

Working Group 1: EU Production

Minutes

Thursday, 26 January 2023 (15:00 – 18:30 CET)

NH Brussels EU Berlaymont

Interpretation in EN, ES, FR

Welcome from the Chair, Sean O'Donoghue

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

Adoption of draft agenda and of the last meeting minutes (19.09.22): adopted

Action points of the last meeting

- **State-of-play of the decision made during the last meeting – information**
- Production and Marketing Plans:
 - Draft text to revise the “Production and Marketing Plans: Guidelines and Good Practices” document to be put forward to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval via written procedure
 - Document approved by Executive Committee: 3 November 2022
 - Translated into Spanish and French
- Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet:
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, agenda item to be scheduled to prepare suggestions ahead of the 2023 report
 - Request to the European Commission to develop a breakdown, at national and fleet segment levels, of the breakeven fuel price figure
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, schedule an exchange of views concerning the breakeven fuel price figure developed by the industry
 - Agenda item scheduled to consider draft advice, including recommendation on breakeven fuel price figure
- Russian Invasion of Ukraine:
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, presentation by Katarina Sipic (AIPCE-CEP) of the State aid crisis mechanisms per Member State for the processing sector to be scheduled
 - Replaced by consideration of draft advice on market disturbances



- Marketing Standards:
 - Secretariat to circulate a questionnaire to determine the preference of the members between integrating sustainability labelling for fisheries and aquaculture products under the Marketing Standards framework or under the Sustainable Food System Framework
 - Advice adopted (based on Secretariat's questionnaire): 13 December 2022
- Awareness and Role of Producer Organisations (POs):
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, draft advice on improving communication on the role of the CMO Regulation and of the POs to be considered
 - Agenda item scheduled

Economic Report on the EU Aquaculture Sector

- **Presentation of the 2022 edition by Rasmus Nielsen, STECF EWG Chair**

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

Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) recalled that the Common Fisheries Policy should ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities contribute to long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability. The collection and dissemination of aquaculture data is done in order to provide a sound basis for scientific advice in support of the EU Common Fisheries Policy.

Mr Nielsen explained that the data collected are specified by Commission regulation. Data are reported by Member States on species and production techniques. Data for the year 2008 to 2020 was used, plus data from FAO and EUROSTAT. The STECF Expert Working Group was composed of 29 experts from 19 countries, plus three Joint Research Centre experts. The report and data would be published soon on the Joint Research Centre's website.

The data collected consists of production data to provide a comprehensive overview of the latest information available on the production volume, economic value, structure and competitive performance at the national and EU level for the years 2008 to 2020. This included economic data (detailed sales volume and value and cost for aquaculture firms), social (social demographics on age, gender, education, nationality), and environment (mortality and medicine use).

Mr Nielsen outlined the contents of the report. The report provides an overview of the EU aquaculture sector, including the structure of the sector, including marine finfish (salmon, seabream/seabass, bluefin tuna and other species), shellfish (mussels, oysters, clams and other species), and freshwater (trout, carp and other species). There were three chapters on special topics. The first one was about energy crises, particularly the effect of increasing prices on the sector. The second one was a nowcast estimation of a selection of indicators for 2021 and 2022. The third one was about socio-demographics of the sector.

Mr Nielsen provided an overview of the EU27 aquaculture in 2020. There are 14 thousand enterprises whose main activity is aquaculture. More than 80% are micro-enterprises, employing less than ten employees. The total employment is estimated to be 57 thousand and 35 thousand full-time



employees. The production (first sales) reached 1.2 million tonnes and 3.9 billion euros in value. The sector performance decreased 4% in sales volume and 4% in turnover compared to 2018. There is a decrease of 3% from 2019 in volume and value. The nowcast estimate is that sales value and volume will increase 4% in 2021.

Mr Nielsen explained that, in 2020, the main species by weight were Mediterranean mussels, trout, blue mussels, seabream, and oysters. The main species by value were trout, seabream, seabass, oysters, and tuna. The marine fish sector was most important segment, in terms of value (42%), covering 21% of the weight and few species due to high specialisation. The largest producer is Greece (seabass/seabream). The marine sector is capital intensive and has larger enterprises. It employs around 8.000 persons in 550 enterprises.

The shellfish sector contributes 30% in terms of value and 51% in volume. The main producers are Spain, France, Portugal and Italy. The main species are oysters, Mediterranean and blue mussels, and clams. The sector is dominated by small-scale family-owned enterprises. The shellfish sector is the most important in terms of employment with 29.000 persons distributed by 7.000 enterprises.

The freshwater sector contributed 28% of the value and 28% of the volume. The main producers are Italy, Denmark, France and Spain. The main species are trout and carp. Trout are produced in both intensive and extensive systems. Carp is produced in extensive system systems. This sector is composed of small-scale family-owned enterprises. It employs 20.000 person in around 7.000 enterprises.

