

Aquaculture Advisory Council

WG2 Shellfish Meeting

11 June 2024 (10:00 - 14:30)

Thon Hotel EU – Rue de la Loi 75 – 1000 Brussels – Interpretation available in EN - FR - ES - IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG2 MEMBERS

Stéphane Angeri (SENC, Chair)

Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming, Vice-Chair)

Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)

Andrea Fabris (API)

Wouter Van Zandbrink (CEP),

Phil Brooke (CIWF)

Audrey Lainé (CNC),

Thibaut Pivetta (CNC),

Julie Aleksandrova (CNC),

Florian Guillou (CNPMM),

Pier Salvador (COGECA)

Philippe Le Gal (CRC Bretagne-Sud)

Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillon de Galicia)

David Basset (EATIP)

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA),

Teresa Morrissey (IFA),

Antonio Correia (APA),

Addy Risseeuw (PO Mosselcultuur),

Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISK),

Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISH).

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Invited: Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE), Llucia Mascorda-Cabre (University of Plymouth), Joe Redfern (Shellfish Association of Great Britain)

Observers: Hein Sas (Native Oyster Restoration Alliance), Sarah Horsfall (Shellfish Association of Great Britain), Laura Jordao (CCRUP), Valentin Rosca (Moldovan Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry), Dumitru Cocieru (Moldovan Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry), Viorica Turcanu (Moldovan Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry), Vasile Capatina (Moldovan Bureau for European Integration)

Member States Experts: Yas Farjad (French State Secretariat for the Sea and Biodiversity), Francesco Lombardo (Maltese Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights), Paloma Carbello Tejero (Spanish Ministry for Agriculture), Magdalena Tenciu (Romanian Institute for Aquaculture), Rui Oliveira (Portuguese Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services).

Secretariat: Cécile Fouquet (AAC Secretariat), Charlotte Musquar (AAC Secretariat), Justine Marrot (AAC Secretariat).



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MEETING MINUTES

Welcome from President Stéphane Angeri

Stéphane Angeri (Chair) welcomed the participants as well as the secretariat and interpreters.

1. Adoption of the agenda and minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without any modifications.

An AOB was added by **Thibault Pivetta (CNC)** concerning the AAC consultation on the European Commission (EC) draft Guidance Documents. He wishes to request an agenda point at the next ExCom meeting to assess member satisfaction with these consultations.

Another AOB was added by **the Chair** concerning the change of name of WG2 to “Low Trophic Aquaculture Working Group”.

The agenda was approved with these changes.

2. Food safety: arsenic levels

- Exchange of information on the latest news

Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE) updated the members on the latest development at the level of the Experts Group on this matter. There has been no change on the revision of the proposed maximum levels. The



current proposal is 0.35 milligrams, and it is slightly higher for mussels, 0.5 milligrams. DG SANTE has received comments from interested third countries such as New Zealand or Chili, which propose 1 milligram per kg.

There will be a new national experts group meeting on 27-28 June on Environmental and Industrial Contaminants, with a presentation of the latest EFSA scientific opinion on inorganic in food.

The proposal to amend this regulation to include maximum levels for fish and shellfish is still planned for next year, unless the new Commission team decides differently.

- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE) emphasized that DG SANTE will be looking at setting the lowest possible level, based on what EFSA advises.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) asked if it would be possible for the AAC to attend the Member States meeting as observer at the end of June. **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** will check with DG SANTE and answer in writing to the Secretariat.

Audrey Lainé (CNC) asked which species of mussels were concerned by the level of 0.5 milligrams. **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** was referring to green shell mussels and chilean mussels.

The Chair stressed on the need to follow up on this matter. He thanked Mr. Gerlitz for the information provided and requested to keep in touch.

3. Norovirus

- **Update** on the French shellfish industry's strategy for managing the norovirus hazard in shellfish: OXYVIR indicator, surveillance and management measures by **Audrey Lainé (CNC)**¹

Audrey Lainé (CNC) updated the members on the situation in France, the French shellfish industry's strategy for managing the norovirus hazard, the objectives of the Oxyvir programme. She mentioned the willingness of the French shellfish industry to use the Oxyvir indicator, with an experimental monitoring of the Oxyvir indicator, as well as some examples of management measures that could be used.

- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

The Chair mentioned that there is no horizontal contamination, that it is necessary to put pressure on the Member States and on the regional authorities, and that it is important to work on something that can prevent this problem.

A letter to the Commission was drafted and it has now been transformed into a draft recommendation. The draft recommendation will be sent to the Working Group members in writing for its approval.

4. Blue crab

- Exchange of information on the latest news

¹http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/240611_French-shellfish-industry-strategy-for-noroviruses_WG2-CCA.pdf



Lorenzo Gennari (AMA) updated the WG members on this matter². An increase in the blue crab harvesting capacity was registered. Some areas are now protected with enclosures and new areas to restore were introduced. The first results will be available at the beginning of next year. The Italian government has recognized the state of emergency and there has been some reactions from the regions, so things are improving and moving. There is a urgent need for research on this topic.

- Exchange of views with the WG members and decision on the next steps

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) mentioned the economic viability of Italian companies and the future of Italian producers. **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)** stated that some could diversify their production, but the scheme cannot last longer than this year.

David Bassett (EATIP) mentioned that EATIP highlighted the blue crab issue concerning future research priorities in the sector with DG MARE however an informal response suggests that there requires to be better coordination between industry, researchers and Government (MS) to fully understand the implications of the situation and assess the efficacy of response to date. He mentioned a small project addressing the blue crab problem in Italy called "Blueat".

Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming) reminded the importance of considering the wellbeing of the crabs and the need to treat them with humanity. To him, simply killing millions of blue crabs is not the solution.

A Focus Group on blue crab was created to work on a draft recommendation this matter. The Focus Group will be led by Lorenzo Gennari (AMA).

5. Molluscan welfare

- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Phil Brooke (CIWF)**

Phil Brooke (CIWF) presented the revised draft Recommendation. He mentioned that he had received a request about including a table in the annex and that **David Bassett (EATIP)** will add a paragraph about funding opportunities.

- Exchange of views with the WG members and decision on the next steps

Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillon de Galicia) suggested that instead of using the statistics from the FAO, it could be more relevant to use Eurostat data to have more accurate data. **Phil Brooke (CIWF)** took note of the suggestion but mentioned that he may not have the time to do this.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) suggested using four main species as a basis for the table.

The draft document will be circulated for approval after it is amended accordingly.

6. Preserve our sovereignty in terms of hatcheries and develop a "pathogen free" label to allow secure exports

- Update on FG activities by FG leader Audrey Lainé (CNC)

² <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Present.-Granchio-blu-11giu24.pdf>



The Chair mentioned that a Focus Group meeting was organised in March during which information was gathered.

Audrey Lainé (CNC) presented the draft recommendation. A more elaborated draft will be sent. The objective is to send this recommendation to the ExCom by October 2024.

- Exchange of views with the WG members and decision on the next steps

Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISHING) mentioned that he is unable to sell in the UK because of the lack of a label stating that his spats come from "*bonamia* free waters".

Audrey Lainé (CNC) agreed on the need to have a label per pathogen to facilitate trade within the EU but also with third countries.

A more developed draft recommendation will be sent in the coming weeks.

7. Use of DG MARE mapping studies for the development of low-trophic aquaculture

- Update on FG activities by FG leader **Thibault Pivetta (CNC)**

Thibault Pivetta (CNC) updated the members on this matter.

A first draft recommendation will be sent in the coming weeks.

8. Action Plan for Marine Ecosystems

- Update by **Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)** on the mapping work

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) updated the members on the mapping work and presented the draft recommendation. He recently received the data from the Netherlands and is finishing the calculations to include them. He suggested a more detailed and precise study.

- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISH) stated that for him dredging still has a negative impact on marine environment and mentioned the consequences of dredging in Denmark for Swedish farmers. Dredged mussels cannot be labelled as environmentally friendly and he will not support a recommendation that states that. **Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)** clarified that the recommendation is about dredging for spats, as opposed to the commercial mussels dredging with trawlers is happening in Sweden, Denmark and Germany. What Mr. Vorbeck was mentioning can be assimilated to fisheries, its impact is very important in some areas and cannot be denied.

The draft recommendation will be circulated for approval in the coming weeks.



9. UK Research projects: Rope to Reefs & Grand Coalition

- Presentation of the project by **Llucia Mascorda-Cabre** and **Joe Redfern (SAGB)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Llucia Mascorda-Cabre presented the “Rope to Reefs” project³. **Joe Redfern (SAGB)** presented the Grand Coalition project⁴.

10. AAC WG2 Work Programme

- Presentation by the secretariat of the Work Programme for 2024-2025

The secretariat presented the draft WG2 Work Programme to the members and called for recommendation ideas.

There was a debate on the topic of “natural solutions for low-trophic aquaculture” as proposed by a member, rather than “natural solutions for aquaculture”. **Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)** highlighted the fact that WG2 works on low-trophic aquaculture and not on aquaculture in general and this would be a recommendation in WG2. **David Bassett (EATIP)** suggested the name should reflect how low trophic aquaculture feeds into multi-trophic aquaculture.

Lorenzo Gennari (AMA) suggested a few ideas including a recommendation to provide indications about the tools and parameters to assess environmental performance, defining parameters for research needs on ecosystem services, exotic species especially the blue crab and an update on the use of plastic materials, especially plastic nets.

Wouter Van Zandbrink (CEP) mentioned that the blue economy was not making a big progress, so it might be useful to make a list of developing shellfish productions in the Member States and give it to the Commission so they can use it in their discussions with the Member States.

Florian Guillot (CNPMEM) mentioned that he was in favour of the development of algae production but questioned the fact that it is in WG2 when there is a Focus Group on algae in WG3.

Thibault Pivetta (CNC) suggested including the need to make progress on the recommendation on good husbandry practices, on the research front for the quantification and recognition of ecosystem services and on the effort to develop a financial tool to support ecosystem services.

Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISH) suggested to add restoration to the tools.

11. AOB & conclusions

- **Changing of the name of the Working Group 2 to “Working Group on Low-trophic Aquaculture”**

This point will be added to the agenda of the next ExCom meeting on 26 August.

- **AAC consultation on the EC draft Guidance documents**

Thibault Pivetta (CNC) expressed his discontent about the poor AAC involvement in the identification of good

³ http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/AAC_LluciaMascordaCabre.pdf

⁴ <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/SAGB-Grand-Coalition-Presentation.pdf>



farming practices.

Concerning the guidance document on good husbandry practices, **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** stated that the file is not closed yet and that he will see how they can get further comments from the shellfish producers on this case.

The Chair thanked **Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)** for his work in the AAC and congratulated him on his retirement.

The next WG2 meeting will be held in Brussels the 16 October 2024 (afternoon).

