

Eighteenth Annual Report of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council 2023-2024

Introduction

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council has been in operation since 2006. Its main function is to advise the European Commission and Member States on matters relating to management of the fisheries in the Baltic Sea. Its work and activities are funded by the EU Commission, the Baltic Sea Member States and its members.

The BSAC comprises a General Assembly, Executive Committee, and three Working Groups: for demersal fisheries, pelagic fisheries and for ecosystem-based fisheries management. The BSAC is run by a Secretariat and assisted by a Management Team to deal with administrative, management and operational things. There are terms of reference and rules of procedure for the BSAC and its Working Groups and Management Team, as well as a Code of Conduct for members and observers. The rules of procedure of the BSAC were adopted in April 2024 during the Extraordinary General Assembly.¹

This eighteenth annual report covers the activities, meetings and outputs of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council from 1st April 2023- 31st March 2024. The work programme was adopted on 16th May 2023.²

Main results/outputs from the BSAC during the year 2023 – 2024

The BSAC work programme 2023-2024 contained a number of focus areas. These are described here, with a few words on the outputs and achievements, where relevant.

The work programme has been implemented to a large degree and most tasks were carried out. At the same time some additional actions complemented the planned tasks.

The BSAC held 8 WG meetings, 2x2 of which were held as joint WG meetings, 4 Executive Committee meetings, 1 General Assembly, 2 workshops (on Baltic Multi-annual Plan and on Predators) and one webinar (on climate change). Focus Group meetings were also organised to work on the revision of the Rules of Procedure, on the technical measures regulation, and the recommendations on Energy Transition.

The BSAC has continued to implement the recommendations of the External Performance Review conducted in 2021. As a key element in this process the BSAC improved its relations with Member States in the Baltic Region, mainly through closer collaboration with BALTFISH and HELCOM. In order to strengthen outreach activities in relation to stakeholders currently outside the membership of BSAC, the BSAC website and the newsletter have been continuously updated.

The main focus area of this year's work were:

Under the chairmanship of the Demersal Working Group

¹ <https://www.bsac.dk/regulations/>

² [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- *Relevant work to address selectivity to avoid unwanted catches of cod.*
- *Continued focus related to the Technical Measures Regulation.*

The Working Group continued the work on selectivity to avoid unwanted catches of cod and the work related to the technical measures through the BSAC reply to the consultation of the Commission on the legal acts introducing a new mandatory trawl gear device in July 2023 and with BSAC reply to the Commission questionnaire on implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation in November 2023. One meeting of the Joint Working Group was almost entirely focused on the discussion of the Commission's Package (Action Plan), with a view to producing a BSAC recommendation.

The Working Group hosted a presentation of the Fish-X project³, focused on overcoming key sets of challenges including the following points: 1) collection and sharing of data, in particular from small-scale and recreational fisheries; and 2) accessing, managing, and utilising data to strengthen the monitoring and control as well as the sustainability of EU fisheries.

Under the chairmanship of Pelagic Working Group

- *The BSAC will investigate further work on management of the western Baltic spring spawning herring.*

The Pelagic Working Group discussed western herring during its meeting in September 2023, in the context of the reply from the Commission, received in July 2023⁴. In its letter sent in January 2023, the BSAC recommended to use the EU Multiannual Plan (MAP) for the Baltic Sea to act as a rebuilding plan and to request ICES to put the EU MAP advice as its headline advice for 2024. In their reply, the Commission stated that ICES is an independent international organisation and it can only base its advice on a management plan on condition that all parties concerned agree. This is not the case for this stock as there is one party that does not agree, in this case Norway. Therefore, ICES had to base its advice on the ICES advice framework.

- *Closely follow scientific analysis and measures proposed, and if relevant advise on Bothnian bay herring and other herring stocks.*

The Pelagic Working Group discussed Bothnian herring during its meeting in September 2023 in the context of the foreseen Commission's request to ICES asking for additional research from ICES on central herring and Bothnian herring.

- *Follow up on stickleback and trial fisheries in the Baltic.*

An update on trial fisheries for stickleback was provided by an Estonian scientist during the Pelagic Working Group meeting in September 2023. The Executive Secretary referred to updates on stickleback trial fishery received from Baltic research institutes. Both Swedish and Danish research institutes did not report any new findings.

- *Work on species interactions between sprat, herring and cod (in close cooperation with the Demersal WG).*

³ [Fish-X Home - FISH-X](#)

⁴ [BSAC letter sent in January 2023, Commission reply received in July 2023](#)

The Pelagic WG and Demersal Working Groups held a joint meeting on species interactions in the end of February 2024. The main items on the agenda included a session on species interactions with scientific presentations followed by Q&A sessions and discussion about a potential draft recommendation. The meeting discussed the HELCOM FISH Working Group request for BSAC input on BSAP Action S40 was also discussed.

- *Explore the potential of a Geographic Information Software (GIS) tool for the Baltic Sea.*

The BSAC Executive Committee in January 2023⁵ expressed limited support for the tool and voiced concerns that it might compete against other initiatives conducted by HELCOM or at national level (Finland). Members recognised that a holistic approach to assess cumulative impacts on the environment and visualise all layers of legislation applying to a geographic zone. However, the amount of the investment and the legal guarantees needed to make the tool useful meant that it should be developed by the law maker itself. There was no further development this year.

Under the chairmanship of the Ecosystem based Working Group

- *The Marine Strategy Framework Directive: ongoing work with its the review, including work on those descriptors that are relevant to fisheries.*
- *Integrated sea use management/maritime spatial planning: continue working in particular on offshore windfarms developments and consider organising a webinar on the topic.*

The Working Group continued to work on offshore wind farms, initiated in October 2022. After its meeting in October 2023, the WG decided to prepare a letter to the Commission as a follow-up on BSAC recommendations concerning the development of offshore windfarms, welcoming the non-recurrent request from the Commission to ICES on OWF and putting emphasis on the need to further investigate the cumulated effects of offshore wind farms.

- *Discuss salmon management, including technical measures for salmon, as well as implementation issues in the salmon fishery.*

In June 2023, the BSAC submitted comments on the amendments to the BALTFISH draft Joint Recommendation regarding a derogation from the landing obligation in the Baltic Sea establishing a discard plan as regards salmon in the Baltic Sea (ICES Subdivisions 22-32). The BSAC Secretariat followed the EG Fish-M dedicated session on HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 focusing on salmon and the implementation of BSAP action S50, organized on 30th - 31st January 2024 and reported to the BSAC members.