Mr Nielsen, in the context of the special chapters, explained that the nowcast model only estimates production volume, value and employment in the sector. In the report, only 2021 is reported due to a lack of data for 2022, plus there is a situation of increasing energy prices and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the nowcast, the total sales volume is expected to increase 4% in 2021. The economic development is expected to improve in 2021 by 4% compared to 2020. Employment is expected to decrease by 1% in 2021 compared to 2020.

Under the special chapter on the energy prices effect on the aquaculture sector, an average price of energy is estimated for the EU in 2022. Three productions are analysed using their cost structure. A direct cost (electricity, energy, fuel) is estimated as well as an indirect cost (feed). The conclusion was that, in the direct energy use, there was a cost increase of 70% from 2020 to 2022. In the indirect cost, there was a cost increase of 55% from 2020 to 2022. The industries with high energy use and production of feed fish are the most exposed, while the shellfish sector was less exposed.

Under the special chapter on social data, data is provided on gender, age, education, nationality and employment status. The analysis provides information on the EU and national level. The data was analysed from the three main sectors and production technology. Mr Nielsen concluded that the socio-demographic data provides some interesting and useful insights on distribution of the different variables on countries, age, gender, segments and production technology. He added that one of the interesting results is on education in different segments/technology.



- **Exchange of views**

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) highlighted that the trends in the shellfish sector for 2021 were fully confirmed, adding that the year 2022 should be quite similar to the estimation. In France, there should be an increase of around 3 to 4% in production of oysters and a 3 to 4% for mussels, which is compensated through an increase in value. Concerning the impact of energy in 2022, Mr Guillaumie stated that he expected an impact of around 15%. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the energy crisis were quite limited in the shellfish sector due to its resilience.

Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) stated that the STECF Expert Working Group had not been able to provide much information about 2022 due to the time constraints and the uncertainty of the situation. Mr Nielsen thanked Mr Guillaumie for the information on French production. If data is be provided by Producer Organisations, it could potentially be added to the data collected by the Member States, in order to facilitate the qualification of the data.

Patrick Murphy (IS&WFPO) wanted to know if there were movements towards organic certification of aquaculture in the EU. Mr Murphy emphasised that, in the case of Ireland, education levels were much higher in shellfish production than in the finfish one.

Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) stated that there was some movement towards certification, including organic certification and certification under the Aquaculture Stewardship Council. The salmon sector in Ireland was fully organic. The movement towards organic certification was also increasing in Norway, representing a high volume. In the case of Denmark, there were difficulties in the production of sufficient smolt as well as legislative complexities. There is also movement in Germany towards certification. The situation was more unclear for Southern countries.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) highlighted that all oysters and mussels in the Netherlands were certified by the Marine Stewardship Council due to the collection of the wild spat.

The Chair, considering the increase energy and feed costs, wanted to know the impact on the Gross Value Added.

Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) responded that only the cost structure was analysed. The income side was not analysed, which mean that it was not possible to know how much was passed on to the consumers or how much prices increased. Mr Nielsen commented that the increase in prices should be quite substantial.

Garazi Rodríguez (APROMAR) requested more information on the methodology, particularly whether there were studies besides the data collected by the Member States. Ms Rodríguez wanted to know if the marine production was expected to increase in the next year.

Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) responded that data was collected from the entire EU. Commission regulations establish the type of data that the Member States must collect and report to the Commission, for example on employment, costs, and feed. The reporting is divided into different production systems.



Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet

- **Consideration of draft advice on suggestions for 2023 edition**

The Chair recalled that the European Commission was preparing the terms of reference for the 2023 edition of the STECF's Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet. At the 19 September 2022 meeting, there was agreement to prepare suggestions to the Commission for the 2023 edition. The Secretariat circulated a questionnaire from 23 November to 8 December 2022. There was a reply from EAPO. The draft advice was circulated on 20 December 2022.

The Working Group proceeded to consider the draft recommendations in section 7 of the draft advice on STECF's Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (2023).

The Chair provided an overview of the draft recommendations. In relation to draft recommendation d) on social variables and improvement of data quality assurance, the Chair emphasised the importance of quality assurance, while recognising the complexity of the exercise. ICES dedicated very significant efforts to identify the process of quality assurance from data collection to the advice. It would be relevant for STECF to undertake a similar exercise.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) recalled that the European Commission is making the data requests, not STECF. Mr Nikolian asked if draft recommendation d) meant that quality assurance, under the Data Collection Framework, was not at the same level as ICES's.

