

Management Team Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 24 March 2021

Zoom online meeting

Attendees:

- Guus Pastoor, MAC Chair
- Christien Absil, MAC Vice-Chair
- Sean O'Donoghue, MAC Vice-Chair & WG1 Chair
- Andrew Kuyk, WG2 Chair
- Katrin Vilhelm Poulsen, WG2 Vice-Chair
- Benoît Thomassen, WG3 Chair
- Pedro Reis Santos, Secretary General

Issues discussed:

1. DG MARE's Letter Participation of UK Stakeholders in ACs

- **MAC's Assessment Report**

MAC Chair recalled that, in the past functioning of the ACs, the focus has always been on the member organisations, which must be endorsed by a Member State. There were never discussions about the individual representatives designated by the member organisations.

WG1 Chair expressed disappointment with the developments at the 22 February Inter-AC meeting on Brexit. There can be UK observers, if invited. It is also possible for UK nationals to be designated by EU organisations as their representatives. When a Chair that is an UK national is involved in the representation of UK interests, then it requires a more detailed analysis, since there is an issue of perception. WG1 Chair agreed that there should be a discussion amongst the ExCom before replying to DG MARE's assessment request.

WG2 Chair highlighted that there is a distinction between actual conflict of interests and perception. Chairs are appointed by the ACs. Nationality should not be a factor. WG2 Chair informed that he would be guided by the ExCom. In relation to the 22



February meeting on Brexit, he recalled that he was invited and that it was known that he was Chair of WG2.

WG2 Vice-Chair agreed that representatives should not be differentiated based on nationality. There will be other cases. It is arbitrary to make a point of UK nationals. There could also be situations of EU associations receiving financial support from third countries. She suggested to start inviting WG Vice-Chairs to future Management Team meetings.

2. Working Group 1

- **Biodiversity Strategy**

WG1 Chair highlighted that the consideration of the draft advice on the biodiversity strategy would be a major agenda item. WG1 Chair expressed satisfaction with the draft prepared by EJF and expressed confidence that agreement would be reached.

- **Marketing Standards**

Secretary General informed that he would contact Didier Gascuel, Chair of the STECF EWG to present the report on criteria and indicators to incorporate sustainability aspects for seafood products in the marketing standards under the CMO. MAC Vice-Chair underscored the importance of the report for the MAC's work.

3. Working Group 2

- **Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices**

WG2 Chair highlighted that the Code of Conduct is part of a wider initiative, the Farm to Fork Strategy. Wide initiatives should not disproportionately affect the sector. It is important to discuss the impact on the seafood supply chain, particularly its specificities. Secretary General explained that the Code of Conduct will be focused on the middle of the supply chain, but that seafood producers were also involved. The Code of Conduct will be ready for signature in June 2021.

- **Contingency Plan for Ensuring Food Supply and Food Security**

WG2 Chair highlighted that the contingency plan is also part of an overarching initiative. The specificities of the seafood sector must be taken into account, since



fish is a highly perishable product, which involves stocks, processing, shelf life and food safety. Frozen and canned products are in advantage here. Secretary General highlighted that it would be difficult for the MAC to provide a joint submission to the public consultation, but that perhaps advice on some of the topics could be adopted.

- **Trade**

WG2 Chair proposed to invite Poul Melgaard Jensen, as FG Chair, to provide an update on the work of the Initial Focus Group on Trade. Secretary General informed that, due to the unavailability of COM representatives, he would make a presentation on recent trade developments, so that the WG could decide on which initiatives to provide feedback.

- **Brexit**

WG2 Chair highlighted that the import of live unpurified bivalve molluscs from the UK affects EU companies. It was a concern raised by the AAC, so the MAC must determine whether to support the AAC or not. Secretary General explained that he would prepare a compilation of replies to the Secretariat's questionnaire on Brexit and that information would be provided at the meeting.

4. Working Group 3

- **Voluntary Sustainability Claims**

WG3 Chair explained that the replies to the Secretariat's questionnaire would be presented and that there would be a consideration of the draft advice. Secretary General informed that a summary, a compilation, and a draft had been prepared. Several diverging views were present in the draft. WG3 Chair mentioned that the different views would likely need to be gathered into clusters. Secretary General highlighted that MARE A4 expressed interest in the discussions. WG1 Chair expressed hope that a compromise would be possible. WG3 Chair stated that compromise would be possible in some issues. At the meeting, consideration will start by the draft recommendations before moving to the main text. MAC Vice-Chair agreed with starting with the recommendations, then issues of common agreement, and, finally, diverging positions.