- *Eel: Reflect on the coordination of the application of the measures (including the flexible closures) and continue to put forward BSAC advice and proposed actions. Follow the publication of the latest ICES advice.*

The BSAC Secretariat followed the PECH Committee meeting, 18th July 2023 on the topic and the third informal consultation session of IC EG FISH-M on eel and reported back to the BSAC members.

⁵ <https://www.bsac.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/BSACExCom-30-31January-2023-final-report-1.pdf>

Following a discussion of the action referring to the eel, held in the framework of the EBM Working Group in October 2023, the BSAC decided to send a letter to the Commission requesting to include eel on the agenda of the Joint Special Group, as an important topic to be discussed by both fisheries and environmental ministries and stakeholders, and asking to publicly share the draft update of the Eel Management Plan guidance document. The Member States were also addressed to put stronger focus and a faster pace in implementing national eel management plans, in particular concerning the upstream measures, to improve the habitats and ensure river connectivity.

The BSAC representatives subsequently took part in the Joint Special Group on 6th October 2023 and presented the BSAC input⁶.

Horizontal issues for all Working Groups

- *Recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2024. ICES will release its annual advice for the Baltic stocks at the end of May 2023. The BSAC will hold a working group to deal with this, and develop recommendations for the Baltic fishery in 2024.*

The BSAC published its annual recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2024 following the Joint WG and the Executive Committee meetings in June 2023.

In 2023-2024 the Commission's proposal on fishing opportunities following Article 4(6) of the Baltic Sea Multiannual Plan brought to light very divided, if not polarized views on the interpretation of the plan's provisions during ensuing discussions on its possible revision; this fact does not facilitate a joint BSAC opinion on next year's proposal for fishing opportunities in the Baltic.

- *Follow up on the publication of the report on the functioning of the CFP and how it connects with the BSAC White Paper published in 2022.*
- *Follow up on the Commission Action Plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems.*

The Joint Demersal and Pelagic Working Group meeting on 27th – 28th February 2024, as well as the EBM Working Group meeting held on 8th March 2024 discussed the Commission's CFP Communication, with a view to producing BSAC recommendations.

- *Co-organise a workshop on monitoring and enforcement of the Landing Obligation with European Fisheries Control Agency and BALTFISH (EFCA-BALTFISH) in the framework of the Joint Working Group. The workshop on control and enforcement of the Landing Obligation will follow the publication of a specific report on the Baltic Sea in 2019-2021.*

The meeting was postponed until spring/summer 2024 due to delays in the publication of the EFCA report.

- *Recreational fisheries: Towards a balanced and proportionate policy for recreational fisheries under the Common Fisheries Policy, work will include measures to strengthen reporting and data collection from recreational fisheries.*

⁶ <https://www.bsac.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Report-Joint-Special-Group-06.10.23.pdf>

The active participation of recreational fisheries representatives insured that this perspective was well taken into account in BSAC's work and recommendations throughout the year.

- *The blue dimension in the EU Green Deal and the Blue Deal.*
- *Fisheries as part of the Farm to Fork Strategy – a sustainable, protein-rich seafood provided by fisheries.*
- *Fisheries contributing to addressing the climate change.*

Relating to the three points above, the BSAC had established a Focus Group to work on energy transition and provided a BSAC advice on the topic. When it comes to climate change mitigation, the BSAC also advised on offshore windfarms development.

In May 2023, the BSAC organised a webinar dedicated to climate change and natural mortality in the Baltic Sea. The BSAC took note of the many climate change led impacts on the Baltic ecosystem, and its fisheries. The BSAC recognised research needs, changes in the scientific advice and management adaptation. The BSAC plans to return to these issues at the next webinar, planned in the course of 2024.

- *Management of seals and other predators and interactions with fisheries: BALTFISH Work programme mentions the organisation of a workshop on the topic (before June 2023) and BSAC will co-organise it.*

The BSAC has repeatedly focused on the topic. The BSAC organised a workshop on predators in October 2023 and is planning to organise a follow-up workshop in the course of 2024.

The functioning of the BSAC

In 2023-24, the BSAC did not face major changes in its internal organisation. As a first step towards the alignment with the latest Commission Regulation, the General Assembly in May 2023 created and appointed of a new office bearing position: Vice-Chair of the General Assembly.

A revision work of the Rules of Procedure was initiated in 2022 to align them with the latest Commission Regulation. The work was initiated by a Focus Group that also identified further potential changes to improve the functioning of the BSAC. In this context, a Vice-Chair of the General Assembly was appointed in May 2023 and happen to be from the Low Impact Fishers of Europe organisation. The new Rules of Procedures were adopted in April 2024.

BALTFISH

The BSAC has maintained close cooperation with the BALTFISH Lithuanian and Polish Presidencies, endeavoured to align the timing of its work and its outputs with the BALTFISH work programmes, gave input and took initiatives. The BSAC faces a challenge with deadlines when consulted on draft Joint Recommendations by BALTFISH. This usually prevents holding meeting on the topic and is perceived to reduce the level of consensus on these specific recommendations. BSAC had however taken action to foresee those consultations and cooperate more with BALTFISH which helped at Chairmanship level but

still required time for members to consider draft Joint Recommendations carefully. The BSAC continued its new habit of organising January Executive Committee meetings in the same location as the BALTFISH Presidency to ensure smooth communication.

The BSAC representatives participated in two BALTFISH Forum meetings (in June 2023, under the Lithuanian Presidency and in September 2023, under the Polish Presidency), but more importantly to streamline work, the BSAC Management Team has been meeting with BALTFISH Presidency regularly online through several structured “Virtual Coffee Meetings” following agreed agendas.

The BSAC has contributed to the BALTFISH Joint Recommendations regarding fisheries conservation measures in five marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea, as well as BALTFISH Joint Recommendation on salmon derogation from the landing obligation.

Fisheries control and inspection, science, the advice and the advisory process

The BSAC ExCom Vice-Chair took part in the **EFCA** Advisory Board meetings on 19th April 2023 and 19th October 2023.

BSAC organised its Executive Committee meeting in Vigo, further reinforcing the cooperation of the two organisations.

The Executive Secretary visited the new EFCA patrol vessel calling in the port of Gdynia on 29th November 2023. This was an occasion for the BSAC to reiterate the importance of control activities carried out by EFCA in the Baltic.

In 2023-24, the BSAC maintained active cooperation with **ICES**. In addition to the annual presentation of the ICES advice on Baltic fish stocks in June 2023, the BSAC co-organised the MIAC meeting and took an active part in the MIACO meeting, both held in January 2024. ICES Advisory Committee members were invited to present additional relevant ICES advices to BSAC such as the D3C3 advice in the EBM WG in March 2024.

