

# Aquaculture Advisory Council

## Working Group 1 - Finfish meeting

18 February 2025 (09:00-12:30)

Online (Zoom) – Interpretation available in EN - FR – ES – IT

## Minutes

### PARTICIPATION LIST

#### WG1 MEMBERS

Andrea Fabris (API, Chair)	Pier Salvador (COPA),	Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISK),
Phil Brooke (CIWF, Vice-Chair)	David Bassett (EATIP),	Catalin Platon (ROMFISH),
Melanie Haslauer (ALFAA),	Douglas Waley (Eurogroup for Animals),	Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming),
Garazi Rodríguez (APROMAR),	James Hinchcliffe (EFFOP),	Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture),
Giulia Malerbi (Aquatic Life Institute),	Catherine Pons (FEAP),	Ole Christensen (FEFAC),
Marine Levadoux (CIPA),	Szilvia Mihalfy (FEAP),	Alain Schonbrodt (FVE),
Florian Guillou (CNPMEM),	Javier Ojeda (FEAP),	Thibault Pivetta (EMPA).
Bernhard Feneis (COGECA),	Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders Association),	
	Nathalie Gamain (OFI),	
	Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK),	

#### OTHER PARTICIPANTS

**Invited:** Paolo Caricato (DG SANTE), Ludovic Chatelin (DG SANTE).

**Observers:** Wasseem Emam (Ethical Seafood Research), Amalda Perales Ferrer (Ethical Seafood Research), Linn Therese Skår Hosteland (Norwegian Coastal Shipowners Association),

**Member States Experts:** Raquel López González (Spanish Ministry for Agriculture – General Secretariat of Fisheries), Maria Vittoria Briscolini (Italian Ministry for Agriculture), Irene Adelaide Forcella (Italian Ministry of Agriculture), Rui Oliveira (Portuguese Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services), Péter Lengyel (Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU), Katalin Szentes (Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture), Vaida Devénaitė (Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service), Kotryna Stanišauskienė (Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service), Veerle Campens (Flemish Agriculture and Fisheries Agency), Samuel Kingston (Irish Ministry for Agriculture, Food and the Marine), Francesco Lombardo (Maltese Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights)

**Secretariat:** Cynthia Benites (AAC Secretariat), Justine Marrot (AAC Secretariat).



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## MEETING MINUTES

### Welcome words by the Chair

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Andrea Fabris (Chair) welcomed the present participants.

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda and last meeting minutes

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The agenda was approved without changes. The minutes of the last meeting were approved by written procedure.

#### 2. Fish Health

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##### i. Development of codes of good practice on the management of aquatic diseases

- Introduction by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**
- **Exchange of views** with the Working Group members and approval of report

The report on the development of codes of good practices on the management of aquatic diseases, prepared by Jordi López Ramón (Aquatic Health Solutions), was presented at the last WG meeting and adopted in October. **The Chair** asked the members if they would like to work on some specific issues following this report or if the work can be considered done now.

**Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK)** mentioned the issue of the microbiome changing with climate change and its effect on fish health. **The Chair** suggested to invite an expert on this issue for the next WG meeting. **The Chair** mentioned the issue of how to prevent the arrival of new pathogens with climate change related to new species and suggested to have a reflection on this. **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** underlined the importance of climate change impacts and the fact that it is difficult to assess the impact of climate change on their activity. **Alain Schonbrodt (FVE)** mentioned the situation in Belgium with insufficient minimum biosecurity measures and the need to reevaluate the Animal Health Law.



If there are specific issues that the Members want to work on, they can write to the FG leader and the FG leader will decide on the next steps.

## ii. Fish parasites

- State of play on the matter by **Paolo Caricato (DG SANTE)**<sup>1</sup>
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on the next steps

Several WG members expressed their disappointment with the conclusions of the EFSA study. Following the publication of the second part of this report, the discussion will now be with the Member States. **Paolo Caricato (DG SANTE)** will see if an expert group on parasites in aquaculture products can be organised with the Member States and the industry present in order to interpret this scientific opinion in a way that is manageable.

**WG Members are encouraged to send additional data to DG SANTE on this issue.**

## iii. Animal Health Law

- Presentation of a draft recommendation on Animal Health Law by **Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

During the last WG Meeting, representatives from DG SANTE presented the implementation of the Animal Health Law. Following this, the Secretariat asked the members to send some inputs on the difficulties of implementation but did not receive any inputs. With the agreement of the Chair, **Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture)** drafted a recommendation on this topic. **Alain Schonbrodt (FVE)** mentioned that it is very difficult to follow the evolution of health conditions from one Member State to the other. He also suggested to have an analysis at least once a year to have the authorisation to remove live fish before dumping them in the pond in contact with fish living in the watercourse. Clinical examination of fish is totally insufficient to establish their health status, and no alive fish should leave a confirmed outbreak. **The Chair** mentioned the issue of restocking.

