

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Working Group 1 - Finfish meeting

4 June 2025 (14:00-17:30)

COPA-COGECA – Rue de Trèves, 61 – 1000 Brussels – Interpretation available in EN - FR – ES – IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG1 MEMBERS

Andrea Fabris (API, Chair),
Phil Brooke (CIWF, Vice-Chair),

Tamas Eisenbeck (AIPCE),
Leo Kirchmaier (ALFAA),
Lorenzo Gennari (AMA),
Giulia Malerbi (Aquatic Life
Institute),
Marine Levadoux (CIPA),
Florian Guillou (CNPMMEM),
Pier Salvador (COPA),
Béla Halasi-Kovács (COGECA),

Angeles Longa Portabales
(CRMG),
Brian Thomsen (Danish
Aquaculture Producer
Organisation)
David Bassett (EATiP),
Ana Granados (EFFAB),
James Hinchcliffe (EFFOP),
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Javier Ojeda (FEAP),
Catherine Pons (FEAP),
Szilvia Mihalfy (FEAP),

Alain Schonbrodt (FVE)
Teresa Morrissey (IFA),
Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders
Association),
Ola Öberg (RECIRKISK),
Eugen Catalin Platon (Romfish),
Paul Denekamp (Stichting
Vissenbescherming).

Excused: Maria Luisa Alvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Observers: Joe Redfern (Shellfish Association of Great Britain), Pedro Reis Santos (MAC), Wasseem Emam (Ethical Seafood Research), Daniela Costa (CCRUP).

Member States Experts: Yas Farjad (French State Secretariat for the Sea and Biodiversity), Julian Garcia Baena (Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Alimentation), Luz Arregui (Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Alimentation), Francesco Lombardo (Maltese Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights), Magdalena Tenciu (Romanian Institute for Aquaculture), Peter Lengyel (Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU), Igor Wawrzyniak (Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), Katarzyna Kaminska (Polish Fisheries Department Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), Kristaps Pilskalns (Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia), Linn Therese S. Hosteland (Norwegian Coastal Shipowners Association), Baiba Kārklīņa (Ministry of Agriculture of Latvia), Marina Ivanova-Pojuzina (Bulgarian Food Safety Agency).

Secretariat: Cynthia Benites (AAC Secretariat), Alicia Mouthuy (AAC Secretariat)



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MEETING MINUTES

Welcome words by the Chair

Andrea Fabris (Chair) welcomed the present participants.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was approved with an input under AOB regarding rapporteurship contracts. The minutes of the last meeting were approved by written procedure.

2. Fish Health

i. Microbiome and climate change

- Introduction by Andrea Fabris (Chair)
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

Andrea Fabris (Chair) presented the state of play on microbiome changing with climate change and its effect on fish health. After a discussion with the members, **it has been decided to add the term “microbiome” in a future recommendation on animal health and climate change.**

ii. Fish parasites

- State of play on the matter by Andrea Fabris (Chair)
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

Andrea Fabris (Chair) reminded that the AAC produced a recommendation on the revaluation of the risk assessment of parasites in farmed fish products in August 2020, and the Commission replied that an EFSA



panel group would start evaluating this risk assessment. EFSA's opinion is now available and DG SANTE took part in the previous working group meeting and explained that it is now in the hands of the Member States to decide on the implementation.

The WG will produce a follow-up recommendation on fish parasites and new FG will be open. The secretariat will keep reaching out to DG SANTE to request that the AAC be included in the meetings with the Member States on this matter.

iii. Medicated Feed Regulation

- **State of play on the matter** by Andrea Fabris (Chair)
- **Exchange of views** with the members and decision on next steps

Andrea Fabris (Chair) reminded the members about the unlevel playing field between Member States regarding medicated feed. The secretariat had previously sent a consultation to gather input on specific examples of critical issues observed in Member States. There is an official communication from the European Commission that EMA will produce a scientific opinion related to the use of substances authorized for terrestrial animals and/or humans for aquaculture fish producing meat for human consumption.

Pier Salvador (COPA) proposed the harmonized use of the same veterinary medicine across the EU. **Phil Brooke (Vice-Chair, CIWF)** highlighted that prevention is better than action: farmers should not cure fishes if they are not ill.

