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*The Scientific, Technical
and
Economic Committee
for Fisheries
(STECF)*

RULES OF PROCEDURE

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The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for fisheries (STECF)

A Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) has been established in accordance with Article 26 of European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of 11 December 2013.

In accordance with Art 6(7) of Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (2016/C 74/05) the STECF has adopted the rules of procedure prescribed below.

These rules of procedure shall ensure that the STECF executes its duties and responsibilities in compliance with the principles of excellence, independence and transparency, while respecting the legitimate requirements of confidentiality.

The STECF shall consist of not less than 30 members and not more than 35 members. The STECF shall elect a chairperson and two vice chairpersons among its members for a period of three years.

The STECF Board shall comprise the Chair and vice-chairs. The STECF Bureau shall comprise the STECF Board, the STECF Secretariat and the DG MARE focal point for the STECF.

STECF RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. VOTING RULES

1. The plenum is established when a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as the simple majority of the STECF membership. A simple majority is defined as half of the membership plus 1.
2. The STECF shall adopt its scientific opinions by consensus or by majority vote of its members. Opinions may be adopted in plenum or by accelerated written procedure by correspondence (see Point 13).
3. In the case that no consensus can be reached:
 - a) The opinion of the majority of the members shall be adopted as being the opinion of the STECF. Decisions and opinions can only be adopted if all members attending the meeting have cast their votes or abstained.
 - b) The majority for adopting decisions and opinions shall be the simple majority of the members voting. The simple majority is defined as half of the members voting plus 1.
 - c) Reasoned minority opinions shall be included in the opinions of the STECF and shall be attributed to the members concerned. The rationale for any minority opinion shall be clearly documented.

2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND THE TWO VICE-CHAIRS OF THE STECF

1. The STECF shall elect from among its members a Chair and two Vice-Chairs.
2. The terms of office of the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be a period of three years, renewable but for no more than two consecutive terms.
3. Following the expiry of a three-year period, the chair and vice-chairs shall remain in office until their replacement or their renewal of their term of office.
4. The Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be elected by secret ballot and in writing. Subject to unanimous decision by members attending the meeting, the secrecy requirement for the ballot may be waived.
5. The election procedure shall be chaired by the Commission.
6. The procedure shall be as follow:
 - a) The election of the Chair and of each of the two Vice-Chairs shall be held separately starting with election of the Chair followed by a successive election of the Vice-Chairs.
 - b) The names of those wishing to stand as candidates shall be notified to the STECF Secretariat before the meeting or be announced at the meeting. Members may present themselves as candidates or be proposed by another member.
 - c) The candidates must, prior to the vote, declare that they are prepared to accept the post of Chair (or Vice-Chair) of the STECF and be prepared to assist the Commission and the STECF Secretariat on matters relating to the co-ordination of the STECF, including if necessary participating in co-ordination meetings organised and chaired by the Commission.
 - d) The candidate receiving the majority of the votes of the members of the STECF shall be elected.
 - e) If none of the candidates receives an absolute majority, a second ballot shall be held between the two candidates with the highest individual totals of votes in the first ballot. The procedure shall be repeated until one candidate obtains the majority of the votes of the members of the STECF.
 - f) Candidates may withdraw their candidature at any time during the procedure.
 - g) Where there is or remains a single candidate, that candidate shall be elected provided that he/she receives the majority of votes cast.
7. Separate minutes shall be kept by the STECF Secretariat for the election procedure. The names of the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs shall be made

public in Directorate General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs website as well as in the STECF web site.

