

General Assembly Minutes

Wednesday, 23 September 2020

13:45 - 16:30

Zoom online meeting

Welcome from the Chair, Guus Pastoor

Adoption of agenda and minutes last meeting (30.01.20): adopted

Election of Executive Committee Member (2020-2023)

- **Decision by Other Interest Groups members on ClientEarth's candidature**

The Secretary General recalled that, under the MAC's rules of procedure and practices, the election of the Executive Committee is by the General Assembly, plus that the representatives of the value chain members and that the representatives of the other interest groups vote for the seats allotted to their group. In the case of the other interest groups, there were three vacant seats in the Executive Committee, so voting would not take place. The Secretary General and the Chair asked the other interest group representatives to signal opposition, if they did not recognise ClientEarth as an other interest group.

The other interest groups representatives present expressed support for the recognition of ClientEarth as an other interest group. ClientEarth became a member of the Executive Committee for the 2020-2023 period.

Election of Working Group Vice-Chair (2020-2023)

- **Election of Working Group 1 Vice-Chair**

The Secretary General recalled that the practice in the MAC was that the General Assembly elected the Working Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Before the meeting, members were invited to express interest in the position via email. No expressions of interest were received.

Pim Visser (VisNed) expressed interest in the position, offering to apply, if there was support from the Working Group 1 Chair.



Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) welcomed the expression of interest. Taking into account the balance of representation, the Working Group 1 Chair suggested that the other interest groups members should have another opportunity to apply. If there were no applications from the other interest groups members, then Mr Visser should take the position of Working Group 1 Vice-Chair.

The Chair agreed with the proposed way forward.

Grant Agreement for Year 5 (2020-2021)

- **Work Programme for Year 5: Presentation of priorities and deliverables**

The Secretary General explained that the draft Work Programme was prepared by the Executive Committee and sent to the European Commission at the end of July. The Commission requested a few minor amendments, which were taken into account. The Commission also sent a few comments, namely to emphasise the importance of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the timeline of the corresponding initiatives, the relevance of consumer information topics, and the upcoming report on the implementation of the CMO Regulation. The Commission also highlighted that several of the topics fall under the mandate of DG SANTE and that timing of the work on Brexit should be anticipated.

The General Assembly approved the Work Programme for Year.

- **Budget for Year 5: Presentation by Panos Manias, Financial Officer**

- **Exchange of views and approval**

The Financial Officer provided an overview of the budget for Year 5. The budget was prepared before the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, so the drafting of the budget followed previous years' estimates with in-person meetings. If the meetings take place online, it will affect the budget headings on participation in meetings and preparation of meetings. The remaining headings should not be significantly affected. The budget was sent to the Commission as part of the Work Programme.

The Chair mentioned that preparing the budget according to previous years' estimates with in-person meetings was probably the best course of action.

The Secretary General highlighted that the Commission provides flexibility regarding the budget. It is possible for the Advisory Council to amend the distribution of funds across headings without a formal amendment request to the Commission.

The General Assembly approved the budget for Year 5.



Keynote Speech on the priorities of DG MARE's and the MAC's priorities – Speaker TBD

- **Exchange of views**

DG MARE's Director-General Charlina Vitcheva was invited as keynote speaker, but could not accept the invitation due to agenda availability. The item was postponed to the next opportunity.

Update on the work done per Working Group

- **Working Group 1: Sean O'Donoghue**

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

Sean O'Donoghue, Chair of Working Group 1, provided an overview of the work done by Working Group 1.

- **Working Group 2: Andrew Kuyk**

Andrew Kuyk, Chair of Working Group 2, on the Control Regulation, explained that, due to the European elections, the EP PECH Committee's work had restarted, while the Council has continued work. Working Group 2 held exchanges of views with the EP PECH Rapporteur. The main elements of the previous MAC advice still stand. Working Group 2 will continue to monitor developments, but, in terms of formal advice, legislative developments did not justify a new MAC advice. On level playing field, the Working Group was likely too ambitious in the scope. Moving forward, the Working Group will aim for more specific advices. On trade negotiations, at the last meeting, the Commission provided a presentation on the state-of-play. The Commission has launched a consultation on a trade policy review. The Farm to Fork and the European Green Deal will need to be considered. On IUU, the Working Group has been monitoring developments. At the last meeting, the Commission provided on the development of the CATCH IT system. The Working Group will be putting forward an advice to the Executive Committee on better alignment with major market States. On supply to the market, Working Group follows the biennial report on the economic performance of the processing sector.

- **Working Group 3: Pierre Commère**

The Working Group 3 Chair and the Vice-Chair were unable to attend. The work of Working Group 3 was covered by the Secretary General's update on the Work Programme of Year 4.



Administrative Matters

- **Presentation by Pedro Reis Santos, Secretary General**
 - **Update on the Work Programme of Year 4 (2019-2020)**

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

The Secretary General provided an update on the implementation of the Work Programme of Year 4, particularly on the priorities and deliverables.