The WG will produce a recommendation, on the basis of WG members input, including FEAP, FVE and COPA.

iv. Use of Biocides

- **State of play on the matter** by Andrea Fabris (Chair)
- **Exchange of views** with the members and decision on next steps

Andrea Fabris (Chair) presented the current state of play regarding the use of biocides. There is a significant lack of information on this topic within the aquaculture sector. According to several WG1 members, it remains unclear which substances are authorised and which ones may potentially be authorized. **The secretariat will inquire with DG MARE about the existence of a list of specific biocides used in aquaculture. Based on their response, the AAC will determine whether to initiate a formal protocol or open a dialogue with the Member States.**

3. AAC WG1 Strategic Plan

- Presentation by the secretariat
- Approval of the Strategic Plan for 2025-2026

The secretariat presented the WG1 Strategic Plan for 2025-2026. The WG1 members approved it with the following change:

- The recommendation "Animal health law: Ban on moving fish from confirmed outbreak of



ISA/IHN/VHS" should be renamed "Animal health law: Restriction of fish movements from confirmed outbreak of ISA/IHN/VHS".

4. Fish welfare

i. Public consultation on the remaining proposals regarding the animal welfare revision

- Presentation by **Phil Brooke (Vice-Chair, CIWF)**

The Vice-Chair and Charlotte Epinay (Eurogroup for Animals) presented the state of play on the public consultation regarding the animal welfare revision, highlighting that the EU Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare announced a new proposal on animal welfare legislation by 2026, with a stakeholder consultation taking place in 2025. A call for evidence should be launched before summer for 4 weeks, and then a public consultation will be open for 12 weeks.

Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture Producer Organisation) proposed reaching a consensus on an AAC recommendation concerning animal welfare. This presents an opportunity to harmonize the AAC's existing guidance on welfare issues. The recommendation could also incorporate best practices and protocols from various EU countries.

The secretariat will invite EURCAW for the WG meeting in October. The FG on animal welfare will work on drafting a recommendation.

5. Aquaculture sturgeon and CITES

- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**
- **Exchange of views** with the Working Group members and next steps

Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming) explained that supporting sturgeon farming remains a complex issue for the organization. While they acknowledge the considerable welfare advantages of caviar derived from farmed sturgeons over that from wild-caught ones, they continue to have serious concerns about the welfare conditions in sturgeon aquaculture. **Paul Denekamp** mentioned he is particularly interested in what the Executive Committee members will observe during their upcoming visit to the sturgeon farm later in June. He prefers to withhold judgment on the welfare of farmed sturgeons until after that visit.

Andrea Fabris (Chair and FG leader) will revise his draft recommendation based on the comments made by the WG1 members and send it for comments and approval.

6. Domestication

- Update on Focus Group activities by FG leader **Ana Granados (EFFAB)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

FG leader, Ana Granados, presented the work made on the recommendation. Many members reacted to the presentation.

The FG will be renamed "Diversification of aquaculture species". The Secretariat will circulate the previous FG document with the FG members to find points of agreement. A FG meeting will then be



organised to make progress on the document ahead of the next WG meeting in October.

7. Update on Eels

- Presentation by **Andrea Fabris** (Chair)
- Exchange of views with the members

The Chair announced that the AAC received in January an answer from the European Commission on the recommendation on the recovery of eel stock, in which they enhanced the area of eels management and the restocking of eels, but also supporting AAC claims regarding illegal fishing and illegal market of eels. They give responsibilities to the Member states to apply eels management plans.

Pier Salvador (COPA) highlighted the importance of collecting data, especially from the Mediterranean region.

The secretariat will reach out to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) to get the contact of the person who can provide information on the management of eels in the Mediterranean countries (both EU and non-EU).

8. AOB & Conclusions

One AOB was added by the Secretariat:

- **Rapporteurship contracts for WG1**

It was agreed that WG1 will receive compensation for rapporteurship on three recommendations: sturgeons and CITES, fish parasites, and the Medicated Feed Regulation to be adopted by the end of October 2025. The secretariat will proceed with sending out the draft contracts.

Andrea Fabris (Chair) thanked the members for their participation and concluded the meeting.

The next meeting of this Working Group will take place in Brussels on **14 October (morning)**.