The Chair stated that there was a lack of consistency in the Data Collection Framework. The data on biological status and catches is very well defined, but the social data was more unclear, which translated into potential inconsistencies on the collection by the Member States. Quality assurance was about the process in STECF after receiving the data.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) underscored that the process in STECF was quite simple. Under a data call launched by the Commission, Member States are asked for the data, which is then sent to JRC for quality review for being used by STECF. Therefore, STECF was not involved in the data collection.

The Chair stated that there was the data collection process undertaken by Member States. Consistency was required in that process. Then there was, when using the data in the report, the issue of quality assurance for STECF.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) responded that quality assurance is done by the Joint Research Centre. Therefore, he wanted to know if a revision of the Data Collection Framework about the quality assurance was seek by the MAC.

The Chair stated that a similar situation happened with ICES. ICES used to claim that there was an appropriate quality assurance in place, until eventually it was revised. The Chair argued that the quality assurance was not fit for purpose in the case of the EU's reports.



Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) drew attention to the Regional Coordination Groups, which developed a handbook on data collection and other issues. Increased quality assurance should take place via implementation in these groups. Each Member State can see how to improve the data collection.

The Chair suggested to include a reference to the Regional Coordination Groups in draft recommendation d). The Chair provided an overview of the remaining sections of the draft advice.

The Secretary General, in relation to section 3 on data collection, suggested that EAPO could further develop the text, for example clarify what data is not up-to-date, provide examples of how the digitalisation could be achieved, and provide examples of Member States that are lagging behind.

The Chair disagreed with the suggestion to include examples of Member States that are lagging behind, but invited Mr Thomas to comment on the other suggestions.

Paul Thomas (EAPO) emphasised that it was about having the means for better data collection, which could be achieved through digitalisation. It is about having a general process for the data collected by the Member States to be, right away, sent to the European Commission, allowing access to the most up-to-date data.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) emphasised that such a request would not be possible to achieve. Digitalisation would not help with doing surveys at sea and the required time for collection. Under the Data Collection Framework, there is an annual work plan, but the two years gap in the data would continue in the future. Mr Nikolian called for examples on how digitalisation would improve the collection of data, particularly the treatment and quality assurance.

The Chair exemplified that there was a digitalisation of the catches in the logbooks, which went into the central control system of the Member States and to the Commission. If experts had direct access to data, which includes geographical areas, catches and fishing gears, there would be more up-to-date data.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) replied that the Annual Economic Report was about economic indicators, such as turnover, Gross Value Added, among others. It is not about the quantity of fish caught. The collection of the data required, in the case of the small-scale fleets, samples, and, in the case of the industrial fleet, of the submission of accounts. Therefore, there must be the annual closure of the accounts before the data is sent. Mr Nikolian emphasised that it was completely different set of data that was required.

The Chair argued that STECF does use catch data when developing the Annual Economic Report. Besides data on catches, there is also data on values and geographical areas, which means that STECF can calculate the Gross Value Added.

Patrick Murphy (IS&WFPO) exemplified that sales notes were submitted, which meant that additional data was available, even if it was not accessible to the experts.

Pim Visser (VisNed) suggested the inclusion, in section 4 on social variables, of a reference to the ICES's working groups on the matter: WGSOCIAL and WGECON.



The Working Group reached agreement on the draft advice on STECF's Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (2023), including the amendments proposed.

- **Way forward**

The Chair proposed to put forward the agreed advice to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential adoption.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) recalled that, under the advice on the 2022 edition of the Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet, adopted on 24 May 2022, there was a point on the calculation of greenhouse gas emissions. Since there was no formal letter of reply from the Commission, Mr Voces wondered if Mr Nikolian could provide some clarity on the matter. He highlighted that data on greenhouse gas emissions would be relevant in the context of the Fit for 55 package.

The Secretary General stated that a formal letter of reply to the advice from Director-General Vitcheva had not been received. At the Inter-Advisory Councils meeting of 17 November 2023, Mr Nikolian had communicated that the advice would be taken into account in the terms of reference of the 2023 edition of the Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) informed that the terms of reference had not been drafted yet. DG MARE was working on a communication on the energy transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The baseline for the greenhouse gas emissions in the sector had been determined. DG CLIMA identified 2005 as the appropriate baseline. Mr Nikolian highlighted that data on the fleet's fuel consumption was collected since 2008 under the Data Collection Framework, expressing his confidence in the quality of the data.

The Secretary General suggested the submission of an email to DG MARE requesting an update on the state-of-play of the reply to the advice of 24 May 2022.

The Chair agreed with the suggested approach.

