

Aquaculture Advisory Council

WG3 Horizontal Issues

15 October 2024 (14:00-18:00) and 16 October 2024 (10:00-12:00)

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

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG3 MEMBERS

Douglas Waley (Eurogroup for animals, WG3 Chair),
Yannis Pelekanakis (HAPO, WG3 Vice-Chair),

Leo Kirchmaier (ALFAA),
Lorenzo Gennari (AMA),
Andrea Fabris (API),
Giulia Malerbi (Aquatic Life Institute),
Javier Ojeda (FEAP),
Marine Levadoux (CIPA),
Phil Brooke (CIWF),
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Florian Guillou (CNPMEM),
Pier Salvador (COGECA),

Angeles Longa Portabales (CRMG)
David Bassett (EATiP),
Charlotte Epinau (Eurogroup for Animals),
Alexandra Philippe (EBCD),
James Hinchcliffe (EFFOP),
Danilo Santini (FAI CSL),
Patrizio Giorni (FAI CSL),
Pierpaolo Piva (FAI CISL),
Catherine Pons (FEAP),
Szilvia Mihalfy (FEAP),
Maria Luisa Alvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA),
Teresa Morrissey (IFA),
Addy Risseeuw (PO)

Mosselcultuur,
Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders Association),
Antonio Correia (APA),
Ola Öberg (RECIRKFIKSK),
Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming),
Stefan Meyer (BVFi),
Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture Organisation),
Ole Christensen (FEFAC),
Alain Schonbrodt (FVE),
Steven Barbosa (IPIFF)

Excused: Philippe Le Gal (CRC Bretagne-Sud).

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Invited: Lorella de la Cruz Iglesias (DG MARE), Julia Rubeck (DG MARE), Soumaya Bouker (DG MARE), Elizabeth Pek (DG MARE), Manuel Lopez Martin (EUSPA), Per Braig (Novaspace), Tina Silovic (Mercator Oceans), Camilla Björkbom (Eurogroup for animals), Tanguy Chever (EUMOFA).

Observers: Joe Redfern (Shellfish Association of Great Britain), Pedro Reis Santos (MAC), Wasseem Emam (Ethical Seafood Research), 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), Yves Reichling (Feedback EU), Lone Flyvholm (Norwegian Seafood Association – FEAP), Laurene Jolly (DG MARE).

Member States Experts: Julián García Baena (Spanish Ministry for Agriculture – General Secretariat of Fisheries), Maria Vittoria Briscolini (Italian Ministry for Agriculture), Ilaria Gerraro (Italian Ministry for Agriculture), Irene Adelaide Forcella (Italian Ministry of Agriculture), Rui Oliveira (Portuguese Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services), Magdalena Tenciu (Romanian Institute for Aquaculture)

Secretariat: Cynthia Benites (AAC Secretariat), Cécile Fouquet (AAC Secretariat), Charlotte Musquar (AAC



Secretariat), Justine Marrot (AAC Secretariat)

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MEETING MINUTES

Welcome words by the Chair Doug Waley

The Chair welcomed the participants.

1. Approval of the agenda and last meeting's minutes

The agenda was adopted with one additional point on the DG MARE Guidance Document on Environmental Performance.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by written procedure.

2. Common Fisheries Policy

- **Presentation** of the evaluation process of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) by **Julia Rubeck (DG MARE)**¹.
- Exchange of views with the members
- Decision on next steps to draft a contribution to the public consultation

¹ <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024.10.15-Presentation-AAC-CFP.pdf>



The Chair recalled that the AAC had responded to the call for evidence on the evaluation of the CFP in September.

Many WG members reacted to the presentation of Julia Rubeck. She took note of the comments and encouraged the members to participate in the public consultation that will be launched by December and submit any document they might find relevant.

A new Focus Group will be created.

3. DG MARE updates

o EU Communication campaign

Elizabeth Pek (DG MARE) presented the EU Communication campaign². The campaign will be launched in March 2025. The campaign objective is to increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of aquaculture in the EU among the target audience by focusing on the people behind the sector (aquaculture producers) and their role in sustainable food production.

Many WG members reacted to the presentation. **The members can send the comments to Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture) or Elizabeth Pek (DG MARE) so that they can be taken into account.**

o Strategic Guidelines actions and Guidance Documents

Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE) updated the members on this matter. DG MARE already adopted two Staff Working documents on the regulatory and administrative framework for aquaculture and the planning of space and access to water for marine aquaculture. They are hoping to publish three more documents before the end of the year on Freshwater aquaculture, Adaptation to climate change, and the Energy transition of the aquaculture sector. The document on good husbandry practices will be published soon on the website.

Work on the environmental performance document is ongoing and the next discussion with Member States will take place on 19 and 20 November. They are also preparing the work for general welfare indicators for fish. These indicators will be peer reviewed by the reference centre. They will publish the document for each species and they have already sampled the species they will start working on.

Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) mentioned the document on good husbandry practices and wondered if another document on other species like oyster is possible. **Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE)** mentioned that the idea would be to start with that document and complement with other practices and other species. **The Chair** mentioned the fact that the feed impact is out of scope of the guidance document on environmental performance. **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)** said that they would really appreciate that DG MARE considers the comments that the AAC will raise concerning environmental indicators. **Ana Granados (EFFAB)** and **the Chair** mentioned the need to look at the market, especially when promoting certain types of aquaculture. **Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE)** took good note of the need to analyse the impact by type of production and they know there is a difference. They are promoting low trophic aquaculture, organic and non-fed fish, but it does not mean that they don't promote finfish aquaculture. A study was launched on environmental benefits of aquaculture, and they will be looking at these challenges.

