

Executive Committee Draft minutes

Friday 17 May 2019

13:30-16:15

Avenue de Cortenbergh 168,
1000 Brussels

Welcome from the Chair, Guus Pastoor

Adoption of agenda and minutes last meeting (05.09.18): adopted

New Executive Secretary

- Brief introduction by the Chair – information

The Chair announced that Konstantinos Kalamantis, currently working in the European Parliament, would replace Sandra Sanmartin after the end of the Parliamentary mandate (on the 3rd of July 2019).

Focus Groups' functioning and procedures

- Discussion

See relevant paper here:

<https://marketac.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Focus-Groups-functioning-discussion-paper.pdf>

The Chair introduced the issue, associating the efficiency of the MAC with the clear delimitation of the tasks of the focus groups. He reported that, following discussions with DG MARE about various general issues related to MAC (work programme, administration, performance, etc.), the Commission's message is that, although it is on the track, it needs to provide more tangible **results** to be able to justify the budget allocated to it. The MAC has its own working programme, but this has to be useful for the Commission. And in order to be useful, one has to be **efficient**. One can observe that we have large participation, which is encouraging, but this makes it sometimes difficult to have a structured discussion. This is why focus groups (FGs) were established, to prepare the work of the working groups (WGs). However, from a procedural point of view, progress is slow. Often it takes too much time to produce an advice. The reasons: the complexity of the issues, the high number of organisations with very different views. But we need to find ways to be efficient, as we have limited time and limited capacity. We have already experience with FGs. It is time to look back and to evaluate how we are performing.

Some thoughts by the Chair on how to improve efficiency: FGs should have clear terms of





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reference agreed by the WG. Maybe we have not been precise enough on what we expect when establishing FGs; we did not clearly narrow down their **scope**. The result is that they are left to deal with very broad issues, without any guidance. Another option could be to split the issues to be dealt with. Finally, we should not transfer strategic discussions to FGs, this is the Executive Committee's task. We have to make sure that we provide for the Commission with timely and precise / useful advice, which responds to specific requests.

The Chair's thoughts on the need to clarify the **scope** and tasks of the FGs were largely shared by participants (EAPO, EMPA, AIPCE, CEP). For EAPO, FGs need to be more "focused" or be split up. He noted that we had successful FGs, where things function well and timely advice is produced. These are the ones that were given specific guidance from the WG on the issues to be dealt with (ie. the EMFF or the Control Regulation FGs). We need to take example of FGs that have been successful. AIPCE proposed the mandate of the FGs to be put on paper.

On the **role** of the FGs and their relationship with the WGs: even though there are no detailed rules of procedure on the function of the FGs, there is a common understanding among members (EAPO, Oceana, EMPA), that these should be there to prepare the ground, facilitate the work of WGs or to inform the debate, not to take decisions or prepare an advice. It is up to the WG, and ultimately at the Executive Committee level, to sort out positions and to take "political" decisions. It should not be the FG's task to seek consensus. All opinions are valid and have to be recorded. The FG's task should be to present the various positions and different options to the WG, which would then decide on the content of the advice.

ETF talked about the importance to have fluid communication among FGs and WGs.

Good Fish Foundation stressed the need to have the necessary time to effectively discuss the outcome of the FG's work / draft during WGs.

Number of **participants**, representation and observers: FGs can be really productive and operational when they are small (8-10 members) and committed and where positions have been prepared in advance (EAPO, EMPA).

For certain members (ETF, AIPCE) it is important that the various members' **sensibilities are reflected** in the FGs, without this meaning that all professional families must be present to the meetings. It is also important to have clarity on who is member of a FG (AIPCE).

Even if we should not exclude observers (CFFA), FGs should not be open to large numbers of them (EMPA).

Some members talked about the importance of building **trust** as a key for the good functioning of the MAC (CFFA, EAPO, CEP). CEP observed that there are issues where all members of the MAC can have common interests and a common purpose and can unite us (ie. consumers' confidence / health or trade wars where fish is involved). How do we find a way through this: we need to talk the same language, as there are different understandings, ie. on sustainability.

