

Executive Committee Minutes

Wednesday, 23 September 2020

16:20 - 18:00 CET

Zoom online meeting

Welcome from the Chair, Guus Pastoor

Adoption of agenda and minutes last meeting (03.07.20): adopted

Farm to Fork Strategy – Draft Action Plan

- **Presentation of the questionnaire’s results**

Click [here](#) to access the presentation.

The Secretary General provided an overview of the [questionnaire’s results](#). Under the circulated questionnaire, the members of the Executive Committee were asked to identify which Farm to Fork Strategy initiatives were “directly”, “indirectly” or “not” relevant for the MAC.

- **Exchange of views**

The Chair argued that if DG MARE was leading or co-leading a certain file, it should be included in the MAC’s work. It is important to take into account the MAC’s work capacity and the timing of the initiatives.

Sean O’Donoghue (KFO) agreed that the initiatives by DG MARE must be taken on board. They suggested for the members to determine the allocation of initiatives by the three Working Groups.

Pim Visser (VisNed) emphasised that within the marketing standards that there was the issue of sustainability indicators.

The Chair provided an opportunity to the Commission representatives to react to the results.

Camille Gallouze (DG MARE) stated that there were some slight differences, but that the Commission did not have any comments at this stage.



- **Way forward**

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) stated that “EU marketing standards” was under Working Group 1. They took into account the comment by VisNed. Working Group 1 will need to consider if the discussion on sustainability should be only on the marketing standards or more generally.

The Chair stated that “support for primary producers position in the food chain” would likely fall under Working Group 1, since it was production.

The Secretary General agreed that Working Group 1 would be the most appropriate.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) stated that the file would be under Working Group 1, even though there are some aspects of Working Groups 2 and 3, which might require a more horizontal approach.

Andrew Kuyk (CEP) highlighted that Working Group 2 was also interested, since it is connected to supply to the market. They also argued that Working Group 2 would be interested in “Food Fraud”. Depending where in the chain it is allegedly occurring, there are different aspects for different Working Groups. It is quite important for the processing sector in terms of traceability and labelling. It is relevant for consumers in connection to the principles of labelling legislation. There are different types of fraud, such as IUU, adulteration with dyes for the appearance of freshness, mislabelling of species. There can also be issues of operator error. They emphasised the importance of the topic for European and American consumers and for operators’ reputation. A future advice by the MAC on food fraud should not be overly specific. It should differentiate between the different types of fraud.

The Secretary General highlighted that, in terms of the MAC’s structure, the topic of food fraud was under Working Group 3.

The Chair proposed to include it under Working Group 2 or 3, depending on the workload of the Working Groups.

Christine Absil (Good Fish Foundation) welcomed the reference to the complexities of fraud. Adulteration is not only affecting consumers, but it is also a distortion of competition in the market. Often it is a problem of unclear legislation. The MAC should try to develop recommendations on adulteration issues.

The Chair, on “minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement” would likely be under both Working Group 2 and Working Group 3.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) suggested that the lead should be Working Group 3.



Andrew Kuyk (CEP) stated that it goes across both Working Groups. There should be burden sharing and cooperation between the Working Groups.

The Chair suggested to include the “EU promotion programme” under Working Group 3. For the “contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security”, the Chair suggested Working Group 2.

Sean O’Donoghue (KFO), on “corporate governance” suggested that it should be dealt with as a horizontal group or under the Executive Committee.

The Chair suggested that it was also the case for “responsible business and marketing conduct”. In time, it would be possible for the Executive Committee to assign parts of it to the relevant Working Groups. The Chair suggested that “reformulation – maximum levels for certain nutrients” would be under Working Group 3. The “sustainable food labelling framework” should be under Working Group 3. On “animal welfare”, if it is aquaculture, it should be for the AAC to consider. If it also covers wild catch, then it should be considered by the MAC under Working Group 3. The “organic farming action plan” would also be for the AAC.

Sean O’Donoghue (KFO) argued that the Working Groups should define how they will work on these topics.

