within procedures and statutes. With this in mind, and having received detailed recommendations from our OIG members, which will be considered by the full membership, the Pelagic AC intends to undertake a third-party performance review of its functioning in 2021. This is an exercise that will be carried out in parallel with the important task of re-defining the Pelagic AC's future in the post-Brexit landscape – and, as a result, is likely to take place in the latter half of the year.

We hope the points shared in this letter are of value to your ongoing consideration of this subject.

Yours sincerely,



Jesper Raakjaer
Chairman, Pelagic AC