In June 2023, the BSAC representatives also took part in a meeting with ICES Advisory Committee members and scientists on the needs of scientific advice for the Baltic Sea stocks.

The BSAC followed the relevant discussions taking place at **the European Parliament** and more specifically the Fisheries Committee. This included meetings on the fisheries package (April 2023), catch allocation (Oct 2023), eel (June and July 2023), selectivity (Feb 2024), regional seas conventions (March 2024).

Throughout the year, the BSAC meetings featured presentations of many scientists from research institutes from around the Baltic (SLU, DTU, NMFRI, LUKE, Thünen Institute) and from ICES.

The BSAC had given its formal support to the CIBBRiNA EU LIFE Bycatch project proposal that has started in September 2023.

Finally, the BSAC representatives took part in more than 52 external meetings organised by the European Commission, other organisations as well as other advisory councils. [-list below-](#)

BSAC Recommendations/advice and letters sent 2023-2024⁷.

N°	Full title	Date of adoption
1	BSAC recommendations concerning the development of offshore windfarms and fisheries interactions	Sent 11/04/2023 Reply received 11/07/2023
2	BSAC recommendation on harmonised implementation of legal rules in geographically close areas	Sent 21/04/2023
3	BSAC input to BALTFISH High Level Group	Sent 24/04/2023,
4	BSAC comments on amendments to the draft BALTFISH Joint Recommendation on Salmon LO derogation	Sent 07/06/2023,
5	BSAC recommendation on the effectiveness of cod spawning area protection measures	Sent 03/07/2023 Reply received 25/08/2023
6	BSAC recommendations for the fisheries 2024	Sent 07/07/2023
7	BSAC recommendations on the legal Acts introducing a new mandatory trawl gear device	Sent 07/07/2023
8	BSAC request for a Baltic roundtable discussion before Fisheries Council of October	Sent 07/07/2023
9	BSAC response to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2024"	Sent 29/08/2023
10	BSAC letter to the Commission requesting guidance on how to apply Article 4(7), of the Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/242, as amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/204	Sent 29/08/2023 Reply received 15/12/2023
11	Follow-up invitation to Our Baltic Ministerial Conference	Sent 03/10/2023 Reply received 17/10/2023
12	Baltic Sea Advisory Council recommendations on the energy transition of the Baltic Sea fisheries sector	Sent 03/10/2023
13	BSAC recommendations on Eel and Joint Special Group 6th October 2023	Sent 06/10/2023 Reply received 09/01/2024
14	BSAC letter on the fishing opportunities and scientific advice for 2024 following the recent BALTFISH Forum meeting	Sent 17/10/2023 Reply received 10/11/2023
15	BSAC letter on STECF work on the Marine Action Plan and the STECF possibility to invite experts to its meeting	Sent 30/10/2023
16	BSAC letter on the effectiveness of cod spawning area protection measures and the possibility to allow scientific test fishing	Sent 30/10/2023

⁷ All on the website here: [Advice & Recommendations - Baltic Sea Advisory Council \(bsac.dk\)](https://www.bsac.dk)

17	BSAC recommendations on the BALTFISH two draft Joint Recommendation regarding fisheries conservation measures in five marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea	Sent 02/11/2023
18	Follow-up on BSAC recommendations concerning the development of offshore windfarms	Sent 07/11/2023 Reply received 15/12/2023
19	BSAC recommendations on the STECF 2023 Annual Economic Fleet Report	Sent 20/11/2023
20	BSAC reply to the Commission questionnaire on implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation	Sent 24/11/2023
21	BSAC Recommendations on the EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries	Sent 04/12/2023 Reply received 13/03/2024
22	Joint-AC letter on ACs stakeholder input	Sent 05/12/2023 Reply received 08/03/2024
23	Invitation to COM to participate in a BSAC executive meeting to discuss ongoing and upcoming ICES requests	Sent 06/12/2023
24	BSAC reply to the European Commission open feedback on the proposed changes to the Baltic Multiannual Plan (MAP)	Sent 29/01/2024
25	BSAC input to HELCOM FISH meeting: priority species for better data	Sent 12/03/2024

Here are short summaries from the meetings held by the BSAC 2023 -2024. You can find full reports, presentations and participant lists in the links.

- **BSAC Focus Group on energy transition for the for Baltic Sea fisheries sector, 17th April 2023 – online**

This was the first meeting of the Focus Group with the objective to produce a draft BSAC recommendation, to be further discussed in the BSAC Working Groups and presented to the ExCom for adoption. The Focus Group adopted the Terms of Reference. A representative of DG Mare A4 presented the general overview of the Commission’s communication on energy transition. He underlined the increasing energy costs have put the economic viability of the EU fleet under tremendous pressure. The EU recognises the need to reduce the EU’s dependency on fossil fuels through energy savings and substitution with renewable and low-carbon alternatives. The objective is to increase the future resilience of the sector and reduce carbon footprint of fisheries and aquaculture products. He informed that the Commission will launch the Energy Transition Partnership and invited the stakeholders to join. A representative of the NSAC Secretariat presented the advice on decarbonisation of the fishing fleet. The Focus Group discussed the organisation of the work and the next steps.

Link to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC WEBINAR Climate change and natural mortality in the Baltic Sea: How to account for these in the scientific advice? 4th May 2023 - online**

The webinar presented the main impacts of climate change that can be expected on the Baltic Sea fish stocks and how can scientific advice and management help to build resilient fisheries. Alan Baudron, Marine Scotland Science presented an overview of the main impacts of climate change on fisheries. Anna Gårdmark, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) presented the

warming effects of climate change in the Baltic. Kathy Mills, Gulf of Maine Research Institute underlined that it is crucial to consider the intersections between climate change and fisheries management. Climate change has been associated with significant impacts on fish populations in terms of shifts in spatial distribution, phenology and productivity. Stefan Neuenfeldt, DTU Aqua, National Institute of Aquatic Resources referred to the interactions between cod and sprat. Increasing temperature make sprat stock increase, sometimes so much that they compete with each other. Lack of bottom oxygen and warming make cod stocks decrease. There was a panel discussion based on the questions received from BSAC members. The BSAC ExCom Chair stated that the webinar was the first step in understanding issues faced by the environment and fishers in the Baltic. The BSAC will continue to discuss on how to account climate effects in scientific advice and fisheries management.

