

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002568/25
to the Commission**

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(25 June 2025)

Subject: North Western Waters Advisory Council's advice concerning the negative impact of offshore wind farms

In its Advice of 3 June 2025, the North Western Waters Advisory Council highlights the negative impact of offshore wind farms on our marine areas.

It underlines the strategic inconsistencies across the Commission's various guidelines and notes that wind farm projects could undermine the EU's objectives.

The advice also refers to the report by the European Court of Auditors, which raises concerns about the social, economic and environmental challenges for fisheries, caused in particular by fishers' reduced access to fishing areas.

Among its recommendations, the advice advocates greater involvement of fishers in decision-making processes and management bodies.

1. Does the Commission intend to take specific measures to ensure that fishers are no longer systematically penalised as a result of usage conflicts linked to uncontrolled development of offshore wind farms?
2. Will it take account of the advice of the North Western Waters Advisory Council and the report by the European Court of Auditors, which cast doubt on its energy strategy?
3. Will it give proper consideration to consultations of local stakeholders who are overwhelmingly opposed to offshore wind farms?

Submitted: 25.6.2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(14 August 2025)

The Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive requires Member States to plan their seas sustainably, utilising an ecosystem-based approach⁽¹⁾ and promoting the coexistence of various activities, including fisheries. It promotes the coexistence of different activities, like fisheries and wind energy projects.

As part of this framework, the Commission encourages Member States to consider interactions between various marine uses and to engage local stakeholders early when developing or revising maritime plans.

The Commission actively supports studies, projects and regional cooperation on co-existence and mitigation measures of offshore renewable energy developments:

⁽¹⁾ according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, it means that the collective pressure of all human activities does not prevent good environmental status and sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations.

- Since 2023, Horizon Europe has funded projects related to social and environmental interactions of wind energy ⁽²⁾;
- The European Blue Forum, launched in 2023 ⁽³⁾, promotes a balance between economic growth, social well-being, and environmental sustainability;
- The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) recently delivered an advice on the interactions between fisheries and offshore renewable energy production ⁽⁴⁾;
- Following a recommendation from the European Court of Auditors Special Report 22/2023 on Offshore renewable energy in the EU ⁽⁵⁾, the Commission is carrying out a study on employment, skills and social implications of offshore renewable energy in the EU, expected by the end of 2026.

On 1 July 2025, the Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans hosted an Implementation Dialogue on the MSP Directive ⁽⁶⁾.

The Commission's reply to the advice from the North Western Waters Advisory Council will be publicly available in due time on their website ⁽⁷⁾.

⁽²⁾ https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-08.

⁽³⁾ <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/european-blue-forum>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/EU_request_on_economic_social_and_ecological_impacts_of_offshore_wind_farms_OWFs_and_floating_offshore_wind_farms_FLOWS_on_fisheries_in_the_Baltic_Sea_Celtic_Seas_and_Greater_North_Sea/28759328?file=53600990.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2023-22>.

⁽⁶⁾ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/events/implementation-dialogue-implementation-maritime-spatial-planning-directive-2025-07-01_en.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.nwwac.org/publications.26.html>.