3. INDEPENDENCE

1. Members of the STECF and external experts shall undertake to act independently of any external influence. For this purpose, they shall make a declaration of interests for each meeting attended (see Annex I). All declarations of interests shall be made in writing and if the member or external expert authorises the Secretariat to do so (Annex II), declarations shall be published on the STECF website. They shall indicate any direct or indirect interests, which might be considered prejudicial to their independence.
2. The STECF Secretariat and the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall ensure that the principles of excellence and independence are complied with at all times. Members shall draw the STECF's attention through its Chair and Vice-Chairs to any factual matter that could undermine external credibility of the STECF's work. Relevant discussions of the matter shall be documented. The STECF shall draw the Commission's attention to all cases where it appears that a member might have ceased to fulfil the requirements of independence or excellence and address the measures to be taken, including if appropriate, the revocation of membership.
3. The extent of participation in the STECF work by members or external experts identified as having a conflict of interests on any items shall be decided by the Chair in consultation with the STECF membership. Any action shall be recorded. In cases where a conflict of interests exists, the members or external experts thus identified shall not be permitted to vote on the items concerned.
4. Members or external experts who receive documents or information of relevance to the STECF or the EWG activities from third parties shall ensure that the information is made available to the STECF Secretariat which has the responsibility to circulate to the expected attendees.
5. Members or external experts contacted by third parties in connection with their participation in STECF activities shall inform the STECF Secretariat of any such contact.
6. Members and external experts shall inform the STECF of relevant contacts they might have with petitioners, special interest groups, other stakeholders or other Community or international bodies engaged in overlapping activities.
7. When invited as a representative of the STECF, members shall ensure that they convey the views of the STECF, without expressing personal views or interpreting adopted opinions in a way that goes beyond the established position or opinion of the STECF. They shall not speak on behalf of the

European Commission unless officially requested to do so. Participation to any external meeting on behalf of STECF should be previously agreed with the Chair and the Commission and recorded in STECF reports.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Members and external experts shall comply with the obligations of professional secrecy laid down by the Treaties and their implementing rules, as well as with the Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 and 2015/444. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

5. TRANSPARENCY

1. The STECF shall operate in a transparent manner, without prejudice to legitimate requests for confidentiality or the need to safeguard the freedom and scientific integrity of the scientific debate and the independence of members and external experts vis-à-vis external influence.
2. Requests for access to documents will be handled in accordance with the provisions of Regulation No. 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (*OJ L 145, p.43*). When considering the exceptions listed in Art. 4 of 1049/2001 account shall be taken of the need to preserve the integrity and the independence of the scientific advice which supports the decision making process of the Community.
3. The following documents of the STECF are published on the STECF website, *subject to any confidentiality requirements*:
 - Requests for opinions.
 - Final reports and opinions.
 - Declarations of interest made by members of the STECF and external experts if the member or external expert authorises the Secretariat to do so.
 - The names of the members of the STECF. A brief CV will also be published provided the member authorises the Secretariat to do so.
 - .
 - Rules of procedures.
4. Without prejudice to Art 6(6) of Decision 2016/C 74/05/EC, the Commission shall be responsible for determining the appropriate level of publicity to be given to a scientific opinion and may request the assistance of the STECF board to ensure the scientific validity of its press releases or related actions.

5. REPLACEMENT OF THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS

1. If the Chair is not in a position to fulfil his/her function, he/she may be replaced by one of the two Vice-Chairs or, failing that, another member chosen in common accord of the members.
2. In case of conflict of interest of the Chair with an item on the agenda, he/she may be replaced by one of the two Vice-Chairs or failing that another member chosen in common accord of the members.

6. EXTERNAL EXPERTS

External experts possessing particular and relevant scientific knowledge may be invited to contribute to the work of the STECF or EWGs with the approval of the Commission. External experts invited to participate in STECF Plenary sessions will not be considered as members of the STECF and will have no right to vote.

7. EXPERT WORKING GROUPS (EWGs)

1. In accordance with Article 6(4) of Decision 2016/C 74/05/EC and in agreement with the Commission services, the STECF may set up EWGs to undertake tasks which are clearly defined and directly linked to the requests submitted by the Commission. In particular, the EWG may be asked to undertake all necessary preparatory tasks in relation to a draft opinion. The STECF can require that these tasks be completed within a defined period.
2. As soon as their mandate is fulfilled, such EWGs shall be disbanded.
3. EWGs shall comprise at least two members of the STECF and may include external experts. EWGs shall normally be chaired by members of the STECF. Alternatively EWGs may be chaired by external experts by invitation of the STECF Bureau.
4. The secretariat will provide the EG chairs with STECF guidelines for Expert Working Group chairs. Those guidelines are drafted and regularly updated by the Secretariat in consultation with the STECF board and DG MARE focal point for STECF.
5. Experts can express their interest for specific EWGs. Candidate members and external experts to be invited to EWGs shall be proposed by the EWG Chairs in close consultation with the Commission services, Secretariat, and STECF Board. After approval from the Commission services, the Secretariat shall issue invitations to the successful candidates.
6. EWGs shall endeavour to reach a consensus.

