



Executive Committee

Date: 22nd March 2018, 14:00-17:30

Venue: BusinessEurope, Avenue de Cortenbergh 168, 1000 Bruxelles

Attendants: **Marc-Philip Buckhout** (Chair), **Cécile Fouquet** (Secretariat), **Farid Safi** (Secretariat), **Marco Gilmozzi** (FEAP) **Courtney Hough** (FEAP), **Margreet van Vilsteren** (Good Fish Foundation), **Bruna Campos** (BirdLife Europe), **Bernhard Feneis** (Cogeca), **Eoin Mac Aoidh** (DG MARE), **Paul Denekamp** (Vissenbescherming), **Jamie Smith** (Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation), **Giuseppe Prioli** (Associazione Mediterranea Acquacoltori), **Alexander Döring** (FEFAC), **Sarah Horsfall** (EMPA), **Bruno Guillaumie** (CNC), **Marco Baldoli** (AIPCE), **Wouter van Zandbrink** (CEP), **Phil Brooke** (Compassion in World Farming), **Rory Keatinge** (Coastwatch Europe), **Cynthia Benites** (COPA)

Excused: **Richie Flynn** (IFA Aquaculture), **Angeles Longa Portabales** (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia), **Katie Miller** (Client Earth)

Delegation of votes: **Angeles Longa Portabales** (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia) to **Giuseppe Prioli** (Associazione Mediterranea Acquacoltori) ; **Katie Miller** (Client Earth) to **Marc-Philip Buckhout** (Seas at Risk) ; **Marc-Philip Buckhout** (Seas at Risk) to **Margreet van Vilsteren** (Good Fish Foundation)

Abbreviations: European Commission (COMM), Member States (MS), Working Group (WG), Working Programme (WP), Terms of Reference (ToRs), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

1. Welcome by the Chair

2. Adoption of the agenda and approval of the minutes of the previous ExCom meeting (September 26th).

Copa/Cogeca asked that as regards item 8 on operations of AAC, the reimbursement of experts from European organisations is discussed.

New point 10 « AAC Rules of Procedure”

Vote on the proposed amendment

Addition of a point « Invitation by the Austrian authorities for the General Assembly meeting” which deserves a separate discussion – Moved after point 2

In AOB: Issues with the Rapporteur’s contracts

The agenda is adopted.

3. Invitation by the Austrian authorities for the General Assembly meeting

Chair: The Austrian AAC Member Leo Kirchmaier had informed that Austria wanted to host the AAC General Assembly this year. There was an official letter drafted at the end of last year which got lost during the transition period when the Secretariat changed hands. Therefore, the AAC Chair and Vice-Chair were not aware of the huge organisation efforts that Austria had already foreseen in view of this event. Now everything was cancelled.

Bernhard Feneis (COGECA): The Austrian authorities even wanted to organize a big evening event on the Danube. Mr. Kirchmaier was criticized and the Austrian authorities regarded the AAC as a very strange organization unable to communicate and respond politely.

Chair: We should draft a letter to be circulated among the ExCom Members for approval to apologize and say that we welcomed their initiative and that don't discriminate against any contribution. In case we receive a similar invitation in the future, we expect the Secretariat to inform ExCom in order to discuss it and coordinate.

4. Relevance of the availability of effective vaccines in aquaculture - Approval of draft WG1 report

Bruna Campos (BirdLife): As it is an AAC document, it should read « it has been stressed that » instead of making a direct reference to AAC Members.

Chair: The text is adopted with the changes suggested by Birdlife. A discussion could be foreseen on the possibility to refer to member organisations in AAC documents.

5. Working group related topics:

- *Working Group 1, Fish – update on state of play*
- *Working Group 2, Shellfish – update on state of play*
- *Working Group 3, Horizontal – update on state of play*

The WG Chairs and Vice-Chairs updated the ExCom Members on the state of play of their work.

One of the points highlighted was the need to ask the Commission to request AAC Contributions with enough time.

The ExCom Members discussed about the relevance of the organisation of the work in 3 WGs, as some discussions were repeated. More coherence is needed for splitting the topics amongst the WGs.

6. Inter-ACs Brexit Meeting (13 April 2018, The Hague) - Approval of the AAC view on Brexit

Members agreed on the fact that the position must clearly reflect that, after Brexit, organizations can be active observers but no longer members, and thus won't be reimbursed.

Chair: The document will be drafted again and circulated for approval before the ACs Brexit meeting in The Hague.

7. Draft letter to the EP on the report on aquaculture

The Members agreed on the letter to respond to the EP initiative report on aquaculture with the following change: « support » instead of « develop » in paragraph 2.

