

From the Fisheries Secretariat sent on 2nd October 2018

Addressing the imbalance in the percentage of Sector and OIG members in the BSAC General Assembly – Updated 2 October 2018

According to the last update from the secretariat we understand that there are currently 41 members of the BSAC General Assembly and that the current allocation of seats is that 28 are fisheries sector and 13 OIG. That means that 68% of the seats in the General Assembly are allocated to the fisheries sector and 32% to the OIG.

There are various calculations that can be done to assess how to return to the proscribed 60/40 balance. There could for example be an increase of 6-7 more OIG members joining the General Assembly or a decrease in the current fisheries sector membership of 9-10. Or of course a range of values between these two extremes with some increase in OIG and some decrease in fisheries sector.

As the current situation does not respect the basic 60/40 principle of the Advisory Council and is a clear breach of the BSAC statutes we are flagging the issue and asking for a General Assembly discussion in order to find a resolution.

BSAC statute 12 states,

“In both the General Assembly and the Executive Committee 60% of the seats shall be allotted to representatives of the fisheries sector and 40% to representatives of the other interest groups affected by the Common Fisheries Policy.”

The Commission has noted that it has an open door principle for AC General Assemblies and does not want to restrict membership. That’s fine, we accept that. However it still leaves the problem of the current situation breaching BSACs own statutes and not respecting the 60/40 representation principle.

Updated proposal: In an update to this point we note that this issue has recently been addressed in a positive and constructive manner within the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) at its General Assembly meeting on 13 Sept 2018. In a similar situation, i.e. having more than 60% fishing sector membership of their General Assembly, the AAC agreed to weight the OIG votes higher in order to respect the 60/40 principle. We understand that the AAC had first discussed this solution with the Commission and that the Commission was fine with it.

This solution respects the BSAC statutes and the 60/40 principle. It appears to be a reasonable, respectful and sensible solution to the issue. Therefore we would ask that the BSAC General Assembly agrees to do the same i.e. to weight the OIG member votes at General Assemblies to meet the 60/40 principle in-line with our statutes.

As a practical example of what this means: When we have 28 sector members in order to respect the 60/40 principle we should actually have 19 OIG members. Since we only have 13 OIG members we can divide 19 by 13 =1.46 and that gives us the weighting for the OIG votes.

We can discuss the details if anyone is unclear. We have also asked the GA Chair and secretariat to take direct contact with the AAC to confirm these details.

Note from the BSAC Secretariat

We have investigated the 60:40 matter
In an e mail from the Aquaculture AC on 27th September 2018, the Executive Secretary has written to inform:

“Indeed, a revision of our Rules of Procedure to include a coefficient to votes depending on the group to which the Members belong ONLY in case of vote by the general Assembly was on our GA agenda two weeks ago. The objective was to comply to the 60/40% repartition in the GA despite the fact that we currently have a 70/30% repartition of members, with an over-representation of the sector.

The GA finally decided that we had to look further into this with a specialised lawyer to have a formal advice concerning the feasibility of this system in Belgian law (the AAC is a non-profit organisation registered in Belgium).
When we presented this system to the Commission, they first indicated that the Commission was OK with the current “unbalanced” situation and that it shouldn’t prevent the AAC to welcome new Members from the sector. However, if the AAC was willing to introduce a coefficient system and it was compatible with the Belgian law, the Commission expressed that it wouldn’t be against it.”

In other words, the decision is not yet final, and is being looked into.
No final report from the meeting available yet.

A clarification from the BSAC Secretariat on membership

With the recent addition of the Polish member organisation The Fishermen Fish Producers Organisation ORL-PR, the General Assembly now numbers 42:

29 from the fisheries

13 from the Other Interest Groups

See BSAC website:

<http://www.bsac.dk/BSAC-Members/General-Assembly>

It will revert to 41 from 1st April 2018 because the European Transport Workers' Federation recently informed that it will be leaving the BSAC at the end of the current year.