**Since no further comments were received, it was decided to send the recommendation to the Working Group members for approval.**

## iv. Medicated Feed Regulation

- Introduction by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**
- **Exchange of views** on the difficulties of applying EU legislation in the Member States and decision on next steps

Following the discussion on this issue at the last WG meeting, **the Chair** mentioned the unlevel playing field between Member States. **The Chair** invited the members to put on the table the problems they face in their Member State and the next step would be a recommendation. He mentioned the importance to make recommendations for the European Commission to control where is going the application of this regulation but also to the Member States that have to be apply more uniformly this regulation.

**Pier Salvador (COPA)** mentioned that a level playing field does not exist between the EU and other EU countries or non-EU countries. **The Chair** suggested to draft a recommendation asking for a level playing field on this topic. **Bernhard Feneis (COGECA)**, **Alain Schonbrodt (FVE)** and **Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders)**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/EFSA-Fish-parasites-Aquaculture-Advisory-Committee.pdf>



Association) explained the situation in Germany, Belgium and Poland.

The Chair invited the members to send inputs. The Secretariat will send a consultation to gather inputs and then circulate a Doodle to have a meeting on this issue to draft a recommendation.

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

- Presentation on the regulatory framework and its evolution at EU level by **Ludovic Chatelin, head of Sector on Biocides (DG SANTE)**<sup>2</sup>
- **Exchange of views** with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

Many WG members reacted to this presentation. **The FG leader will decide on the next steps.**

### **3. Industrial contaminants levels in aquaculture products and climate change**

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- o Update of activities of the FG by **Andrea Fabris (API)**
- o Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

The WG1 committed to adopt a recommendation on this topic in the Strategic Plan of the AAC, so it needs to be adopted before the end of October 2025. During the last WG2 meeting, WG2 members decided to participate and contribute to this recommendation. A joint FG was created between WG1 and WG2 and it was then decided to move it to WG3. This FG had two meetings, one on 10 January and the other on 7 February. They have worked on a list of contaminants. The FG still does not have a FG leader. They decided to appoint three co-leaders – **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA), Marine Levadoux (CIPA) and the Chair** - to draft this recommendation in order to ensure that the recommendation is adopted in time. One of the main points of the recommendation will be that the contaminants are not the responsibility of the farmers.

**Members are encouraged to join the FG and a call for a FG leader was reiterated.**

### **4. Fish welfare**

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#### **Fish Welfare Reference Center**

- o Summary of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of EURCAW-Aqua new Reflection Platform and follow up by **Phil Brooke (CIWF)**<sup>3</sup>
- o **Exchange of views** with the Working Group members and next steps

**Ola Oberg (RECIRKFIK)** mentioned the question of welfare related to the microbiome and the different ways of running hatcheries. **Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming)** wondered about oysters and other shellfish that are not included and asked if they can receive comments from Advisory Councils. **Phil Brooke (CIWF)** mentioned that the reflection meeting was a chance for the AAC to contribute and that a representative from the Reference Centre could be invited to come to the next WG meeting and regularly update the members on their work. The formal requests to include a topic or other species that they can act upon have to come from the Member States and DG MARE, but it is possible. **Bernhard Feneis (COGECA)** mentioned the issue of

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<sup>2</sup> [http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/20250218\\_AAC-Aquaculture-BPR.pdf](http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/20250218_AAC-Aquaculture-BPR.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Fish-reference-centre-report.pdf>



predators, especially cormorants. **Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture)** mentioned the transport regulation and if the Reference Centre will produce an opinion on this.

**The Secretariat will invite a representative from the Reference Centre to the next WG meeting and ask if the Reference Centre is going to draft an opinion on the transport regulation.**

## 5. Sturgeon

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- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and next steps

**The Chair** mentioned that this recommendation needs to be approved by 31 October 2025. **Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK)** emphasized that sturgeon has no reason for being in CITES anymore. **Pier Salvador (COPA)** emphasized the exceptional work of aquaculture in saving this species.

**A draft recommendation will be circulated for comments at FG level. A Focus Group meeting will also be organised.**

## 6. AOB & Conclusions

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**The Secretariat** presented the timeline of the AAC elections in 2025. An email was sent to the members with all the information and deadlines.

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

The next meeting of this Working Group will take place in Brussels on **4 June (afternoon)**.