Interaction with the Commission: for EAPO, it is an "open secret" that the Commission feels





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that the MAC does not deliver or does not deliver in time. But this criticism is not always justified. One has to look from where the MAC comes from: ACFA is the MAC's predecessor and the Commission still views the MAC as its own body. Of course, the Commission shall request advice from the MAC and the MAC has to deliver. However, the MAC should be more independent, it should not strictly depend on what the Commission commands. EAPO agreed on this and added that the Commission should give the MAC more room of manoeuvre, while noting that we also need to manage the Commission's expectations. AIPCE stressed that a balance must be struck between having an exchange of views and producing an opinion. Even if the MAC has to produce specific opinions and answer the Commission's questions, we must not deprive ourselves of having enriching exchanges of views, even if these do not correspond exactly to what the Commission asks us to do.

CEP wondered whether the problem was the machinery - the way we articulate FGs (small or big); or whether it is the issues. Probably it is a mixture. There is a relationship between FGs and the Commission's expectations. Part of the problem is the Commission's expectations that the MAC must deliver specific advice. The Commission does not see **value in the MAC as a forum of discussion**. They see value in us producing tangible advice that will help them in their task of proposing new policy initiatives. And it is easy for an AC to provide advice on a specific legislative proposal and the MAC has proven that it can do that. However, unlike other ACs, which have a regional or sectoral focus, the MAC's specificity is that it is deliberately horizontal in a way, as members cover the whole supply chain (fishermen, processors, distributors, retailers and other interest groups). The result is that there are differences of views. CEP sees value in the MAC having the opportunity to have full, frank, open and respectful discussions. The MAC is a unique forum where discussions can take place among all the industries and stakeholders concerned.

Finally, the role of the **management group** was raised by CFFA, who believed that minutes of its meetings should be public. CEP replied that, in principle, management group's work is public (to be checked). Its objective is to discuss handling and crosscutting issues and to make sure that the MAC functions well, that there is coherence in its work. It is not a decision-making body, as is the Executive Committee. It is the lubricant that helps the pieces work together.

The Commission made a general assessment of the MACs performance:

From an operational point of view the MAC is not the best. But there are objective reasons for this: big number of members compared to other ACs, covers the whole EU (not regional competence), newly created. We understand the challenges.

Issues of importance for the Commission (not necessarily addressed to the MAC, but to all ACs):

- **Transparency**, ie. through your website.
- ACs are set up to provide **advice to the Commission** and the relevant Member States.
- **Consensus**: if not possible, then minority opinions have to be registered and put in a recommendation. It is disappointing when no advice is produced.
- It is important that there is a good and constructive **atmosphere**.
- It is necessary to have a calendar which mentions when an advice is due. **Timely advice**





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is essential and is of the interest of the MAC.

- **Work programme:** MAC should have a **strategy** in short-medium-long term.

Chair's conclusions:

- *Terms of reference and clear scope / mandate of FGs, with description of tasks and a timeline, are crucial.*
- *Participants and observers: we have to be realistic, as we have a lot of stakeholders. But small groups (5-10) work more efficiently.*
- *Trust among members is essential.*
- *Negotiations should not take place in the FGs. Only the preparatory work has to be done in the FGs.*
- *Chairs of current FGs could prepare terms of reference and a timeline.*
- *The secretariat should have regular contacts with the Commission.*
- *A paper on the function of FGs should be circulated to members.*
- *Minutes of the management group's meetings should be circulated to members.*

Update on accounts

Panos Manias, Financial Officer of the MAC

- **Update on execution of the budget – information**

Please see the relevant document here:

<https://marketac.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Finance-Presentation-MAC-17-May-2019.pdf>

AEMP wondered what the share is of the self-financing by the MAC members, the financing of the Commission and that of the Member States. It is interesting to note that the funding that the MAC receives from the Commission is intended to finance the preparation of opinions for legislative proposals. On the other hand, all the money that the MAC receives from the Member States, it can use it as it sees fit, to organize, for example, workshops, to make communication etc.