7. When it is not possible to reach a consensus, the opinions of EWGs shall include any minority opinions. Minority opinions shall be attributed to members or external experts and shall include supporting argumentation.
8. EWGs shall report to the STECF, providing it with such reports or draft opinions as the Committee has requested. Either its Chair or a nominated alternate, who has attended the EWG, shall present the EWG report to the STECF.
9. The list of EWG participants and contact details shall be included in the EWG report.

8. RAPORTEURS AND PREPARATORY WORK

1. Rapporteurs may be designated by the plenary to prepare the draft STECF response on specific agenda items. The designated rapporteur shall be recorded in the plenary meeting report. The work of a Rapporteur is terminated when the STECF adopts the report or opinion
2. Preparatory and organizational work may be commissioned through ad hoc contracts under the provisions of the Annex to Commission Decision (EC) C 74/05/2016. The assignment of those ad hoc contracts is discussed and decided within the STECF bureau.

9. NOTICE OF MEETINGS, AGENDA, DEADLINES

1. The STECF Bureau, in collaboration with the relevant Commission services shall establish a schedule of both STECF's plenary meetings and EWGs for the forthcoming calendar year.
2. The Commission shall prepare terms of reference for plenary meetings and EWGs in consultation with the STECF Bureau and EWG chairs. Terms of reference shall be publicised at least ten working days before the date a plenary meeting is scheduled to commence and at least 4 weeks before an EWG is scheduled to commence.
3. As a general rule, the STECF bureau will liaise with EWG chairs, DG MARE and JRC focals at least four weeks before the date an EWG is scheduled to take place to decide if an EWG shall take place as scheduled.
4. As a general rule, the Secretariat will confirm meetings of the STECF and EWGs at least ten working days before the date the meeting is scheduled to commence.

5. The STECF or EWG Chair shall circulate a draft agenda to participants no later than five working days before the date the meeting is scheduled to commence.
3. The agenda shall be adopted at the beginning of the meeting taking account of any agreed amendments.
4. All background documents shall be made available to the secretariat for distribution to the members, and external experts at least five working days before the meeting is scheduled to commence.
5. The working language of the STECF is English. Background documents prepared in languages other than English shall be accompanied by an English translation.

11. ATTENDANCE OF OBSERVERS

It is a general policy of the STECF to ensure transparency in the scientific advisory process. Accordingly meetings of the STECF or EWGs shall be open to observers unless decided otherwise by the Commission. Conditions and rules for attendance of observers at meetings of the STECF and EWGs are outlined in Annex III (Protocol for Observers).

12. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND REQUESTS FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

1. The Commission has sole competence to request advice from the STECF.
2. Terms of reference to the STECF shall include a list of requests for advice together with background information and relevant supporting documentation to enable the STECF to provide an informed response. The terms of reference shall be submitted to the STECF via the Secretariat.
3. Requests submitted to the STECF, shall be published as soon as possible on the STECF's website.
4. Where necessary, the Commission services may require the STECF to provide advice within a specified deadline that shall never be less than 15 working days from the date of the Commission's request. In exceptional circumstances the provisions of Paragraph 13 of these rules of procedure may apply. The STECF shall strive to ensure that the deadline is respected.
5. The STECF may ask the Commission services to clarify any question and/or to supply additional information.