- **Presentation by Panos Manias, Financial Officer**
 - **Update on Accounts of Year 4 (2019-2020)**

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

The Financial Officer provided an update on the accounts of Year 4. Taking into account the proximity to the end of the financial year, the figures presented would be quite close to the final ones. The usage of funding for participation in meetings and for preparation of meetings were significantly lower than budgeted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of income, there was an increase of contributions by the members, due to new memberships. The contributions from Member States almost doubled, following contacts by the Secretary General to the national authorities.

The Chair, highlighted that, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 on the budgets of Years 4 and 5, it could be an opportunity to look into other expenditures, such as contracting experts and scientists. Therefore, the Chair wanted to know about the possibility of shifting funding.

The Financial Officer responded that it was possible. Unspent funding would need to be returned to the Commission. Therefore, it would be a good opportunity to hire experts to contribute to the MAC's advices. If the needs are known in advance, it is possible to include it in the budget. It is also possible to accommodate later contracts, since the Commission provided more flexibility to amend the budget according to the Advisory Council's needs without requiring formal approval by the Commission services.

The Chair mentioned that for complex files, such as sustainability claims and the Farm to Fork Strategy, if the Working Groups decided that they need the support of a scientists or a consultant, it could be a good contribution to improve the MAC's work.

Matthias Keller (Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.) requested information on the maximum amount that the MAC can spend per year.



The Financial Officer explained that the MAC can receive a maximum of 300.000€ from the Commission. The remaining amount depends on the contributions of the members and the Member States. For Year 4, there was about 50.000€ of contributions by members and Member States. The Secretariat anticipates the same amount for the next financial year.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) agreed with the Chair on the possibility of experts. They suggested to analyse ways of optimising virtual meetings to ensure more interaction. They also suggested a significant upgrade of the MAC's website, in order to match the other Advisory Councils.

Pascale Colson (DG MARE) agreed with the suggestion of experts. If the MAC has a financial margin, then it should invest it on relevant actions. Some Advisory Councils took the opportunity to undertake additional translations.

Matthias Keller (Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.) wanted to know if the 300.000€ was a fixed amount or if the AC must return the unused amounts.

The Financial Officer explained that the Advisory Councils do not receive the full 300.000€ in advance. There is a final instalment that is calculated after the end of the financial year. Through the calculation, it is determined if the Advisory Council will receive more money or not or if it must return some money to the Commission. The Commission's contribution is dependent on the usage.

Christine Absil (Good Fish Foundation) agreed with the suggestion of hiring experts. Regarding KFO's suggestions on the meetings, they agreed that more interaction is needed, but that it was really connected to the system used. In the future, the timing and agendas should be changed, in order to avoid screen fatigue.

The Chair proposed to keep open the option of the Working Groups hiring experts, if they found it necessary. The budget would not yet be changed, since there is flexibility. The Chair agreed with the suggestion of updating the website and of changing the scheduling of the meetings.

Nicolás Fernández (OPP72) emphasised that it is still unclear how the pandemic will evolve, so there was no need to already amend the budget's headings. If there is a need to allocate funding to something else, then each Working Group Chair should put forward a proposal. The Commission should not reduce the financial contribution to the MAC, taking into account the high importance of the MAC's work.

The Chair agreed with OPP72. Regarding a potential cut to the financial contribution by the Commission, the Executive Committee reacted to that announcement. The Commission services have expressed flexibility on that.



The Secretary General explained that, after a new analysis, the Commission services would be maintaining the 300.000€ contribution for Year 5.

AOB

None.



List of attendees

Representative	Organisation
Andrew Kuyk	CEP
Ángeles Longa	EMPA
Anna Boulova	FRUCOM
Camille Gallouze	European Commission
Catherine Pons	FEAP
Christine Absil	Good Fish Foundation
Daniel Weber	European Fishmeal
Els Bedert	EuroCommerce
Emiel Brouckaert	EAPO
Gaël Lavielle	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne
Georg Werner	Environmental Justice Foundation
Guillaume Carruel	EAPO
Guus Pastoor	Visfederatie
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne
José Basilio Otero Rodríguez	Federación Nacional de Cofradías de Pescadores (FNCP)
José Carlos Escalera Aguiar	Federación de Cofradías de Pescadores de Cadiz (FECOPESCA)
Haydeé Fernández Granja	CONXEMAR
Katarina Sipic	AIPCE-CEP
Katrin Vilhelm Poulsen	WWF
Massimo Bellavista	COPA COGECA
Matthias Keller	Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.
Nicolás Fernandez Muñoz	OPP72
Pascale Colson	European Commission
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO



Representative	Organisation
Paulien Prent	Visfederatie
Pedro Luis Casado López	OPP80
Pedro Reis Santos	Market Advisory Council
Pim Visser	VisNed
Purificación Fernández	OPPC-3
Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista de Sousa	ANFACO-CECOPECA
Quentin Marchais	ClientEarth
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche
Sean O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Ltd (KFO)
Stavroula Kremmydiotou	Market Advisory Council
Vanya Vulperhorst	Oceana