Link to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Executive Committee, 16th May 2023, Brussels, hybrid**

The Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Sinkevičius thanked the BSAC for inviting the Commissioner to the meeting and presented his apologies for not being able to attend in person due to several missions abroad. She underlined the fundamental role of the Advisory Councils in the development and implementation of the CFP. The Head of Cabinet presented the Commission's package, published in February 2023. She underlined that through the implementation of the actions contained in the package, the Commission aims at identifying the deficiency areas and at closing the gaps in the implementation of the CFP. Some participants regretted that despite the fact that the Commission underlines the fundamental role of the ACs in the implementation of the CFP, the BSAC advice and recommendations had not been taken into account by the decision-makers in recent years. Several participants could not agree with the blanket approach to a ban on bottom trawling in Europe. The meeting discussed the action points from the Action Plan and the CFP Communication.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **General Assembly, 17th May 2023, Brussels, hybrid**

The ExCom Chair presented the annual BSAC report and underlined that 2022-23 had been a very busy year for the BSAC. The work programme for 2023-24 was adopted. There was a vote on the revised Rules of Procedure. A need to clarify the legal text of the Delegated Regulation, relating to small scale fishers was identified. The General Assembly decided to ask the ExCom to re-establish the Focus Group on the Rules of Procedure, in order to resolve the outstanding issues. The General Assembly took note of the appointment of BalticWaters by the OIG organisations as a BSAC ExCom member. The General Assembly adopted the nomination of the new Vice chair of the General Assembly by consensus.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Workshop on the Multiannual Plan for the Baltic Sea, 17th May 2023, Brussels, hybrid**

Following the interest of some BSAC members to update the BSAC position on the Baltic MAP, 7 years after its adoption and 3 years after its first evaluation, the workshop discussed the Multiannual Plan for the Baltic (MAP). The representative of DG Mare referred to the first report on the implementation of the Multiannual Plan (MAP) for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, published in September 2020. Being the first of its kind, the Baltic MAP was held up as a "blue print" for other subsequent MAPs, for the North Sea, Western Waters and Western Mediterranean. According to the Commission's report, the Baltic MAP has proven to be a helpful tool to implement the Common Fisheries Policy. Mark Dickey-Collas, Chair of ICES ACOM presented the ICES advice on EU request to report on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Multiannual Plan from 2019. The ACOM Chair underlined that the Baltic is affected

by climate change. He referred to the fact that invasive species (round goby) are increasing in range and abundance. The abundance of stickleback has increased in recent years. Parasite loadings from seals and also stickleback affect some commercial species. The reproductive success of Baltic cod is in decline, and this is attributed to changes in abiotic conditions. The concept of FMSY assuming long term equilibrium is not considered appropriate for the Baltic cod stocks presently due to the large decline in productivity. In his recorded intervention, MEP Pierre Karleskind, Chair of the Fisheries Committee (PECH) referred to the fact that the Baltic MAP had been the first adopted multiannual plan in the EU. In the course of the discussion, the participants pointed to the following core messages: the current MAP has not delivered the expected results; there is a need to revise the MAP in view of the current state of the fish stocks; the MAP has not facilitated regional cooperation; the MAP needs to be adjusted to the on-going changes in the ecosystem; there is a need for adaptative management in changing environmental conditions; the MAP and the technical measures should be revised to take account of the changes in the state of the fish stocks and the environment; the MAP should include socio-economic considerations. Link to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Joint Working Group, 13th and 14th June 2023, Copenhagen, hybrid**

Dorleta Garcia, ACOM Vice-Chair explained the 2023 advice by stocks (cod, flatfish, pelagic stocks, sprat, salmon), and gave a power point presentation. She explained the principles of the advice. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and comment at the end of each category of stocks. The floor was opened for discussion stock by stock and the initial development of draft BSAC recommendations for the fishery for 2024. The Working Group asked the Secretariat to produce, after the meeting, draft BSAC recommendations for the fishery in the Baltic Sea in 2024, taking into account the statements made by the BSAC members at the meeting. Participants were asked to submit further input to the recommendations. LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Focus Group on energy transition for the for Baltic Sea fisheries sector Thursday, 22nd June 2023, online**

This was a second meeting of the Focus Group. The Focus Group Chair gave a brief summary of the launch of Energy Transition Partnership, organised by the European Commission on 16th June 2023 to steer the process and to involve all stakeholders. He underlined that the issue of decarbonisation is high on the political agenda. The Executive Secretary presented the structure of the draft recommendation. He referred to the comments received from Swedish Pelagic Federation PO to the draft recommendation and the comments made during the BSAC ExCom meeting in May 2023. Participants referred to the need to include both vessels modernisation and construction of new vessels in the BSAC recommendations on the Energy transition. The need to take into account the need to shift from energy intensive fisheries to low impact fisheries and to consider the necessary changes in the entire value chain were also mentioned. Daniel Stepputtis informed that the Federal German Thünen Institute of Baltic Sea Fisheries has initiated the conceptualisation of a “fishing vessel of the future”, including a flexible propulsion concept (climate-neutral, emission-free, modular) with a range extender as well as providing for a modular deployment/multi-use concept in order to take into account the need for diversification of the small coastal fishing sector. LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Executive Committee, 29th June 2023, Vigo, hybrid**

In her welcoming address, Dr Susan Steele, Executive Director of EFCA underlined that it was a genuine pleasure to host the BSAC at EFCA premises in Vigo. She stated that the Advisory Councils are the eyes and ears on the ground for EFCA. Bilateral meetings are of great value. The Baltic Sea Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) is the core activity for EFCA. It takes into account specific concerns with relation to the Baltic fisheries, such as control of salmon and eel and control of the

closure of cod fishery. The number of sea inspections has increased in the Baltic and a fixed wing aircraft had been used for the first time. The meeting discussed the BSAC draft recommendations on fishing opportunities for the Baltic in 2024. The Executive Secretary informed that the draft recommendation prepared by the Secretariat had been sent to members for comments after the Joint Working Group meeting. He informed on the input received from members. In the spirit of looking for compromise, he proposed to discuss the proposed amendments. The BSAC members had comments to several stocks. These comments were duly noted by the Secretariat in the draft recommendations. After a further exchange of views, the ExCom asked the Secretariat to make the final necessary amendments to the draft recommendations as agreed by the meeting. It was decided that the revised document would be sent to the ExCom for final written approval, before being sent to the Commission and Member States in the beginning of July 2023. Julia Rubeck, the new AC coordinator at DG Mare presented the Commission Communication “Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2024”. Miguel Nuevo from EFCA presented the overview of the working procedures of EFCA.

