

Mr. Rory O'Leary
Principal Officer
Department of the Environment Climate and Communications
29-31 Adelaide Road
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Cc: Sinead McSherry, Head of Aquaculture & Foreshore Management Division, DAFM

Dun Laoghaire, 10 January 2025

Dear Mr. O'Leary,

Subject: Seafood/ORE Group

Since the establishment of the Seafood/ORE group by your Department, the [North Western Waters Advisory Council](#) (NWWAC) and the [Pelagic Advisory Council](#) (PelAC) have been interested in following its work more closely on behalf of the international stakeholders they represent who hold fishing rights within the 6-12 mile zone around Ireland and in the Irish EEZ.

As mentioned in our previous communications from 07 July 2022 and 20 March 2023, the ACs are representative and legitimate EU fisheries stakeholder bodies which are legally recognised as organisations pursuing an aim of general European interest. The NWWAC is established in Ireland and produces regular advice on its own initiative or at the request of the European Commission and the concerned Member States on all relevant matters related to fisheries management in ICES areas 6 and 7. The Pelagic AC is established in The Netherlands and, unlike most ACs, it does not have a regional basis, but covers key pelagic stocks across all European sea-basins (excluding the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean Sea). This is due to the dispersed nature of the stocks and the unique features attributed to the fisheries of short-lived species.

As the majority of the remit area covered by the NWWAC is in the EEZ of Ireland, our members naturally are interested in and concerned with the offshore wind energy developments in this area and their potential impacts on fisheries. Previous work includes policy advice to the European Commission on the impact of offshore wind energy developments ([link](#)), as well as the virtual workshop on the effects of seismic and offshore wind energy developments on commercial fisheries jointly organised with the PelAC in 2022 ([link](#)). On 19 January 2023 NWWAC/PelAC held a successful joint briefing on the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 in Dun Laoghaire ([link](#)) with the direct involvement of your Department.

In order to provide members of the Seafood/ORE Group with additional detail regarding the ACs' remit and functioning, the NWWAC Executive Secretary Mo Mathies joined the meeting of the group held in Galway on 16 April 2024.



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Subsequently, the senior DECC representative present gave a clear indication that the request of the ACs for inclusion in the Seafood/ORE group should be granted, and additional discussions were held by the Fisheries Liaison Officer with representatives from the ORE sector in order to overcome any lingering objections.

It is our understanding that as of late summer 2024 all members of the Seafood/ORE group are positively inclined to the ACs joining the group, yet at some stage the ACs' inclusion is being blocked.

Given the importance and urgency of this topic for both the NWWAC and PelAC stakeholders who hold fishing rights within the Irish EEZ, we would like to reiterate our request for inclusion in the relevant stakeholder discussion forums, and in particular the Seafood/ORE Group.

The connection to the Advisory Councils will support the stakeholder involvement on a much wider basis without any additional pressure on the Department itself as well as assist our members in keeping abreast of any developments in this area.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding the work of the ACs. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,



Emiel Brouckaert
NWWAC Chair



Esben Sverdrup-Jensen
PelAC Chair