The letter will be sent to the EP Rapporteur shortly after the meeting.

8. Draft response to the Commission questions on the post 2020 EMFF

The Members agreed on the letter to respond to Commission with the following changes:

- « SIZE of the AAC » should be replaced by « NATURE of the AAC ».
- The last sentence should say: ON BEHALF OF THE AAC...

The letter including these changes will be sent to DG MARE shortly after the meeting.

9. Discussion on the AAC reimbursement Rules

Chair: The current travel reimbursement rules say that the AAC should reimburse "from the place specified in their invitation to the place of the meeting". If the organisation's site is closer than 100 km from the place of the meeting, no travel expenses can be reimbursed. There is a problem for organizations

like COPA-COGECA as their Secretariat is in Brussels but not necessarily their Representatives. I think that these people should be reimbursed for their travel expenses.

ExCom Members agreed on the fact that these experts should be reimbursed but that the conditions should be clearly defined. They should cover the travel expenses of the expert from his place of residence to the meeting place.

10. AAC Membership applications - Update and approval of new Members

Chair: the AAC currently counts 57 organizations. 17 members of the 40% and 39 members of the 60%. This makes an unequal balance of 30% - 70%.

We received 5 applications, 4 of which already have received the backing from their Member States. They all belong to the 60% group.

Should we welcome them?

Our decision may affect contributions from some Member States.

The ExCom Members debates on this matter:

- Welcoming new Members should be OK as long as the balance is respected in the ExCom, where decisions are taken.
- Other organizations should have the right to participate.
- The participation in votes should respect the 60:40 rule. We could give NGOs a higher weight when voting if we welcome new members from the sector.

The Secretariat was requested to update the ExCom at each meeting on the AAC composition and its evolution (before the entrance of new Members, after they join, the impact of Brexit...)

Chair: It seems that we cannot refuse Members who have received the backing from their Member State. We will request a meeting with the European Commission ASAP to confirm how we should proceed with the GA composition and if there is a possibility to calibrate the votes.

11. AAC website online content and social media

The Secretariat updated the ExCom members on the AAC website (www.aac-europe.org) and Twitter account (@aac_europe). It requested pictures to illustrate the website.

12. Date and place of forthcoming meetings 2018

The Next ExCom meeting will take place in Paris on the 30th August.

The Secretariat has to inquire about possibilities to do organise some meetings via the Internet.

13. Any other business

Contracts of Rapporteurs

Chair: The situation on the contrat of Mr. Guillaumie, rapporteur for WG2 must be discussed. The current contrat puts Mr. Guillaumie in a situation in which he should be paying a lot of taxes.

Member exchange views:

- As an AAC Member, Mr. Guillaumie is a third party. The agreement can specify the person who does the work and specifically mention he has got the necessary skills.
- The ToR for the mission must be present in the Working Plan and the Budget.
- The contract can precise the responsible person within the member organization with a withdrawal clause if the responsible person is no longer capable to fulfil his obligation.

Chair: We will include a clause linking the rapporteurs' contract to a specific person and not to an organisation anymore.

Proposal of Amendment of the rules of procedure

The ExCom members had exchanged emails on this point before the meeting.

They proposed to modify the proposal of amendment to:

- Clarify that Ex com decides who represents the AAC at what meetings
- State that the participation to a meeting must be an active one (i.e. panel speakers, facilitator) – participating in the audience is not enough
- Say that the AAC budget is only spent if the other party inviting will not cover the spending itself

Chair: We will draft a statement including the comments. It will have to be adopted by the GA.

Invoice to AliénorEU

The Secretariat asks for authorization to invoice its work for the 3 first months (November 2017-January 2018).

Roles of Chair & Vice-Chair

Chair: Richie Flynn and I will clarify the roles of the Chair and the Vice-Chair. I will come forward with a proposal to modify the Rules of Procedure.

Timing of Work Programme and Budget

The Secretariat is requested to produce a roadmap in order for The ExCom to draft a Work Programme in accordance with the work of the Commission and the EP.

In September 2017, the GA adopted partial accounts as the AAC financial year ends on the 31/10/2017. The final accounts must now be approved so that the accountant can make the fiscal declaration. This must be done by the end of April! As we cannot organise a GA, the accountant suggested that the AAC Members send their approval of the accounts by post to the Secretariat.

Chair: The accounts will be sent to the ExCom for approval and then to the GA for adoption. We will study a new calendar of meetings for the GAs and see how we could do to adjust the timing of the annual accounts to what is required in Belgium.