LINK to the report: [ExComJune2023report.pdf \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Focus Group on the Rules of Procedure, 28th August 2023, online**

The Focus Group Chair recalled that following several rounds of consultation of the members, and after receiving various comments, a new version of the rules had been submitted to the Executive Committee by the Honorary Chair of the General Assembly, with the deadline for comments on 28th August. The Focus Group discussed the outstanding issues referring to the revision of the Rules of Procedure. The Focus Group Chair concluded the meeting by informing the participants that the next meeting of the FG will take place after receiving a response from the Commission to the BSAC letter seeking clarification to correctly interpret and implement the Regulation.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Focus Group on energy transition for the for Baltic Sea fisheries sector, 4th September 2023, Stockholm, hybrid**

The aim of the second meeting of the Focus Group (FG) on energy transition was to make good progress in preparing the BSAC recommendation. The FG Chair underlined that the BSAC recommendation should put focus, in the short term, on improving the energy efficiency of the existing fleet with the objective of reducing fossil fuel consumption. He drew attention to the fact that energy efficiency cannot be increased uniquely by replacing the engines. Other ways to enhance energy efficiency in fisheries include changes to the vessels, the fishing gear and fishing patterns. There is a need for clear ideas on how to construct a vessel under the principles of energy efficiency. The FG agreed that pilot projects should be the first step to energy transition in the BSAC recommendation and should primarily engage small-scale vessels. The FG agreed that capacity reductions are one effective way to reduce the emissions. Lack of fishing opportunities as well as difficulties to attract young people to the sector were mentioned as barriers to energy transition. Therefore, socioeconomic incentives should be provided to fishers to make them stay in the sector, as well as to attract young people to the profession.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Pelagic Working Group, 26th September 2023, online**

The meeting discussed the Commission’s Ocean Package published in February 2023, on the basis of a draft document prepared by the BSAC Secretariat, including actions relevant to the BSAC. The WG decided to include the comments made during the meeting in the BSAC recommendations. The Executive Secretary referred to the reply received on 25th July 2023 from the Commission to the BSAC letter on western herring, sent on 31st January 2023. He reminded the WG that in this letter, the BSAC recommended to use the EU Multiannual Plan (MAP) for the Baltic

Sea to act as a rebuilding plan and to request ICES to put the EU MAP advice as its headline advice for 2024. The Working Group decided to ask the BSAC ExCom to invite the Norwegian authorities to one of the BSAC meetings, in order to discuss the matter of the management of western herring and the possibility to establish a rebuilding plan. Einar Eg Nielsen, DTU Aqua presented the DNAMIX project, aimed at transforming the way to monitor and manage species composition within mixed catches from mixed pelagic fisheries. The Working Group discussed the updated Commission's proposal on TACs for 2024. Lauri Saks, University of Tartu, Estonia gave a short presentation on the progress and results obtained in trial fisheries for stickleback. The Executive Secretary referred to updates on stickleback trial fishery received from Baltic research institutes.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

• **BSAC Ecosystem Based Management Working Group, 27th September 2023, online**

The meeting discussed the response from the Commission to BSAC recommendations concerning the development of offshore windfarms and fisheries interactions. The Working Group decided to ask the Commission to include in the request to ICES on the effects of OWF on marine environment and existing activities at sea, such as fisheries: decommissioning schemes, compensation schemes for unforeseen future damages and impact on recruitment of some stocks, in particular western Baltic herring. A representative of DG Mare referred to the measures aimed at recovery of European eel listed in the Action Plan. The Working Group decided to send a letter to the Commission requesting to include eel on the agenda of the Joint Special Group and asking to publicly share the draft update of the Eel Management Plan guidance document. The meeting discussed the Commission's Ocean Package published in February 2023, on the basis of a draft document prepared by the BSAC Secretariat, including actions relevant to the BSAC. The WG decided to include the comments made during the meeting in the BSAC recommendations. Jannica Haldin, Deputy Executive Secretary, HELCOM presented the third HELCOM holistic assessment (HOLAS 3) that provides a comprehensive overview of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea, covering the assessment period of 2016–2021. Thanos Smanis and Belinda Bramley from MPA Europe presented their project with the overall objective to map the optimal location for MPAs in Europe to support transboundary Marine Spatial Planning for a network including as high biodiversity of species, habitats, and ecosystems as possible, and blue carbon stores.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

• **BSAC Demersal Working Group, 28th September 2023, online**

The meeting discussed the Commission's Ocean Package published in February 2023, on the basis of a draft document prepared by the BSAC Secretariat, including actions relevant to the BSAC. The Working Group decided to include the comments made during the meeting in the BSAC recommendations. The Working Group took note of a reply from the Commission to the BSAC recommendation on the effectiveness of cod spawning area protection measures, received on 25th August, stating that the Commission will discuss the recommendation with the Member States concerned. Following a discussion on the effectiveness of current conservation measures in place for the Baltic cod. The Working Group decided to ask the BSAC Secretariat to draft a letter to BALTFISH Member States asking for the possibility of conducting test fishing on the basis of Article 25 of the Technical Measures Regulation (2019/1241)6 to find evidence that there is no cod bycatch between 20 and 30 m depth. The meeting discussed the Commission's proposal on 2024 fishing opportunities for cod and plaice, published on 19th September 2023. Fabian Reith from Fish-X project presented the 3-year project, co-funded by the Horizon Europe Programme. The project aims at overcoming key sets of challenges including the following points: 1) collection and sharing of data, in particular from small-scale and recreational fisheries; and 2) accessing, managing, and utilising data to strengthen the monitoring and control as well as the sustainability of EU fisheries.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Executive Committee 26th October 2023, Gdynia, hybrid**

The meeting dealt with administrative issue, reports from meetings, including the Webinar on Climate Change, work of the Working Groups and Focus Group on the Rules of Procedure. The BSAC members were asked to provide further input to the MIAC/MIACO meetings. The AGRIFISH Council decisions on 2024 TACs were presented and discussed. The participants underlined the need to take into account interspecies in the stock advice and decisions on the TACs and the need to revise the Baltic MAP should also be revised accordingly. Raul Prellezo, presented the Baltic chapter of the 2023 Annual Economic Report (AER) on the EU fishing fleet. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the latest information available on the structure and economic performance of the EU Member States fishing fleets. Following a discussion, the ExCom decided that the BSAC secretariat will prepare a draft letter to STECF with the remarks made during the meeting. The meeting discussed the new Control Regulation.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Workshop on seals and cormorants - the Baltic predators: Balancing fisheries and the environment, 27th October 2023, Gdynia, hybrid**

The objective of the workshop was to gain feedback of experts on the legal rules and management measures related to seals and cormorants, on the status of populations, monitoring and interactions of seals and cormorants with fish stocks and fisheries. 23 speakers had presentations related to, among others, the policy and management measures in place, cormorants and seal interactions with fisheries, parasites transmitted by seals, status of the seal populations in the Baltic, compensation schemes for human-seal conflict mitigation, seal-related project RESOCO and economic aspects of the seal-fisheries interactions. The workshop concluded with 4 presentations from the perspective of the BSAC members.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Focus Group on Technical Measures Regulation questionnaire, 13th November 2023, online**

The task of the Focus Group (FG) was to prepare a BSAC answer to the Commission consultation on the evaluation of the Implementation of the Technical Measure Regulation. The draft recommendation was sent to the Executive Committee for validation before the deadline given by the European Commission.