The Chair agreed with the proposal from KFO. The Working Groups should look at the initiatives and consider the relevance for the MAC as well as the deliverables and timeline. The Executive Committee could then consider the scope and the distribution of the workload between the working groups.

Consideration of Draft Advices for Adoption

- **Draft Advice on Data Collection by STECF (Working Group 1)**

Sean O’Donoghue (KFO), as Chair of Working Group 1, explained that the advice covers wild catches, aquaculture and processing. It includes specific recommendations on average prices of the fleet as well as on the biennial aquaculture and processing sector reports. It aims to increase collaboration with STECF.

The Executive Committee adopted the draft advice put forward by Working Group 1.

- **Draft Advice on the Aquaculture Advisory Council’s Recommendation on Labelling of Caviar (Working Group 3)**

The Secretary General explained that the topic was put forward by FEAP under Working Group 3. The objective was for the MAC to endorse the AAC’s recommendation on labelling of caviar. It was discussed several times in Working Group 3. Earlier this year, the Working Group 3 agreed to put



forward the advice for endorsement by the Executive Committee. Working Group 3 did not prepare a specific text, it simply agreed with the endorsement of the AAC's advice. At Working Group's level, there were also comments by FEAP, WWF and AIPCE-CEP. The Secretariat worked on a draft with the background of the AAC's advice, expressing the endorsement, and outlining the comments from FEAP, WWF and AIPCE-CEP. The Secretariat discussed informally with FEAP and AIPCE-CEP to bridge their comments, but the wording has not been finalised. Both FEAP and AIPCE-CEP agreed that it would be best to postpone the approval to the next meeting.

- **Other draft advices**

Andrew Kuyk (CEP), as Chair of Working Group 2, explained that the draft on better alignment of import control schemes in major market States was considered at the 9 & 22 September Working Group 2 meetings. The draft advice is based on work by EJF. It aims for better alignment of import control schemes between major market States, particularly Japan and USA. For clarity, the list of key data elements in the Annex is purely illustrative. There were no objections at Working Group 2's level.

The Chair proposed the use of the written procedure, in order to ensure that members had the opportunity to consider the draft text.

The Secretary General suggested the use of the urgent written procedure.

The Executive Committee agreed with a 2 days' consultation through urgent written procedure.

NGO's Letter to DG MARE on "Participation of NGOs in Advisory Councils"

- **Exchange of views**

The Chair recalled that the letter was sent by a group of NGOs that participate in several ACs. The letter is quite general and does not include a reference to any specific AC. Therefore, it is important to discuss, if there are any issues in the MAC.

The Secretary General mentioned that there had been letters to DG MARE from the industry of MEDAC, the Secretariat of NWWAC, and the Chair and Secretariat of NSAC. Additionally, the Director-General of DG MARE held a meeting with the NGO representatives.

The Chair stated that it was better to hold a discussion in the Executive Committee before taking action.

Katrin Poulsen (WWF) agreed with the inclusion of the topic on the agenda. There have been steps of several NGOs to leave ACs, but WWF is not leaving any AC. In some ACs, there has been friction connected to the basic functioning of the ACs, difficulties in finding consensus and expressing



minority, and potential shortcomings by Secretariats. The letter is quite general and does not refer to specific ACs or problems. The letter does not reflect issues in the MAC and WWF does not see structural problems in the MAC. They explained that a meeting took place between the NGOs and the Director-General of DG MARE. The Commission expressed willingness to maintain a dialogue with NGOs, in order to ensure their participation.

Vanya Vulperhorst (Oceana) stated that, if there had been issues in the MAC, these would have been put forward directly to the Secretariat and Chair and not through a general letter. They expressed appreciation for the efforts in the MAC to find compromises and accommodate different views.

Pim Visser (VisNed) wondered about the reasoning of the NGOs to send a generic letter, which covers the MAC, when it is not applicable to it. They drew attention to the potential influence on the Director-General of DGMARE, considering the recent appointment. They agreed with the approach of internal discussion mentioned by Oceana. They expressed satisfaction with the recording of the MAC NGOs' position in the meeting minutes, but added that they would have preferred a letter by the NGOs to the European Commission.