13. ACCELERATED PROCEDURE

In urgent cases, on request of the Commission services and with the agreement of the Chair of the STECF, an accelerated written procedure by correspondence may be applied as follows:

1. The Secretariat shall request, and whenever possible in agreement with the Chair of the STECF, a member, or an external expert or an EWG to draw up a draft STECF opinion and to submit it to the Secretariat within a set deadline.
2. If the Chair and Commission services consider that the nature and urgency of the matter requires an emergency meeting, the Secretariat shall endeavour to organise a meeting at short notice.
3. In the event that circumstances do not require or allow a meeting to be convened, a draft opinion may be adopted by written procedure. The Chair shall request a member of the STECF to co-ordinate the preparation of a draft opinion and send it to the Secretariat, who shall distribute it to all members with a request for comment and amendment by a specified deadline. Following the specified deadline, the co-ordinator shall take account of any comments and suggestions for amendment and prepare a final draft, which shall then be circulated to all members with a request for approval, normally by a second deadline. The final draft shall be adopted as the opinion of the STECF when those members corresponding on the issue have reached a consensus opinion. Members not corresponding will be considered as abstainers. If correspondents are unable to agree a final text, the STECF opinion will be taken to be the text that the majority of correspondents agree to. Reasoned minority opinions of correspondents may be included in the STECF opinion and shall be attributed to the correspondents concerned.

14. RISK-RELATED ISSUES RAISED BY THE STECF

1. The STECF Chair may draw the Commission's attention to any issue falling within their remit which it considers to pose an actual or potential risk to resources, their exploitation, consumer safety, public health or the environment.
2. The Commission shall decide on the action to be taken including, if appropriate, a request for scientific advice on the matter and inform the STECF accordingly.

15. COORDINATION OF THE STECF

1. The STECF Chair and Vice-Chairs shall assist the Commission on matters relating to the co-ordination of the STECF. In particular, they shall assist the Commission to achieve a high level of harmonisation in the assessment

procedures both between the STECF EWGs and between the Committee and other Community and International bodies charged with the evaluations of fisheries issues.

2. Co-ordination shall be achieved by means of periodic meetings or exchange of documentation as appropriate to the matter at hand. Meetings shall be convened by the Secretariat in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 10.2 of these rules of procedure.
3. Co-ordination will cover, notably, the following areas:
 - a. **Questions**

The Chair, in consultation with the Vice-Chairs as appropriate, shall advise the Secretariat of the:

 - EWG to be designated as responsible for addressing the question
 - the need for an ad hoc EWG to be convened.
 - b. **Coherence and improvement in format and expression of opinions**

The STECF shall ensure that its advice is formulated in a clear and standardised way. In particular care should be taken to use standardised terminology to avoid any potential ambiguity in interpretation and to ensure transparency.

16. COOPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES ADVISING THE COMMISSION

Where necessary, the STECF shall co-operate with other relevant scientific and advisory bodies in undertaking its work and in preparing its opinions and advice. Such activities shall be coordinated by the Secretariat.

17. SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND THEIR ADOPTION

1. The scientific opinion of STECF should comprise:
 - the background (EU interests and scientific background),
 - the requests for advice,
 - the considerations used by the Committee to reach its conclusions,
 - the conclusions, setting out the response to the question(s) posed by the Commission. For complex opinions, the conclusions shall be accompanied by a summary in non-technical language, any recommendations arising from the conclusions,
 - bibliography,
 - any minority opinions.
2. The STECF shall normally adopt its advice during plenary meetings.

3. The STECF may adopt its advice using the accelerated written procedure by correspondence as set out in Paragraph 13.
4. Commercial confidentiality of documents and materials must be respected if the STECF is informed as such by the Commission.

18. SECRETARIAT

Responsibilities of the secretariat are outlined in Article 6(5) of the Decision 2016/C 74/05/EC.

19. STECF SUPPORT TO COMMISSION IN REGIONAL CONTEXT - RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

a. Regional context

In accordance with Article 18 of the CFP Regulation 1380/2013 the STECF members can support the Commission services by participating in STECF member capacity at meetings in regional as well as international context. STECF participation in such meetings shall be discussed within the STECF Bureau and is subject to prior authorization by the Commission services. Members representing STECF shall only express the opinions of the STECF and not personal opinions and will report all the relevant matters arising to the STECF. Reimbursement is subject to *ex-post* verification of attendance by the Commission services.

b. Request for information and dialogue with stakeholders

- The STECF may require information or opinion from stakeholders (e.g. ACs) in order to formulate its advice. In such case, a deadline for submission of information or opinions may be specified. If the required information has not been submitted within the deadline, the STECF may adopt its advice on the basis of the available information.