LINK to related background documents: [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Executive Committee, 24th January 2024, Warsaw, hybrid**

The Executive Secretary informed on the current status of expenditures and on the change of the BSAC office premises. The BSAC Executive Committee welcomed a new member of the General Assembly: the Polish Association of Fish Processors (PAFP). The ExCom approved the draft work programme for 2024-2025 and the draft budget for 2024-2025. The meeting discussed how to proceed with the revision of the Rules of Procedure. There was general consensus to move forward with the adoption of the revised Rules of Procedure (RoP) and to recommend to the General Assembly to adopt the RoP during an extraordinary General Assembly, held online, in the end beginning of April. The Focus Group was given a new mandate by the ExCom dedicated to examining how to define the indicators to attribute the “share” of small-scale fleets in the Member States. A representative from DG ENER presented the Commission Wind Power Action Plan, adopted on 24th October 2023. The Executive Secretary presented reports from several meetings attended by the BSAC representatives. The Executive Secretary referred to the discussion on the implementation of actions of the BSAP, held during HELCOM FISH Working Group. He pointed at BSAP action (S40) aimed at identifying fish species for which there is a need for better data for

identified purposes, such as setting threshold levels on which the BSAC representatives had declared support in the form of a list of proposed species with rationale included. Jannica Haldin, HELCOM Deputy Executive Secretary presented the relevant actions. The meeting took note of the letter sent to DG Mare in reply to the DG Mare letter sent on 10th of November 2023, in which the BSAC had asked for more transparency and clarity in relation to the ongoing requests, in particular the Baltic herring stocks. The Commission's representative stated that the Commission fully acknowledges the need for stakeholder involvement and is willing to have in-depth discussions at InterAC to establish some principles already this year for the advice to ICES and STECF. The meeting discussed a proposal for a Regulation amending the Multiannual Plan for the Baltic (the MAP), tabled by the Commission, regarding deletion of Article 4.6. The public consultation on the proposal was opened until 31st January 2024. The BSAC draft recommendation was discussed. The representative of the Polish BALTFISH Presidency gave an update on the work programme, including the work on harbour porpoise and eel, as well as the EFCA landing obligation compliance report.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **BSAC Joint Demersal - Pelagic Working Group, 27th February 2024 and 28th February 2024, online**

The Working Group discussed the relevant actions of the Commission's Communication on the CFP, divided in chapters and added statements to the recommendations provided on the basis of past BSAC recommendations, other ACs work and the BSAC EBM Working Group. A special session on species interactions included a series of scientific presentations followed by Q&A and discussion. Nataliia Kulatska, Swedish University of Agricultural Science presented size-selective cod predation: impact on prey and implications for pelagic fisheries. Nis Sand Jacobsen, DTU Aqua presented species interaction in the Baltic, consisting of predation leading to natural mortality, somatic growth due to prey abundance, food competition and disease spread and are crucial drivers of population dynamics. Michele Casini, Swedish University of Agricultural Science presented cod – flounder interactions. Marco Scotti, GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel presented how ecosystem based fisheries management restores biodiversity. Kristiina Hommik, University of Tartu presented an initial analysis of mixed fisheries in the Baltic Sea fisheries. Stefan Neuenfeldt, DTU Aqua presented traditional species interactions in the Baltic Sea that include the interactions between cod, herring, and sprat, as well as interactions between cod and flounder, and competition for food, including benthos organisms (Saduria, Bylgides). The Working Group discussed the BSAC input to the BSAP actions on data needs (already discussed at the ExCom in January). follows such policy. Another fisheries representative from Poland supported his statement. In the course of discussion several data needs were mentioned by the meeting participants, such as, among others, data on spatial distribution and size and age distribution for all stocks and data on the structure of the stocks and structure of catches. Riku Varjopuro, Syke presented the Permagov project, aimed at analysing and improving the performance of marine policies in realisation of the EU Green Deal objectives. Karin Hüsey presented the TABACOD project in the context of concerns raised by the BSAC on the fact that the results of the TABACOD project had not been considered in the ICES assessment.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Focus Group on the Rules of Procedure, 5th March 2024, online**

The Focus Group on the Rules of Procedure was re-established to deal with the definition of small-scale fishing vessels as well as indicators to establish what share such vessels would represent of a Member State's fishing fleet. The participants exchanged their initial views on how to define small-scale fishing vessels as well as the indicators to establish what share such vessels would represent of a Member State's fishing fleet. The Focus Group agreed to ask the Secretariat to draft a letter to the Member States, as set out above in order to gather data upon which to base further

discussions, and circulate it to the Focus Group for further consideration. The Secretariat is also invited to reflect on other ways to advance the work of the Focus Group and share its ideas and suggestions in due time. In light of the information gathered at the next meeting of the Focus Group (to be decided) the Focus Group will decide on how to advance work in order to deliver in the terms of references.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **EBM Working Group, 8th March 2024, online**

The Working Group discussed the relevant outstanding actions of the CFP Communication with a view to finalising the BSAC recommendations. Simon Jennings, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair presented the ICES advice in response to the EU request on identifying operational indicators and defining usable threshold values (reference points) for criterion D3C3 under MSFD Decision (EU) 2017/848. ICES advises that eight state indicators (retained after screening and testing) describing recruitment, growth of individuals, and age or length structure, are suitable to track changes in population structure in a wide range of populations. ICES was unable to advise on threshold values for any of the retained and tested state indicators. This was because ICES could not identify breakout points when looking at the indicator values and therefore considered that setting a threshold would be more of a management decision rather than a scientific one. The Executive Secretary informed that the BSAC input to HELCOM BSAP in the form of a list of species for which there is a need for better data was discussed in the Joint WG on 27-28 February 2024. After some discussion, the Working Group decided to include in the BSAC draft input coastal data-deficient non quota species (such as pike, perch, turbot, roach, vendace, burbot, round goby and others), data and research needs regarding species interactions and stickleback (impact on other species).

