

# Aquaculture Advisory Council

## Executive Committee

### Minutes

Brussels, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (10:00-13:00)

**Attendants:** Marco Gilmozzi (Chair), Phil Brooke (CIWF), Bruna Campos (BirdLife), Pascale Colson (DG MARE), Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming), Alexander Döring (FEFAC), Bernhard Feneis (COGECA), Cristina Fernández (Observer), Cécile Fouquet (Secretariat), Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA), Courtney Hough (Candidate for AAC Chairmanship), Angeles Longa Portabales (CRMG), Javier Ojeda (Candidate for AAC Chairmanship), Erik Bjorn Olsen (Danish Society for a living sea), Christel Perot-Camus (CNC), Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (Observer), Giuseppe Prioli (AMA), Addy Risseeuw (PO Mosselcultuur), Farid Safi (Secretariat), Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA), Kathryn Stack (FEAP), Margreet van Vilsteren (Good Fish Foundation), Douglas Waley (Eurogroup for Animals)

**Excused:** Marc-Philip Buckhout (Seas at Risk), David Sandison (Scottish Salmon Producers),

**Delegation of votes:** Marc-Philip Buckhout (Seas at Risk) to Bruna Campos (BirdLife)

**Abbreviations:** RoP (Rules of Procedure); EC (European Commission); FG (Focus Group); GA (General Assembly); IMCO (Information to Consumers Regulation).

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda and approval of the last ExCom minutes (October 17th 2018)

The Agenda and the minutes of last ExCom were approved.

#### 2. Legal Affairs Focus Group: full constitution and mandate

- Approval of members of the group

The following composition of the group was approved:

- Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)
- Kathryn Stack (FEAP)
- Alexander Döring (FEFAC)
- Marc-Philip Buckhout (Seas at Risk)
- One vacant NGO seat

- Approval of mandate

**Bruno Guillaumie** (EMPA) said that the mandate should clearly state that any AAC member should be free to suggest to the FG amendments to Statutes and RoP. The FG should welcome all suggestions and draft them in a legally robust way, before submitting them to the ExCom for approval.

**Alexander Döring** (FEFAC) said that the FG should have the possibility to call on an external firm if necessary, since the Belgian law of non-profit organizations has changed.

**Christel Perot-Camus** (CNC) said that the AAC being registered in Belgium, the Legal Affairs Focus Group should be working in French.

**The Legal Affairs FG will issue its proposals in French. In case of legal assistance needed, the Secretariat will evaluate the financial possibilities to request external legal advice. The ExCom expects the FG to propose the changes to the Statutes and Rules of Procedure before the next ExCom meeting on July 10.**

### 3. Labelling of Caviar: update and next steps

**The Chair** introduced this point reminding that the AAC had requested the support of its advice to the MAC. He noted that the MAC's membership composition is not favourable to the concerns of EU seafood producers. He suggested to voice this AAC concern to the MAC and to the EC.

**Kathryn Stack** (FEAP) reminded that DG MARE's answer to the AAC complains about the labelling of the origin of caviar products was that an IMCO implementing regulation would be implemented in 2019. However, this regulation will only oblige processors to inform when the main ingredient is "non-EU" without further information, which is not ideal.

**Pier Antonio Salvador** (COPA) requested that the EC takes a stance on this matter, so as to support its own producers. For instance, requesting a compulsory information of the origin of products in the HORECA.

**Bruna Campos** (BirdLife) did not consider the current legislation sufficient and suggested the creation of a focus group on labelling with interested MAC members.

**The Secretariat will draft a letter to the European Commission to express the AAC concerns concerning the MAC and will request a meeting to discuss it. The ExCom members will have to approve the letter via written procedure.**

### 4. Proposal of AAC letter to DG MARE to request more human resources in their staff in charge of aquaculture

**The Chair** reminded that while 20% production of fish in the EU comes from aquaculture and that this activity is clearly the future of seafood, there is only 3 people working on a part-time basis on this topic in DG MARE.

**Pascale Colson** (DG MARE) shared a message from DG MARE's Unit in charge of aquaculture: the team will be strengthened by one full-time person by April and possibly by a part-time person later.

Members welcomed this news but considered this insufficient.

**Bruna Campos** (Birdlife) proposed to focus the letter on how the current lack of capacity prevented the AAC from going on with its work. For instance, the undelivered guidelines for marine spatial planning in aquaculture.

**Kathryn Stack** (FEAP) proposed to add a sentence so as to acknowledge the incoming increase of the aquaculture team.

**The letter will be sent to the Commission with these comments.**

#### **5. Texts approved by the Working Groups tabled for adoption by ExCom:**

- AAC Advice on the control regulation (WG2)

**The document was approved and will be sent to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States.**

- Document on the AAC debates on sustainable aquaculture (WG3)

**The Chair** regarded this document as a non-publishable internal document showing the path we have taken to define "sustainable aquaculture".

#### **6. Management Committee activities and decisions needed by ExCom:**

- Kind offer from the Cypriot authorities to organise a meeting in Cyprus.

The AAC Secretariat has received a kind offer from the Cypriot authorities who wish to host an AAC meeting.

Reminding the lack of response to the Austrian invitation in 2018, **Bruna Campos** (BirdLife) said that she was in favour of accepting the invitation from Cyprus. A small meeting such as ExCom could take place instead of a GA or WGs. **Phil Brooke** (CIWF) and **Addy Risseeuw** (PO Mosselcultuur) agreed with accepting the invitation.

Combining the AAC meeting with some other meetings related to aquaculture (**Alexander Döring** mentioned that FEFAC has an important member in Cyprus) could be interesting. Visits to local fish farms could also be organised.

