

Director-General Ms Charlina Vitcheva,
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cc: BALTFISH Member States, ICES

Ref: BSAC/2023-2024/29

Copenhagen, Tuesday 7th November 2023

Subject: Follow-up on BSAC recommendations concerning the development of offshore windfarms

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) would like to thank you for your reply of 11th July 2023¹ to our recommendations concerning the development of offshore windfarms (OWF) in the Baltic Sea².

The BSAC welcomes that the Commission has put forward a non-recurrent request to ICES to examine the impact of OWF on the environment. In this context, the BSAC would like to emphasise the cumulative effects of OWF. We believe that to begin with, it could be very useful to undertake a specific case study on the effects on recruitment of western Baltic herring and of the effects on harbour porpoises being exposed to turbine noise.

Construction of OWF raises a number of issues where ICES studies can be useful when the cumulative effects have to be assessed. One such issue is compensation of the impacts of OWF. Building on past experience of large-scale hydropower infrastructures and their impact on river connectivity, compensation schemes must cover present and future, even **unforeseen cumulative impacts of OWF**. The compensations should cover environmental impact (for example, loss of spawning grounds, damage to the seafloor, and impact on fish migration routes) as well as socio-economic impact (for example, loss of access to fishing grounds for commercial and recreational fishers, loss of income). When building OWF, fishing within a wind farm should, where possible, be allowed.

¹ https://www.bsac.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/reply-to-BSAC-recommendations-on-offshore-wind_2023.pdf

² <https://www.bsac.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/BSACOffshoreWindRecommendations2023-2024-01.pdf>

It is also important to examine the effects of **decommissioning OWF**. What will happen to the potentially positive effects of OWFs, such as reef effects and the creation of new nursery grounds? Will the environment be fully restored?

Finally, taking into account the important development of offshore wind farms in future years and in light of the above, and especially that cumulative effects unfold over time, **the BSAC recommends the Commission to make its request to ICES recurrent.**

We thank you for your continued involvement on that specific topic and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,



Nils Höglund
BSAC Ecosystem Based Management
Working Group Chair



Jarek Zieliński
BSAC Executive Committee Chair