

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Working Group 1 - Finfish meeting

14 October 2025 (10:00-13:30)

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),

Leo Kirchmaier (ALFAA),
Marine Levadoux (CIPA),
Florian Guillou (CNPMEM),
Pier Salvador (COPA),
Brian Thomsen (Danish
Aquaculture Producer
Organisation)

David Bassett (EATiP),
James Hinchcliffe (EFFOP),
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Charlotte Epinay (Eurogroup for
Animals),
Robyn Sahota (Eurogroup for
Animals),
Javier Ojeda (FEAP),
Szilvia Mihalfy (FEAP),
Ole Christensen (FEFAC),

Alain Schonbrodt (FVE),
Yannis Pelekanakis (HAPO),
Teresa Morrissey (IFA),
Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders
Association),
Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK),
Paul Denekamp (Stichting
Vissenbescherming).

Excused: Maria Luisa Alvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA), Giulia Malerbi (ALI)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Observers: Joe Redfern (Shellfish Association of Great Britain), Linn Therese Skår Hosteland (Norwegian Coastal Shipowners Association)

Member States Experts: Rui Oliveira (Portuguese Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services), Magdalena Tenciu (Institute of Research and Development of Aquatic Ecology, Fishing and Aquaculture Galati), Marta Martínez López (Spanish Ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food), Luz Arregui (General Secretariat of the Spanish Ministry of agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and George Broulidakis (Greek Ministry of Rural Development & Food)

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 the following AOBs requested by:

- **Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming)** on the farm visit at the last ExCom meeting
- **Ole Christensen (FEFAC)** on the feed workshop
- **Phil Brooke (CIWF)** on the state of play of the FG on domestication and diversification

The minutes of the last meeting on 3 June were approved by written procedure.

2. Fish Health

i. Recommendation on Fish parasites

- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**
- **Exchange of views** with the members and adoption of the recommendation

Andrea Fabris (Chair) presented the draft recommendation on Fish parasites to the members. After a discussion with the members, **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** suggested adding a paragraph on routine inspections carried out by aquaculture operators and veterinary teams.

The Recommendation was approved with the addition of Javier's paragraph and will be submitted to the ExCom members for comments and approval.



ii. Recommendation on Medicated Feed

- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**
- **Exchange of views** with the members and adoption of the recommendation

Andrea Fabris (Chair) presented the draft recommendation on Medicated Feed to the members. The discussion focused on the right amount of feed and on the needed collaboration between farmers and veterinarians on feed mixtures.

The recommendation was approved and will be submitted to the ExCom members for approval by the end of October.

iii. Use of Biocides (i.e. iodine)

- 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. The discussion centred on the need to have an overview of authorised substances. The members agreed to develop a future recommendation requesting clearer timelines and transparency from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and Member States on substance re-evaluations and market authorisations.

Andrea Fabris will be the FG leader and a meeting of the FG on fish health will be convened to address this issue.

iv. Autologous vaccines availability and connected issues

- 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 autologous vaccines availability and connected issues.

A meeting of the FG on fish health will be organised to exchange experience, explore Member States regulations and authorisation pathways, production standards and quality control, as well as cross-border exchange and import/export challenges.

3. Fish welfare

i. Revision of the EU animal welfare legislation

- Presentation of a draft recommendation by **Charlotte Epinay** and **Robyn Sahota** (Eurogroup for animals)
- Presentation on the aquaculture section of the report on “Stop Cruel Imports” by Carlos Jalil (Eurogroup for animals)
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

The discussion focused on the fish species studied, the significance of regulatory audits and scientific evidence, and the different needs depending on the fish. **Charlotte Epinay** and **Robyn Sahota (Eurogroup for Animals)** reminded that the AAC should answer the European Commission’s public consultation on the



modernisation of EU animal welfare legislation with the adoption of an AAC recommendation.

Charlotte Epinay and Robyn Sahota will be the topic leaders and will share a draft recommendation. As it addresses imports, the Market Advisory Council will be consulted. A FG meeting will be convened.

ii. Fish Welfare Reference Center

- Presentation on EURCAW-aqua priorities by **Michail Pavladis** (EURCAW-aqua)
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Many WG members reacted to the presentation. The members endorsed coordinating welfare-related recommendations with ongoing EURCAW-Aqua work and upcoming Commission studies, aiming for harmonised welfare data collection and legislation.

The members are invited to send their questions to the Secretariat by end of November 2025, who will collect them and send them to the Fish Welfare Reference Center.

iii. Increased funding to support research on species-specific welfare indicators and humane slaughter including the effectiveness of stunning methods in the field

- Presentation by **Charlotte Epinay** and **Robyn Sahota** (Eurogroup for Animals)
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Charlotte Epinay and **Roby Sahota** (Eurogroup for Animals) explained they will work on a draft recommendation, which is included in the AAC Strategic Plan for 2025-2026, following a coordination meeting with EURCAW. **Both will serve as topic leaders for this recommendation.**

In addition, they asked if an external study on *Improving Harmonisation of Aquatic Animal Welfare and Slaughter Data* could be conducted by an external expert.

Charlotte Epinay and Roby Sahota will submit terms of reference (ToR) for FG and WG validation to initiate funding for an external expert study. The study must be completed by October 2026, with validation of the ToR and expert selection finalised by Q1 2026.

4. Restriction on moving fish from confirmed outbreak of ISA/IHN/VHS

- Presentation by **Arnaud Collard**, from the Research and Diagnostic Service at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Liège
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Many WG members reacted to the presentation. Regarding the future recommendation, which is included in the AAC Strategic Plan for 2025-2026, the members agreed to collect Member States experiences, identify critical issues and regulatory inconsistencies, develop recommendations for harmonised disease management and vaccination use.

A new FG will be created and a call for a FG leader will be launched.



5. Taxonomy Regulation: uptake of fish farming

- Presentation by Lorella de la Cruz (DG MARE)
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

As DG MARE was not available to make this presentation, **Cynthia Benites (AAC Secretariat)** presented a state of play on this issue. Indeed, the AAC has already adopted a recommendation on taxonomy with a link on aquaculture. **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** expressed frustration over the taxonomy applied to aquaculture, emphasizing that it is intended for industries and urging the Commission to clarify its scope through clear communication. The future recommendation is part of the AAC Strategic Plan for 2025-2026.

A FG will be created and a call for a FG leader will be open.

6. Working Group Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025-2028

- Reminder of the rules of procedure by the secretariat
- Appointment of the Working Group Chair and Vice-Chair for the period 2025-2028

Andrea Fabris (API) was reelected as Chair of the WG1 for 2025-2028, and **Phil Brooke (CIWF)** was reelected as Vice-Chair of the WG1 for 2025-2028.

7. AOB & Conclusions

Three AOBs were added:

- **Farm visit at the last ExCom meeting**

Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming) asked that the farm visit held at the last ExCom meeting in June was added as an agenda item of the following WG meeting.

- **Feed workshop**

Ole Christensen (FEFAC) presented the outcome of the Workshop on the European Commission Aquafeeds Study organised by DG MARE on 6 October. He indicated that, once the study is published, the item would be put at the agenda of the following WG meeting, with highlights presented by Ole himself.

- **FG leader of the FG on domestication and diversification**

The FG leader of the FG on domestication and diversification, Ana Granados (EFFAB), can no longer be FG leader. **A call for a new FG leader will be open.**

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

The next meeting of this Working Group will take place online on **24 February (morning)**.

