



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE.D.3/JR

Dear Mr Zieliński,

Thank you for the letter send on 3 June 2024 (BSAC/2024-2025/11) regarding the foresight study “Fishers of the Future”.

As we explained during the event on 19 March, [Fishers of the Future](#) is a foresight study. As such, it explores future eventualities, scenarios and outcomes using the disciplined analysis of alternative futures. The study was also conceived as an iterative and participatory project: feedback is collected all along the way and helps us shape the outcome, using the informed opinions of our stakeholders.

This study is the first foresight exercise we do in DG MARE. As such, it is also a learning process, and we are duly noting all feedback received for future similar or related exercises, including that set out in your letter. We are also bound by the terms of our offer and contract, as well as by the available budget: rest assured that the margin of manoeuvre we have is being fully utilised to make adjustments were needed and possible, in full collaboration with our contractor.

I also wish to underline that this study was not conceived as an extended research study to gather quantitative data but rather a first attempt at identifying perceptions of fishers and stakeholders about what the future can hold (similar to what was done for [Farmers of the Future](#)). We are not seeking to *define* a future for fishers but want to stimulate thinking, discussion, and strategic planning around possible future conditions and challenges. Whichever the methodology, shortcomings can always be found. However, even though the methodology may have shortcomings, the study is indeed creating a lot of thinking and debate about the future, which we are listening to closely and which is essential to building our reflections and policy direction for the coming years.

Evidently, there is space for further and more extended research studies to be conducted over a couple of years fully representative of the fishing sector across 22 coastal countries. However, the cost and time associated with such work would mean that we

Mr Jarek Zieliński  
Chair BSAC Executive Committee  
fpaski@me.com  
Axelborg Axeltovej 3,  
DK-1609 Copenhagen V  
DENMARK

miss many critical policy milestones along the way and are not able to respond swiftly enough to the needs and challenges the sector is facing. We do hope though that our first foresight study will constitute a stepping stone for researchers to continue, build on it and deepen the reflections in the years to come.

Regarding your specific points on the survey of drivers and challenges, I would like to insist that it constituted only one part of the process to identify trends and develop scenarios for the future. The initial feedback collected through the survey was further refined during 4 subsequent workshops that took place from March to June. All of the elements you mentioned (climate change, collapsing fish stocks, deteriorating state of the sea, green transition, access to fishing grounds, intra-sectoral competition, lack of participation, self-determined management) were covered during the discussions. While the environmental factor (climate change, pollution, biodiversity) will be a key determinant of the evolution of fish stocks, the contractors are evidently looking at other aspects as well (linked to technology, social, economic and regulatory questions).

By now, all workshop participants should have received the final draft scenarios for the future prepared by the consultant based on the workshop discussions. These will be further refined following a last round of feedback. Additionally, you should also have received an invitation to participate in the final phase of the project which is dedicated to the preparation of the profiles of the fishers of the future.

Finally, I would like to bring one additional element to your attention. The debates and reflections on the future of fishers will not end with the project's final report in December 2024. Our aim is to keep discussions going during the start of the next Commission mandate and we are already reflecting on the set up of future stakeholder consultations to discuss the final outputs of the project.

Beyond this study, the current challenges and the future of fishers and fisheries is at the core of the work of DG MARE. This is underlined by the launch of the CFP evaluation. The outputs of the Fishers of the Future study and any follow-up consultations and engagement with stakeholders will also contribute to these reflections and help us shape the way ahead.

I wish to thank you for BSAC's continued engagement and collaboration on this project, as well as many other important ongoing files. Should you have any specific questions on this study, please contact Ms Joan Roussoulière-Azzam ([joan.roussouliere-azzam@ec.europa.eu](mailto:joan.roussouliere-azzam@ec.europa.eu)) or Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox [MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

Valérie TANKINK  
Head of Unit

c.c.: Sally Clink [sc@bsac.dk](mailto:sc@bsac.dk)  
Ewa Milewska [em@bsac.dk](mailto:em@bsac.dk)