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](#)

- **Management team meetings**

The BSAC Management Team held 11 meetings during its the year 2023-2024.

Reports: https://www.bsac.dk/past-meetings/?meeting_search=all+Management+Team&meeting_year=&loc=

- **Virtual coffee meetings**

The BSAC Management Team held 5 Virtual coffee meetings with the Polish BALTFISH Presidency, following agreed agendas.

[21st September 2023](#)

[25th October 2023](#)

[4th December 2023](#)

[16th January 2024](#)

[11th March 2024](#)

External meetings

The BSAC representatives and in particular the BSAC Chair and Secretariat have taken part in a string of meetings. These are listed here. Reports are always uploaded on the website and informed of in the BSAC newsletter. They are all available on request to the secretariat. See more under the links: [External Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council \(bsac.dk\)](#) and

<https://www.bsac.dk/latest-news/>

Subject	Date	Name of who took part
Baltic Sea Fisheries Forum	11/04/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
ICES presentation of the new application	13/04/2023	BSAC Secretariat

EFARO WEBINAR on Offshore Wind Farms and how we monitor their impact in Europe	14/04/2023	BSAC Secretariat
EFCA Advisory Board meeting	19/04/2023	BSAC ExCom Vice Chair
Meeting Mission Oceans: Restore oceans and waters by 2030	25 – 26/04/2023	BSAC Secretariat
European Parliament PECH Committee meeting, Ocean Package	26/04/2023	BSAC Secretariat
European Maritime Days	24-25/05/2023	BSAC Executive Secretary
ICES meeting on the science in the Baltic	12/06/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair and Executive Secretary
Energy Transition Partnership Workshop	16/06/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
European Parliament hearing on the eel regulation	27/06/2023	BSAC Secretariat
BBNJ-CBD event by EBCD	05/07/2023	BSAC Secretariat
MPA Europe stakeholder briefing – Baltic	12/07/2023	BSAC Executive Secretary
European Parliament Fisheries Committee – Eel report	18/07/2023	BSAC Secretariat
BALTFISH Forum	05/09/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair, Vice-Chair, EBM WG Chair and Secretariat
MSC event	06/09/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
WWF webinar on marine protected areas	20/09/2023	BSAC Secretariat
Webinar on offshore renewable energy (WWF, CCB)	25/09/2023	BSAC Secretariat
Björn Carlsons Östersjöpris BalticSea Prize Ceremony	26/09/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
Our Baltic Conference	29/09/2023	ExCom Chair
Joint Special Group	06/10/2023	ExCom Chair, EBM WG Chair and the Executive Secretary.
Inter-AC meeting	10/10/2023	ExCom Chair, Vice-Chair, EBM WG Chair and Secretariat
Rethinking the allocation of fisheries catches for fairer and more sustainable decisions, organised by the Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment	11/10/2023	BSAC Secretariat
Meeting with Commissioner	17/10/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
EFCA Advisory Board	19/10/2023	BSAC ExCom Vice Chair
HELCOM FISH WG	01-03/11/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair and Executive Secretary
1st Mission Arena by Blue Mission BANOS	13-15/11/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
Baltic Breakfast on Gulf of Riga	15/11/2023	BSAC Secretariat

herring		
Decarbonising the fishing sector (Oceana, Client Earth)	23/11/2023	BSAC Secretariat
Energy Transition Workshop on finance	28/11/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
Is bottom trawling sustainable? New perspective under the Commission's Action Plan – hosted by MEP Niclas Herbst	28/11/2023	BSAC Secretariat
Energy Transition Partnership	28/11/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair
Visit EFCA Vessel	29/11/2023	Executive Secretary
Roundtable with the Commissioner before December Council	07/12/2023	BSAC ExCom Chair and Vice-Chair
HELCOM FISH M	14/12/2023	BSAC ExCom Vice-Chair, BSAC Secretariat
DPPO Pelagic science conference	18/12/2023	BSAC Executive Secretary
MIAC and MIACO meetings with ICES	18-19/01/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair, Executive Secretary
STECF Expert Group on technical measures	22/01/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair, Executive Secretary
Fish-X webinar – modernising fishing vessels with digital tools	26/01/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Blue Invest Webinar on Energy Transition of EU Fisheries and Aquaculture	30/01/2024	BSAC Secretariat
HELCOM FISH M meeting on salmon	30/01/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Eurofish Governing Council meeting	01-02/02/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair
Inter-AC meeting	06/02/2024	BSAC ExCom Vice-Chair and an ExCom member
HELCOM FISH M meeting on eel	13/02/2024	BSAC Secretariat
European Parliament: Increasing selectivity in EU fisheries – state of play and best practices	19/02/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Energy Transition Partnership Workshop: Innovation and technology	28/02/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair
Meeting of Advisory Councils and the European Commission to discuss the procedure for advice requests to ICES and STECF	29/02/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair, GA Vice-Chair, Secretariat
HELCOM stakeholder conference	29/02/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair
European Ocean Days	04-06/03/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair
HELCOM FISH WG meeting	12-14/03/2024	BSAC ExCom Chair, Executive

		Secretary
ASCOBANS – Jastarnia Group	13-15/03/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Fishers of the Future	19/03/2024	Demersal WG Chair, BSAC Secretariat
International ocean governance – sustainable ocean initiative (soi) global dialogue with regional seas organizations & regional fishery bodies	20/03/2024	BSAC Secretariat

Scientific experts and special guests invited to BSAC meetings during the year

At the Webinar on climate change and natural mortality in the Baltic Sea, 4th May 2023

Alan Baudron, Marine Scotland Science; Anna Gårdmark, SLU; Kathy Mills, Gulf of Maine Research Institute; Stefan Neuenfeldt, DTU Aqua; Marc Dickey Collas, ICES ACOM Chair.

