

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Working Group 1 - Finfish meeting

24 February 2026 (14:00-18:15)

Online – Interpretation available in EN - FR – ES – IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG1 MEMBERS

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

Giulia Malerbi (ALI)
Max Hörmann (ALFAA),
Florian Guillou (CNPMEM),
Pier Salvador (COPA),
Brian Thomsen (Danish
Aquaculture Producer

Organisation)
David Bassett (EATiP),
James Hinchcliffe (EFFOP),
Robyn Sahota (Eurogroup for
Animals),
Catherine Pons (FEAP),
Javier Ojeda (FEAP),
Lone Flyvholm (FEAP),
Szilvia Mihalfy (FEAP),

Ole Christensen (FEFAC),
Alain Schonbrodt (FVE),
Yannis Pelekanakis (HAPO),
Ola Öberg (RECIRKFIK),
Catalin Platon (ROMFISH),
Paul Denekamp (Stichting
Vissenbescherming).

Excused: Leo Kirchmaier (ALFAA), Mélanie Haslauer (ALFAA)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Invited: Ligia Negulici (DG SANTE) and Aleksandra Miteva (DG SANTE)

Observers: Wasseem Emam (Ethical Seafood Research), Stefan Reiser (Thünen Institute), Linn Therese Hosteland (Norwegian Coastal Shipowners)

Member States Experts: Marta Martínez López (Spanish Ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food) and Luz Arregui (General Secretariat of the Spanish Ministry of agriculture, Fisheries and 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 without any change.

The minutes of the last meeting (14.10.2025) were approved by written procedure.

2. Fish Health

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

- State of play on the matter by Ligia Negulici (DG SANTE)¹
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on the next steps

Ligia Negulici (DG SANTE) presented the state of play on the use of biocides. Many members reacted to the presentation on the use of biocidal products in aquaculture. Pier Salvador (Copa) stressed the need for harmonised EU-level rules, rather than national decisions, to avoid an uneven playing field. Ola Öberg (RECIRKFIK) also underlined that food security should be an important criterion to consider when evaluating biocides.

¹https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/2.-Use-of-biocidal-products-in-aquaculture_DG-SANTE-presentation.pdf



The draft recommendation on biocides for aquaculture will be drafted by the rapporteur (Andrea Fabris - API) and circulated at the WG level.

ii. 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 the next steps

Andrea Fabris (Chair) reminded that the members agreed to draft a recommendation on autologous vaccines at the last Working Group meeting. Lone Flyholm (FEAP) indicated interest in joining the FG, and she will share concrete examples of specific issues.

Based on the comments from the members, **the recommendation on autologous vaccines will be drafted. Members will also be encouraged to share examples to this draft.**

iii. Follow up on EC replies on the recommendation on fish parasites and medicated feed

- Presentation 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 EC replies on the recommendations on fish parasites and medicated feed. On fish parasites, he indicated the need to await the outcome of the European Commission and Member States' Expert Group meeting, scheduled for April, before taking any action. On medicated feed, he will circulate the follow-up analysis.

An update on these items will be provided at the next WG meeting in June.

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

- Presentation of a draft recommendation by **Alain Schonbrodt (FVE)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Alain Schonbrodt (FVE) presented the draft recommendation on the restriction on moving fish from confirmed outbreak of ISA/IHN/VHS that is being discussed at the FG level. Members discussed on the practical implications of movement restrictions and differences in their implementation across Member States.

Following a discussion with the members, the draft recommendation will be amended and circulated for comments and approval at the FG level.

4. Fish welfare

i. Revision of the EU animal welfare legislation

- Adoption of the draft recommendation by **Charlotte Epinay and Robyn Sahota (Eurogroup for Animals)**
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on the next steps

Robyn Sahota (Eurogroup for Animals) presented the draft recommendation on the inclusion of aquatic



animals in the scope of the EU animal welfare revision. She explained that, as the draft also addresses aspects related to imports, the Market Advisory Council (MAC) is consulting its members on these elements, which fall exclusively within the remit of that Advisory Council. Several members took the floor, in particular to comment on the title of the recommendation and on the possibility of including a recommendation on public procurement.

The revised draft will be circulated for comments and approval within WG1 once the MAC will share its comments on the imports part.

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

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

Robyn Sahota (Eurogroup for Animals) presented the key elements of the draft recommendation on increased funding to support research on species-specific welfare indicators and humane slaughter including the effectiveness of stunning methods in the field that is being finalized. She also explained to coordinate the AAC's work on this document and ensure alignment with EURCAW-Aqua activities, a meeting with EURCAW-aqua was held on 30 January. Members discussed the scope of the recommendation, the support for operators and appropriate funding instruments.

Following input from the members, the draft will be revised and circulated at the FG for comments and approval.

5. EU package on simpler food and feed safety rules

- Information on the package by **Ole Christensen (FEFAC)**²
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Ole Christensen (FEFAC) presented the EU package on simpler food and feed safety rules proposed by the European Commission as part of the Omnibus package. The members took note of the presentation, and they will continue monitoring the legislative proposal by the European Commission.

6. Evaluation of the EU Animal Health Law

- Presentation on the main findings by **Aleksandra MITEVA (DG SANTE)**³
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Aleksandra Miteva (DG SANTE) presented the main findings of the evaluation of the EU Animal Health Law. She explained that the European Commission is preparing the final evaluation report, which is expected to be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council by April 2026. Many members reacted to the presentation and took note of the presentation by DG SANTE.

The members will continue monitoring this file.

²<https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/5.-Simpler-food-and-feed-safety-rules.pdf>

³<https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/6.-Evaluation-of-the-Animal-Health-Law.pdf>



7. Follow up on the ExCom' sturgeon farm visit

- Presentation by Paul Denekamp (**Vissenbescherming**)
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming) presented his conclusions on the ExCom sturgeon farm visit that took place in June 2025, about which he has written a document before. He suggested a broader participation beyond only the ExCom members. He proposed that all visits of fish or shellfish farms by the AAC will be evaluated in the appropriate Working Group.

The Chair concluded that the issue would be considered further based on the cited document and proposal.

8. Domestication and diversification of aquaculture species

- Update on Focus Group activities by FG leader **Phil Brooke (CIWF)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

Phil Brooke (CIWF) presented the draft document on domestication and diversification of aquaculture species, that is being discussed at the FG level.

Following a discussion with the members on the definition of domestication in aquaculture, as well as on criteria and conditions to be considered when developing new farmed species, it was decided that further exchange of views will take place at the FG level.

9. AOB & Conclusions

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 **8 June (afternoon), which will be followed by the AAC-MAC 10-year anniversary on 10 June (afternoon).**