**Paul Denekamp** (Stichting Vissenbescherming) expressed his concerns as of creating additional plane travelling. The members who would prefer not to attend this exceptional meeting will be able to follow the ExCom via Skype.

**The Chair agreed and said that an ExCom meeting should be organised in Cyprus instead of a bigger meeting.**

- Workshop on "Challenges and Potential for freshwater Aquaculture" (Brussels, 22/05)

**Cécile Fouquet** (Secretariat) informed that the Committee of the Regions requested a speaker on behalf of the AAC for a workshop taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 dedicated to freshwater aquaculture.

**The Management Committee will appoint the speaker.**

- European Maritime Day workshop organisation (Lisbon, 16/05). Decision on AAC members which will lead the tables.

**Bruno Guillaumie** (EMPA) expressed his discontent about the lack of interpretation for non-English speakers for this event and he regretted the fact that it was organized on one of the days of the year with the greatest tidal coefficient.

**AAC attendants accepted the proposed speakers and appointed as table leaders: Margreet van Vilsteren (Media), Javier Ojeda (Consumer and products), Yannis Pelekanakis (Animal welfare). The CNC will inform the secretariat of their speaker for the table "Space and environment".**

**The AAC will send a letter to the Commission to highlight the issue of the lack of interpretation for non-English speakers at the EMD events.**

- Information point on meetings attended on behalf of the AAC by the Secretariat and the Vice-Chair:
  - DG MARE meeting on the circular economy of fishing gears (26<sup>th</sup> February)

**Cécile Fouquet** (Secretariat) circulated a summary of the event drafted by DG MARE. **Bruno Guillaumie** (EMPA) suggested changes to the summary which **Cécile** forwarded to DG MARE.

- EFCA's Advisory board meeting (27<sup>th</sup> February)

**Cécile Fouquet** (Secretariat) noted two interesting points of this meeting:

- 1) EFCA informally agreed that it should liaise with EFSA to see how to collaborate more on the issue of sanitary controls for imported fish.
- 2) The AAC will seat in the administrative board of EFCA in 2022 following the rotating allocation of the seats.

**7. 2019-2020 AAC Work Programme and Budget: discussion on the way to proceed to prepare it**

**The Chair** proposed that each WG submits 5 priority topics to the ExCom for next year (with a precise timeline). An achievement report would be drafted at the end of the period.

**Bruno Guillaumie** (EMPA) agreed. Nonetheless, the Work programme should leave room for unforeseen topics at the initiative of the AAC Chair, WG Chairs or the EC.

**The Secretariat will ask to the EC its crucial priorities for next year so as to help WGs to determine their priorities in June. The ExCom will have to approve next July the priorities for next year on the basis of the proposals by the WGs.**

#### **8. AAC Budget: update on ongoing financial year and reimbursement rules**

- Update of AAC ongoing budget

**Cécile Fouquet** (Secretariat) gave an update on the AAC ongoing budget. Due to the increase of reimbursement requests by participants in AAC meetings, the funds initially dedicated to physical FG meetings will probably need to be used to cover reimbursement requests for regular meetings. This year, some dissemination tools should be developed, in particular in view of the AAC participation to the EMD event. Overall, the AAC budget is tight.

- Information on Focus Group financing

**Farid Safi** (Secretariat) explained that, for this year, FG members should preferably meet by phone calls (and can be using the Secretariat conference call system).

- Information and decision on AAC reimbursement rules

**Farid Safi** (Secretariat) compared the EC and the AAC reimbursement rules for expert meetings. Lifting the 350€ reimbursement ceiling for transport expenses is possible and would not strongly impact the budget.

A discussion then started about this proposal:

**The Chair** proposed to raise the ceiling (500€ for instance) instead of lifting it.

**Giuseppe Prioli** (AMA) asked whether motorway tolls could be reimbursed in the future.

**Paul Denekamp** (Stichting Vissenbescherming) said that if ExCom meetings take place in the afternoon, he would not need a hotel and thus would not ask for the accommodation allowance.

**The Secretariat will examine the possible changes to reimbursement rules given the available budget on the basis of the suggestions received. Proposals will be submitted for approval before the next WG meetings.**

## 9. Election of the AAC Chair

By decision of the GA, the AAC Chair candidate was exceptionally appointed at this meeting. The 3 candidates were **Javier Ojeda** (APROMAR), **Courtney Hough** (independent) and **Douglas McLeod** (British Trout Association). The two first candidates briefly exposed their vision for the AAC. **Douglas McLeod** couldn't attend the meeting. The ExCom members decided that, in the context of Brexit, the AAC should try to avoid voting for a British citizen. Mr. Courtney Hough showed his certificate of Belgian nationality.

The result of the votes was:

**Javier Ojeda**: 10 votes

**Courtney Hough**: 6 votes

**A written procedure will be launched for the GA to approve Mr. Javier Ojeda as AAC Chair. In case of consensus, Javier Ojeda will become Chair on April 10, 2019.** He will have to be confirmed as Chair by the ordinary GA on September 10, 2019.

In case a new candidate wants to stand for AAC Chairmanship in September, he/she will have to be appointed by the ExCom.

**Javier Ojeda** thanked the ExCom for choosing him and paid tribute to Richie Flynn, the regretted former AAC Chair, considering replacing him as a challenge.

Javier Ojeda resigned as WG1 Chair. **Phil Brooke** (CIWF), WG1 Vice-Chair, shall fulfil this role until the next GA.

## 10. Date and place of the forthcoming meeting

The next ExCom meeting will take place on 10 July 2019 in Brussels.