– In response to stakeholders that make a valid *prima facie* case to offer relevant data and information not otherwise available to the STECF or its EWGs, the Commission services in charge of the file in collaboration with the STECF Bureau will decide on the action to be taken. The stakeholder party will be informed of the decision.

20. ANNEX I – DECLARATION OF INTEREST

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
(MEETING:.....)**

NAME:.....

Definitions:

"**Conflict of interest**" means any situation where an expert has an interest that may compromise or be reasonably perceived to compromise the expert's capacity to act independently and in the public interest when providing advice to the Commission in relation to the subject of the work performed by the expert group or sub-group in question.

"**Immediate family member**" means the expert's spouse, children and parents. "Spouse" includes a partner with whom the expert has a registered non marital regime. "Children" means the child(ren) the expert and the spouse have in common, the own child(ren) of the expert and the own child(ren) of the spouse."

"**Legal entity**" means any commercial business, industry association, consultancy, research institution or other enterprise whose funding is significantly derived from commercial sources. It also includes independent own commercial businesses, law offices, consultancies or similar.

"**Body**" means a governmental, international or non-profit organization.

"**Meeting**" includes a series or cycle of meetings.

Please answer each of the questions below. If the answer to any of the questions is "yes", please briefly describe relevant interests and circumstances, as appropriate.

If you do not describe relevant interests, your DOI form will be considered incomplete and, therefore, you shall be excluded from the expert group or sub-group.

1 EMPLOYMENT CONSULTANCY AND LEGAL REPRESENTATION

	<i>Within the past 5 years, were you employed or have you had any other professional relationship with, or held any non-remunerated post in a natural or legal entity or other body with an interest in the field of activity of the expert group in question?</i>	yes	no
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1a	Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1b	Consultancy, including services as an advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1c	Non-remunerated post	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1d	Legal representation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Time period (from... until month/year)	Name of entity or body	Description

2 MEMBERSHIP OF MANAGING BODY, SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODY OR EQUIVALENT STRUCTURE

	<i>Within the past 5 years, have you participated in the internal decision-making of a legal entity or other body with an interest in the field of activity of the expert group in question or have you participated in the works of a Scientific Advisory Body with voting rights on the outputs of that entity?</i>	yes	no
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2a	Participation in a decision-making process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2b	Participation in the work of a Scientific Advisory Body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Time period (from... until month/year)	Name of legal entity or body	Description

3 RESEARCH SUPPORT

	<i>Within the past 5 years, have you, or the research entity to which you belong, received any support from a legal entity or other body with an interest in the field of activity of the expert group in question?</i>	yes	no
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3a	Research support, including grants, rents, sponsorships, fellowships, non-monetary support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Activity	Time period (from... until month/year)	Name of legal entity or body	Description

4 FINANCIAL INTERESTS

	<i>Do you have current investments in a legal entity with an interest in the field of activity of the expert group in question, including holding of stocks and shares, and which amounts to more than 10,000 EUR per legal entity or entitling you to a voting right of 5% or more in such legal entity?</i>	yes	no
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4a	Shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4b	Other stock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Investment	Name of legal entity	Description

5 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

	<i>Do you have any intellectual property rights that might be affected by the outcome of the work carried out by the expert group?</i>	yes	no
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5a	Patent, trademarks, or copyrights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5b	Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Intellectual property	Description

6 PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND POSITIONS

	<i>Within the past 5 years, have you provided any expert opinion or testimony in the field of activity of the group in question, for a legal entity or other body as part of a regulatory, legislative or judicial process? Have you held an office or other position, paid or unpaid, where you represented interests or defended an opinion in the field of activity of the group in question?</i>	yes	no
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6a	For a legal entity or other body as part of a regulatory, legislative or judicial process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6b	Represented interests or defended an opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Time period (from... until month/year)	Name of legal entity or body	Description

7 INTERESTS OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS

yes no

7a	To your knowledge, are there any interests of your immediate family members which could be seen as undermining your independence when providing advice to the Commission?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Interests	Time period (from... until month/year)	Name of legal entity or body	Description

.....
Place

.....
Date

.....
Signature

21. ANNEX II – PERSONAL DATA AUTHORIZATION



Authorisation to use personal data on JRC websites in the context of STECF

In accordance to the Commission Decision No C(2016)1084 and to the new Communication on the Framework for Commission Expert Groups: Horizontal Rules and Public Register (forthcoming) experts working for STECF are requested to fill in a Declaration of Interest form (DoI).