² <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/20241014-Meeting-with-AAC-v-2.pdf>



4. Mid-term evaluation of the new Strategic Guidelines

- **Presentation/Introduction by Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE)**
- Exchange of views with the members

Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE) explained that the mid-term assessment of the new Strategic Guidelines is planned for next year. This will consist of reporting on what has been achieved so far and the impacts. The Member States survey, launched on 10 July, was the first step, with replies expected by 31 October. The next steps include compiling these responses to get an overview. They will also organise a stakeholder event in March to discuss the report on the mid-term assessment. They will also be involving the AAC in the assessment. This mid-term assessment will be taken into account for the CFP evaluation.

The Chair mentioned that the AAC committed to produce a recommendation by October 2025. **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** hoped that there will also be an assessment of the work and the contribution of the stakeholders such as the AAC. **Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE)** mentioned that they will be involving the AAC closely on this and it is a good opportunity to see what has been delivered. **Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISH)** asked if the mid-term assessment is connected to EMFAF. **Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE)** mentioned that on the question of funding, there are questions about that so it should be included in the replies.

A Focus Group will be created with Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture) as the Focus Group leader.

5. Use of satellite data for aquaculture

- **Presentation of the Earth Observation (EO) solutions supporting fisheries and aquaculture Service Portfolio** by Manuel Lopez Martin and Per Braig (NovaSpace), EU Agency for the Space Programme³. (*online*)
- **Presentation of the services offered by Copernicus** by Tina Silovic, Mercator Oceans⁴ (*online*)
- Exchange of views with the members

Many WG members reacted to the presentations. **The Chair** mentioned that the AAC committed to produce a recommendation by October 2025.

A Focus Group was previously established and a call for a FG leader will be open.

6. Research for aquaculture

- Presentation of draft recommendation by FG leader **David Bassett (EATIP)**
- Next steps for approval of draft recommendation
- Next steps for 2025 recommendation

Maria Luisa Alvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) asked if the whole chain was included in the recommendation or only the producer side. **Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming)** mentioned the difference between fundamental and applied research and that he will send his comments in writing. **David Bassett (EATiP)** said the recommendation should be as broad as possible. He would welcome comments from the whole value chain except if someone disagrees. **Stefan Meyer (BVFi)** mentioned the digitalization on the end of traceability tools. **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)** mentioned the need to have research on climate change and on alien species

³ <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EUSPA-presentation-AAC-15-10-2024.pdf>

⁴ http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Copernicus-Marine_AAC_Silovic.pdf



like blue crab. **Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture)** reminded the members that the AAC committed to deliver this recommendation by the end of October 2024, but exceptionally it could be approved by the end of this year. He also recalled that the AAC committed to another recommendation on research including dissemination by October 2025.

This recommendation will be approved by the end of this year. Another FG meeting will be organised in November. Work on the second recommendation will start at the beginning of 2025 to have it approved in time.

7. A Common Food Policy – concept and approaches

- **Presentation/Introduction by Camilla Björkbom (Eurogroup for Animals)** on concept and approaches for a Common Food Policy⁵– online
- Exchange of views with the members

The Chair mentioned that the AAC committed to produce a recommendation on this topic by October 2025.

Many WG members reacted to the presentation. **Doug Waley, leader of the FG on an EU Food strategy, will decide on the next steps.**

8. EUMOFA report on aquaculture products in food outlets

- **Presentation of the report by Tanguy Chever (EUMOFA)**⁶ – in person
- Exchange of views with the members

Many WG members reacted to the presentation. **Tanguy Chever (EUMOFA)** explained that every year the Market Advisory Council adopts a recommendation advising on future EUMOFA studies.

9. Guidance Document on Environmental Performance

- Update on Focus Group activities by Focus Group Leader **Brian Thomsen**
- Exchange of views with the members

The Chair explained that the European Commission asked to give inputs by the end of October. Given the short time, the AAC will send a memo containing the consolidated comments, which is not a recommendation but a list of all the positions. It will be sent together with the ExCom's approved letter to the European Commission requesting that the AAC is consulted systematically and with more time to do so.

Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) regreted that no updated version was available as the one from June is unsuitable for 80% of aquaculture structures and overlooks more than 50% of aquaculture. He called for a global position from the AAC on this subject while continuing to be constructive with DG MARE and bringing forward the positions of the members. **Andrea Fabris (API)** also underlined the need to have more time and that parameters should be better defined. **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)** stated that there is a need to simplify, at least for shellfish farming. **Comments on the draft memo are welcome until 18 October.**

⁵ <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Common-Food-Policy-AAC-16-October-2024.pdf>

⁶ <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EUMOFA-Aquaculture-outlets-study-AAC.pdf>



10. Update on ongoing WG3 work by the secretariat

The secretariat updated the members on ongoing work in WG3:

- **Organic Aquaculture**

The last FG meeting concluded on the need to draft two letters to follow up on the reply of the European Commission to the recommendation. The letter has been circulated to the FG for comments and approval.

- **PEFCR for fishery and aquaculture products (MAC recommendation – AAC observer)**

The second public consultation for marine fish was open from 10 June to 10 July. After consultation with **Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture)** and the MAC, it was decided to request a status of observer in the MAC. The recommendation is published as well as the reply from the European Commission. Both are available on the MAC website.

11. AOB and conclusions of the WG3 meeting

An AOB was added by **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** concerning a report on the risks and benefits of fish consumption published by the FAO and the WHO in which they do not differentiate between farmed fish and wild fish. **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** would like the AAC recommendation on this topic to be sent to the FAO and the WHO.

The Chair concluded the meeting. The next WG3 meeting will be held on **19 February online**.