At the Executive Committee on 16th May 2023

Carmen Preising, Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner; Chris McDougall, project leader, the European Blue Forum; Vanya Vulperhorst, Campaign Director, Oceana;

Workshop on the Multiannual Plan for the Baltic Sea, 17th May 2023

Mark Dickey-Collas, Chair of ICES ACOM; MEP Pierre Karleskind, Chair of the Fisheries Committee (PECH) – online;

At the Joint WG 13th – 14th June 2023

Dorleta Garcia ICES ACOM Vice Chair

At the Focus Group on energy transition for the for Baltic Sea fisheries sector, 22nd June 2023

Daniel Stepputtis, Federal German Thünen Institute

At the Executive Committee on 29th June 2023

Dr Susan Steele, Executive Director of EFCA; Miguel Nuevo, EFCA

At the Pelagic Working Group 26th September 2023

Einar Eg Nielsen, DTU Aqua; Lauri Saks, University of Tartu, Estonia

At the Ecosystem based management Working Group on 27th September 2023

Jannica Haldin, Deputy Executive Secretary, HELCOM; Thanos Smanis and Belinda Bramley from MPA Europe;

At the Demersal Working Group 28th September 2023

Fabian Reith, Jean-Pierre Cauzac and Theo Saccareau from Fish-X project;

At the Executive Committee on 26th October 2023

Raul Prellezo, AZTI, STECF

Workshop on predators, 27th October 2023

Vedran Nikolic (DG ENV D3), Anne Delvaux (DG ENV F3), Alice Belin (DG ENV C2); : Florent Nicolas, HELCOM; Katarzyna Kamińska, Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Elo Rasmann, Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture, Estonia; Norbert Häubner, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management; Gildas Glemarec, DTU Aqua; Maria Ovegård, SLU; Thomas Bregnballe, Aarhus University, Denmark; Niels Jepsen, DTU Aqua; Tyrell DeWeber, The Potsdam Institute of Inland Fisheries, Germany; Mats Westerborn, LUKE, Finland; Magdalena Podolska, NMFRI, Poland; Kurt Buchmann, University of Copenhagen, Denmark; Karin Hårding, University of Gothenburg, Sweden; Katarzyna Nadolna – Ałtyn, NMFRI, Poland; Sven-Gunnar Lunneryd and Sara Königson, SLU, Sweden; Staffan Waldo, SLU.

At the Executive Committee, 24th January 2024

Alessandro Polito from DG ENER; Jannica Haldin, HELCOM Deputy Executive Secretary.

At the Joint Working Group on 27th and 28th February 2024

Nataliia Kulatska, SLU; Nis Sand Jacobsen, DTU Aqua; Michele Casini, SLU; Marco Scotti, GEOMAR; Kristiina Hommik, University of Tartu; Stefan Neuenfeldt, DTU Aqua; Riku Varjopuro, Syke; Karin Hussy, DTU Aqua.

At the Ecosystem-based Management Working Group, 8th March 2024

Simon Jennings, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair.

Projects supported

The BSAC supports research and projects, but is not in a position to participate or provide support. Secretariat clear and swift in informing members, encouraging participation. This year, the BSAC had given its formal support to the **CIBBRiNA EU LIFE Bycatch project** proposal that has started in 2023.

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Keeping the BSAC members informed

BSAC members have received regular newsletters⁸ from the BSAC Secretariat. There has been a total of 11 during the year. These have also been made available to observers and put on the BSAC website. The BSAC website was revised in 2023.

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Who are the members of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council?

The BSAC started the year 2023-2024 with 41 General Assembly members from fisheries associations, producer organisations, processors, market and trade organisations, environmental NGOs, and recreational and sports fishers. Amongst this membership, all

⁸ <https://www.bsac.dk/newsletters/>

Baltic Member States are represented. There is no quota system on members applying to the BSAC.

Who was who on the General Assembly 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Fisheries Interests (28)	
The Fishermen's Association of Bornholm and Christiansø	Danish Fishers Producer Organisation
European Association of Fishmeal and Fish Oil Producers	Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation
Association for Low Impact Coastal Fishery	Estonian Fishermen's Association
Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations	Finnish Fishermen's Association
Bundesverband der Deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels E.V.	German Cutter-and Coastal-Fishermen's Association
Union of German Cutter Fishery	Association of Fisheries Protection
Latvian Fisheries Association	Lithuanian Fisheries Producers' Association
The Association of Fishermen and Fish Processors Baltijos zvejas	Association of Fishermen's of Sea- PO
National Chamber of Fish Producers	Kołobrzeg Group of Producers Fish
Polish Fish Producers Association	Darłowska Group of Fish Producers and Shipowners
The Fishermen Fish Producers Organisation ORL-PR	Sweden Pelagic Federation PO (SPF)
Fish Producers' Organisation Bałtyk	The Swedish Fishermen Producer Organisation
Åland Islands Fishermen's Association	Fishermen's Federation for Small-Scale Fishery in Sweden
LIFE Low Impact Fishers of Europe	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association - Federation of National Organisations of Importers and Exporters of Fish
Other Interest Groups (13)	
Swedish Society for Nature and Conservation	The Fisheries Secretariat
Danish Recreational Fishermen	Coalition Clean Baltic
Finnish Association for Nature Conservation	German Angling Association
European Anglers Alliance	CIPS International Confederation for Sport Fishing
Association of Recreational Fishing Ships SAJKS	Polish Ecological Club
World Wide Fund for Nature WWF	BalticWaters
Baltic Salmon Rivers Association	

What about the Executive Committee?

There is room for maximum 30 organisations on the Executive Committee, nominated and elected by the General Assembly. This means 18 for the fisheries interests and 12 for the

other interest groups (OIG). The current Executive Committee runs from 2021 – 2024 (elected September 2021). The 18 seats of the fisheries college are full. Of the 12 seats for the OIG, 8 are filled. All updated on the website. ⁹

⁹ <http://www.bsac.dk/BSAC-Members/Executive-Committee>

Who are the office bearers? Please note that the BSAC will hold elections in May 2024

Honorary Chair of the BSAC General Assembly

Ingemar Berglund
ingemar.berglund@gmail.com

Vice Chair of the BSAC General Assembly

Christian Tsangarides
Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE)
bans@lifeplatform.eu

Chair of the BSAC ExCom – elected May 2022

Jarek Zieliński
Fish Producers' Organisation Baltyk
ul. Baltycka 1, 78-100 Kolobrzeg
Poland
chair@bsac.dk

Vice Chair of the BSAC ExCom

Sportfiskarna
Aurorum 2
977 75, Luleå
Sweden
glenn.douglas@sportfiskarna.se

Chair of the Demersal Working Group

Teija Aho
Swedish Fishermen PO
Fiskets Hus
Fiskhamnsgatan 33
S-414 58 Göteborg
Sweden
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Chair of the Pelagic Working Group

Lise Laustsen
Danmarks Pelagiske Producentorganisation
Axeltorv 3, 6.
1609 København V
Denmark
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Chair of the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Working Group

Nils Höglund
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The BSAC Secretariat

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