The purpose is to provide contact details in relation with a specific activity or event or to communicate on my achievements or contributions to the STECF activities.

I hereby authorise the JRC to collect, process and publish my personal data, as specified below, on the public STECF web pages maintained by the JRC. This includes storing my personal data in a file system or database for this purpose.

My personal data will be available on the STECF web pages as long as the Commissions maintains the institution of the STECF starting from filling the present form or until I notify in writing my wish to change or withdraw it.

I am aware that my authorised personal data can be consulted by anyone having access to the website using the Internet or any other dedicated network.

As this processing collects and further processes personal data, Regulation (EC) 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data is applicable.

This processing of personnel data is under the responsibility of the Head of Unit JRC.H.2 Thematic Coordination acting as Controller. The Head of Unit Water and Marine Resources at the JRC – Directorate D in Ispra, who manages the processing, acts as personal data processor. My authorised personal data are processed according to Art.5d of the Regulation (EC) 45/2001.

For any further information please contact the Controller by writing an e-mail message to the functional mailbox address: jrc-internal-external-communication-controller@ec.europa.eu

Declaration

- I give my unambiguous consent to the use of my personal data on JRC websites, as specified hereafter: First name - Last name – Title – Function – work Email address – work mail address – work phone number – work fax number – Declaration of Interest - personal CV (members of the STECF only)
- I do not give my consent to the use of my personal data on JRC websites
- I withdraw my consent to the use of my personal data on JRC websites

Name / Surname	
Date	
Signature	

22. ANNEX III – PROTOCOL FOR OBSERVERS

PROTOCOL FOR OBSERVERS (LAST UPDATE 27 OCTOBER 2016)

It is a general policy of the STECF to ensure transparency in the scientific advisory process. Accordingly meetings of the STECF or EWGs shall be open to observers unless decided otherwise by the Commission. With a view to facilitate the participation of observers without negatively affecting the logistics and performance of STECF and EWG meetings the following rules shall apply:

1. The Commission will determine the maximum number of observers to be admitted to any meeting based on conference room capacity and the need for a balanced participation preserving the scientific nature and integrity of the work. If there are more requests for attendance than can be accommodated, priority will be given to representatives of the Advisory Councils and Member States Regional Groups.
2. Observers may attend meetings in person but may not vote;
3. Observers may make oral statements during the meeting upon the invitation of the Chair;
4. Observers may engage in other activities as appropriate and as approved by the Chair.
5. Observers shall have access to the same documentation generally available to meeting participants, except those documents deemed confidential by the Commission (Article 7(1) of Commission Decision (EC) C 74/05/2016.
6. Observers should note that statements and opinions of any persons attending the meeting shall not be attributable.
7. Observers should note that EWGs are responsible for preparing a report to the STECF. The opinions expressed in EWG reports have no official status and should not be interpreted as the opinions of the STECF. The STECF opinions are formed only after formal review in plenum or by written procedure and subsequently published on the STECF website.

Those accepting this invitation are deemed to have agreed to comply with these rules. The chair will ensure that participants are informed of the above rules at the beginning of the meeting. Those not accepting them will be asked to leave. An observer who is found not to have respected the rules in this protocol may be asked to leave a meeting or may be declined admission to subsequent meetings.

These rules shall be subject to review and revision, as appropriate.

Meetings open to observers are indicated on the relevant meeting web pages on the STECF web site where those wishing to participate as observers should register their interest to attend. Registration should be made at least ten working days before the meeting is scheduled to commence.

Note that the Commission does not reimburse the travel and subsistence costs of observers.