KFO noted that it would be good to see an expenditure sheet with the projected, budgeted and estimated figures, with percentages of categories where money was spent, so that we can have a picture of the state of the budget.

Grant Agreement Year 4

- **Budgets: new foreseen expenditures and amendments needed – discussion**

Please see the relevant document here:

<https://marketac.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Operational-Budget-YR4-Oct-19-to-Sep-20.xlsx>

Chair: new expenditures should be foreseen for the workshops on plastics and on ecolabels, to be organised in the fall 2019. We need to have estimates and fit them in the budget.

- **Work Programme: discussion among members on work programme year 4 – discussion**



The Chair presented the **priorities** and **deliverables** for next year:

- Marketing standards' work will continue (the Commission working document will be published in the fall and the MAC will be asked to give its opinion)
- EMFF: the MAC will pursue its recommendations
- Control Regulation: the work will continue
- Certification schemes: we have draft terms of reference for the organisation of a workshop and advice will be provided next year
- Dual quality food: this was finalised
- Trade agreements: ongoing
- Level playing field: MAC paper to be produced by the end of the year. It is likely that the work will continue
- IUU Regulation: ongoing
- Plastics: ongoing

New elements to be included in the work programme for next year:

- STECF: MAC providing additional information to STECF, both on landings and on processing/trade
- GSP renewal (related to the trade agreements)
- Establishment of a statistics' network for aquaculture
- Brexit and implications for the market
- Landing obligation and implications for the market
- Fish welfare?

On fish welfare: the Chair raised the issue because markets are interested in this. EAPO believed that we need to bring scientists to have an informed discussion on fish welfare, as there are very different / extreme approaches. EMPA warned that we need to pay attention as some organisations wish to add welfare as a fourth pillar of sustainability. It is a very important ethical issue, but the three pillars of sustainability are well established.

AIPCE requested for **pictures of processed products** to illustrate the work programme.

EAPO stressed that the **MAC website** to be redesigned.

CEP thought that it might be useful that the MAC includes in its programme a **strategy or vision statement** for now and generations to come, shared by all members. It could say something like: responsibly and sustainably managed seafood can contribute to food security. Seafood is unique among food sources. It is inherently renewable, if properly managed. Low impact and is good for the human health.

The Chair concluded by adding that we should discuss with the Commission their legislative intentions for next year.

New Parliament

- **Organisation of a cocktail for new MEPs – discussion**



In general members thought that it would be helpful to organise an event in the European Parliament, where MEPs but also Commission officials would be present. Some members wondered whether it would not be a good idea to organise a joint ACs' event. The secretariat would explore options for such an event, which might also be a working meeting or an invitation to MEPs to join a specific meeting.

AOB

Next meetings: 2-3 September, in Brussels (from Monday afternoon, 12:30 to Tuesday evening)

DRAFT



List of attendees

Representative	Organisation
Andrew Kuyk	AIPCE-CEP
Arnaud Chaperon	FEAP
Bruno Guillaumie	AEPM/EMPA
Claudia Vinci	AIPCE-CEP
Emiel Brouckaert	EAPO
Erik Bjørn Olsen	Living Sea
Georg Werner	Environmental Justice Foundation
Guus Pastoor	AIPCE
Jessica Demblon	MAC Secretariat
Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo	ETF
Juana María Parada Guinaldo	OR.PA.GU.
Katarina Sipic	CONXEMAR
Katrin Poulsen	WWF
Konstantinos Kalamantis	MAC Secretariat
Marc Eskelund	EUfishmeal
Panos Manias	MAC Secretariat
Patrick Murphy	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation CLG.
Pierre Commere	ADEPALE / AIPCE
Pim Visser	VisNed / EAPO
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche
Sean O'Donoghue	Killybegs fishermen's organisation ltd
Vanya Vulperhorst	Oceana

