

Aquaculture Advisory Council

WG3 Horizontal Issues

9 June 2026 (10:00-17:00)

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

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG3 MEMBERS

Charlotte Epinay (Eurogroup for Animals, Chair),
Yannis Pelekanakis (HAPO, Vice-Chair),

Tamas Eisenbeck (AIPCE – Seafood Europe),
Leo Kirchmaier (ALFAA),
Lorenzo Gennari (AMA),
Isidro Blanquet (APA),
Andrea Fabris (API),
Giulia Malerbi (Aquatic Life Institute),
Marine Levadoux (CIPA),
Alexandre Cottier-Pérez (CIWF),

Phil Brooke (CIWF),
Florian Guillou (CNPMM),
Pier Salvador (COPA),
Angeles Longa Portabales (CRMG),
Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture Producer Organisation),
David Bassett (EATiP),
Violaine de Neef (EBCD),
Barbara Barbosa (EFFAB),
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Danilo Santini (FAI CISL),
Pierpaolo Piva (FAI CISL),
Javier Ojeda (FEAP),

Catherine Pons (FEAP),
Lone Flyvholm (FEAP),
Ole Christensen (FEFAC),
Alain Schonbrodt (FVE),
Teresa Morrissey (IFA),
Hein Sas (NORA),
Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders Association),
Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK),
Eugen Catalin Platon (Romfish),
Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming).

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Invited: Emilia Gargallo (DG MARE), Nikolaos Georgiadis (DG ENV), Pavel Salz (EP expert), Julian Garcia Baena (DG MARE)

Observers: Joe Redfern (Shellfish Association of Great Britain), Pedro Reis Santos (MAC), Wasseem Emam (Ethical Seafood Research), Linn Therese S. Hosteland (Norwegian Coastal Shipowners)

Member States Experts: Carol Collins (Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Ireland), George Broulidakis (Ministry of Rural Development & Food, Greece), Alkisti Batzina (Ministry of Rural Development & Food, Greece)

Secretariat: Cécile Fouquet (AAC Secretariat), Alicia Mouthuy (AAC Secretariat)



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MEETING MINUTES

Welcome words by the Chair

The Chair welcomed the participants.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was approved without any changes.

The minutes of the last meeting (25.02.2026) had been adopted by written procedure.

2. DG MARE updates

Emilia Gargallo (DG MARE) provided an update on various DG MARE initiatives and policy developments¹.

Many WG members reacted to the presentation. Emilia Gargallo took note of the comments and encouraged the members to participate to the ongoing public consultations and submit any document they might find relevant.

¹ <https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2.-DG-MARE-Updates.pdf>



3. Evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy

- Introduction by **AAC Chair Brian Thomsen** of its strategy for the next steps
- Exchange of views with the members

The AAC Chair briefly presented the AAC recommendation on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy, adopted by the ExCom members. **To easily reach out to the Member States' experts, a policy brief will be published together with each recommendation on the AAC, reflecting its main messages.**

4. Predators

- Introduction by the **Secretariat**
- Exchange of views with the members and decisions on next steps

The **Secretariat** highlighted the growing attention given to predator management at EU level, and to cormorants in particular. A public consultation on the Nature Directives was now ongoing.

Many members stressed the need for a holistic approach addressing cormorant predation. Members highlighted the importance of considering invasive species, the importance of developing preventive management measures (instead of eliminating predators), and reassessing the protection status of certain species where appropriate. Several members also called for the identification and promotion of practical solutions and best practices among Member States.

A new FG will be created with Catalin Platon (ROMFISH) as its leader to prepare a contribution to the Nature Directives stress test consultation. The Secretariat will also reach out to the Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism (AAM) to request the possibility to contribute to their draft document on predators.

5. Water

- Presentation by **Mr. Nikolaos Georgiadis** from DG ENV Unit C1 (Sustainable Freshwater Management) on the Water Resilience Strategy implementation, the evolutions and revision of the Water Framework Directive and the newly adopted implementation Guidance²
- **Exchange of views** with the members in view of drafting a new recommendation
- **Decision** on rapporteur and next steps

Mr. Nikolaos Georgiadis (DG ENV) presented the latest developments concerning water policy, the Water Resilience Strategy and the ongoing review of the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Many members reacted to the presentation and Mr. Georgiadis took note of their comments.

Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) will draft an AAC recommendation on the Water Resilience Strategy implementation. A FG will be created.

² <https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/5.-Water-Resilience-Strategy.pdf>



6. Sustainable aquaculture

- Presentation of the discussion and potential recommendation by **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)**³
- Exchange of views with the AAC members
- Decision on next steps

In light of the forthcoming Commission Guidance on Environmental Performance, **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** introduced this topic in view of an exchange of views on the issue.

As many concepts need much more time to be discussed, this item will figure again on the agenda of the next WG meeting in October 2026.

7. MFF – Exchange in view of an AAC contribution

- Presentation “Navigating the new MFF approach for - Mapping threats and opportunities for the aquaculture sector” by **Pavel Salz**⁴
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

Pavel Salz (EP expert) presented the report that the PECH Committee issued on the next MFF 2028-2034, with a special emphasis on how it may affect aquaculture. Many members reacted to his presentation.

The AAC will consider drafting a recommendation on this topic.

8. AAC work – feedback on the evaluation questionnaire

- Presentation of important feedback by the **Secretariat and the AAC Chair**
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

The **Secretariat** presented on of the results of the 2024-2025 yearly AAC evaluation, which highlighted that only few AAC members share the AAC recommendations with their Member States’ authorities. **Brian Thomsen (DAPO)** suggested preparing a one-page summary accompanying each recommendation, focusing on key messages, while **Charlotte Epinay (WG3 Chair)** proposed compiling contact details of Member State experts by policy area.

The ExCom will consider these ideas to improve the uptake of AAC messages by the Member States’ authorities.

9. AAC WG3 Strategic Plan

- Presentation by the **Secretariat**
- Approval of the Strategic Plan for 2026-2027

As WG3 members submitted 15 recommendations ideas, the Secretariat presented the state of play and the number of votes received. **Following a discussion, WG3 members agreed that the SP will include**

³ <https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/6.-Sustainable-aquaculture-WG3-document.pdf>

⁴ <https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/7.-Navigating-the-new-MFF-approach-for-2028-2034-%E2%80%93-Mapping-threats-and-opportunities-for-the-fisheries-and-aquaculture-sector.pdf>



the following recommendations:

- Vision 2040
- Evaluation of the CFP/CMO
- Supporting sustainable aquaculture in the EU with the next MFF

Members also agreed to request a study on “An aquaculture omnibus”, although it will not constitute a firm commitment to be included in the SP.

10. Update on ongoing WG3 work by the Chair

- **Follow up on the AAC Recommendation on Small Scale Aquaculture:** Ola Oberg (RECIRKFISK), the topic leader, presented a draft letter, aiming to respond to a letter by DG MARE. **Following a discussion with the members, a new FG meeting will be organised to discuss the letter (which will be structured into two separate sections).**
- **Ocean Act:** Lorenzo Gennari (AMA), FG leader, presented the Ocean Act importance and mentioned the need to contribute to the ongoing EC public consultation. **A FG will be created to discuss the the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Regulation in different Member States, as well as the AAC's expectations regarding the Ocean Pact/Ocean Act.**

11. AOB & conclusions

Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming) suggested that a point is included on the next WG3 meeting agenda to discuss the farm visits done by ExCom members, exchange views and impressions about them. **Charlotte Epinay (Chair)** thanked the members for their participation and concluded the meeting.

The next meeting of this Working Group will take place in Brussels on **20-21 October 2026**.