- **Way forward**

The Chair encouraged members to, if there are issues, to put these forward for discussion.

Georg Werner (EJF) agreed with the statement by Oceana, expressing satisfaction with the functioning of the MAC. If there are any issues within the MAC, these would be raised internally first.

Camille Gallouze (DG MARE) stated that the Commission is aware that the situation depends on the ACs.

MAC's Secretariat (2020-2023)

- **Recommendation by the Evaluation Committee**

The Chair explained that a tender was publicly published. The Evaluation Committee was composed of the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs. The role of the Evaluation Committee was to analyse the offers and put forward a recommendation to the Executive Committee. During the invitation period, EBCD, which currently provides the Secretariat, was the only organisation to put forward an offer. The tender is similar to the current service with some indexations. The Chair expressed satisfaction with the functioning of the Secretariat, including on the accounting.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) expressed satisfaction with the work of the Secretariat, particularly the proactive approach of the Secretary General, and recommended the endorsement by the Executive Committee.



Christine Absil (Good Fish Foundation) expressed agreement.

- **Appointment of the Secretariat**

The Executive Committee agreed with the appointment of EBCD as Secretariat for the 2020-2023 period.

AOB

- **MAC-NWWAC-NSAC Focus Group on Brown Crab**

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) explained that the NWWAC invited the MAC to participate in a joint focus with NSAC. While the other two ACs have dealt with management issues, it is also important to deal with marketing and price issues. The Secretariat of NWWAC has prepared draft Terms of Reference, which the MAC will need to consider. The Commission expressed encouragement for collaboration across the ACs.

The Chair emphasised the importance of representing different sectors, since it affects both producers and processors. The context of COVID-19 is bringing difficulties to the exports of brown crab to the Chinese market, which need to be considered.

The Executive Committee agreed with the creation of the Focus Group.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) expressed hope that Working Group 1 will be able to agree quickly with the other Advisory Councils on the Terms of Reference.

- **Organisation of the next meetings**

The Chair proposed to, taking into account the flexibility provided by online meetings, to organise future meetings across several days, instead of concentrated in two days. It is also easier to organise meetings in short notice.



Summary of action points

- Farm to Fork Strategy – Draft Action Plan
 - Individual Working Groups to analyse the agreed initiatives and consider their relevance as well as deliverables and timeline
- Consideration of Draft Advices for Adoption
 - Draft Advice on the Aquaculture Advisory Council’s Recommendation on Labelling of Caviar: Postponed to the next meeting
 - Other Draft Advices: Draft advice on better alignment of import control schemes between major market States to be put forward to the Executive Committee for adoption under a 2 days’ urgent written procedure consultation
- MAC-NWWAC-NSAC Focus Group on Brown Crab
 - Working Group 1 to agree on Terms of Reference with NWWAC and NSAC



List of attendees

Representative	Organisation
Andrew Kuyk	CEP
Camille Gallouze	European Commission
Catherine Pons	FEAP
Christine Absil	Good Fish Foundation
Daniel Weber	European Fishmeal
Dora Barreira Ramos	European Commission
Els Bedert	EuroCommerce
Emiel Brouckaert	EAPO
Evelien Ranshuysen	European Commission
Gaël Lavielle	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne
Georg Werner	Environmental Justice Foundation
Guillaume Carruel	EAPO
Guus Pastoor	AIPCE-CEP
Haydeé Fernández Granja	CONXEMAR
Katarina Sipic	AIPCE-CEP
Katrin Vilhelm Poulsen	WWF
Massimo Bellavista	COPA COGECA
Pedro Reis Santos	Market Advisory Council
Pim Visser	VisNed
Quentin Marchais	ClientEarth
Roberto Carlos Alonso	ANFACO-CECOPECA
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche
Sean O'Donoghue	EAPO
Stavroula Kremmydiotou	Market Advisory Council
Vanya Vulperhost	Oceana