Russian Invasion of Ukraine

- **Consideration of draft advice on market disturbances**

The Chair recalled that, under the Work Programme of Year 7, there was a commitment to develop advice on the impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Secretariat circulated a questionnaire from 1 to 15 December. Replies were received from APROMAR, Conxemar, SPFPO, and EAPO. The draft advice was circulated on 12 January 2023. The Chair informed that, prior to the meeting, preliminary comments were sent by FEDEPESCA and by EAPO. The Chair took the opportunity to thank Mr Nikolian for the close cooperation, in the earlier stages of the crisis, between the DG MARE and the MAC.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) apologised for not replying to the questionnaire. Ms Álvarez highlighted that section 2 "problems faced by the fisheries and aquaculture supply chain" described problems faced by fishers, aquaculture farmers, and processors. Her association would like to add



examples of problems faced by the retail sector. In section 4 “implementation of measures and financial instruments at the Member States’ level”, there is a reference support provided by the Spanish authorities. Her association wanted to add a clarification that the Spanish support only covered the primary sectors, even though the EU-level measures allowed aid to the entire supply chain. Ms Álvarez informed that her association would also like some amendments to section 5 “recommendations”.

The Working Group proceeded to consider the draft recommendations in section 5 of the draft advice on disturbances in the market of fisheries and aquaculture products due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Chair provided an overview of the draft recommendations in section 5, emphasising the lack of a level-playing-field in support measures across the EU.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) expressed concern that draft recommendation c) would mean that the MAC wants compensation for fuel prices.

The Chair responded that it was meant as a reference to the measures in Article 26 of the EMFAF, since the crisis is expected to continue for several more months.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) highlighted that different measures were being taken by Member States, but that Member States could also consider that it was a fact of life that the fuel prices were impacted by the war. Ms Absil stated that the request could be done, but might not be realistic. Since draft recommendation d) did not explicitly mention compensation, but only measures to mitigate the impacts, she did not oppose the wording.

Francisco Nikolian (DG MARE) recalled that the crisis measures under Article 26 of the EMFAF ended in December 2022. No extension was provided. Payments could continue, if undertakings submit costs related to 2022. The Temporary Crisis Framework could continue through the national budgets. The amount under this framework was raised to 300 thousand euros per undertaking.

The Chair highlighted that draft recommendation d) was essentially about *de minimis* support.

Paul Thomas (EAPO) suggested a change in the order of the wording in draft recommendation e), so that the first reference would be “to prevent the bankruptcy of existing undertakings”. Mr Thomas emphasised that the priority should be the prevention of bankruptcy, not the establishment of new companies and opportunities.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA), in relation to draft recommendation f) on the monitoring of the ongoing shift in purchasing habits of consumers, wondered if it would be possible to have global data every six months. EUMOFA was essentially using data from 2021. In the case of Spain, the last available data for 2022 was from October. When comparing October 2022 to October 2021, there is a decrease in consumption between 13 and 20%. There is insufficient knowledge on the impact of inflation on fisheries and aquaculture products.



Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) informed that EUMOFA provided information on household consumption up to October 2022.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) emphasised that there was a decrease in household consumption, plus high inflation and price increases. There are consumers that are unable to pay for products that they were consuming in the previous year.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) recognised that there was a reduction in consumption, as demonstrated by the latest available data. Mr Nikolian exemplified that in Denmark there was a reduction of 13%, in Germany of 20%, in Hungary of 26%, in Ireland of 11%, in Italy of 13%, in the Netherlands of 14%, in Poland of 13%, in Portugal of 21%, in Spain of 18%. In the case of France, there was an increase of 9%.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) suggested the addition of a more explicit reference to “the use of the most up-to-date available information on the market disturbances caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine” in draft recommendation f). Ms Álvarez highlighted that it was not possible for retailers to reflect their costs in the prices, because there was a lack of demand. In the case of Spain, January 2023 was being a very negative month.

Patrick Murphy (IS&WFPO) suggested to add “and report” to the wording of draft recommendation f).

Paul Thomas (EAPO) suggested replacing the word “safe” with “achievable” in draft recommendation g) when referencing the transition away from fossil fuels.

The Secretary General, in relation to draft recommendation i), informed that, in the replies to the questionnaire, some members of the processing sector had called for adjustments in the Autonomous Tariff Quotas. Considering the sensitivity of the topic, the Secretariat used wording previously agreed in the advice on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, adopted on 11 June 2021.

Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPECA) wondered about the meaning of the word “capacity”, since some fleets have higher capacity than the allocated quotas. The EU processors use raw material based on the quotas, not on the capacity.

The Chair agreed with Mr Alonso and suggested to amend it to “production”.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) recalled that the regulation on Autonomous Tariff Quotas (ATQs) referred to “competitiveness”, not to “production”.

The Secretary General suggested to phrase it as “EU fleet’s production and competitiveness”.

Patrick Murphy (IS&WFPO) wondered if there would be an effect on the fleet due to the imports, which should be taken into account.



Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPECA) disagreed with expanding the wording of draft recommendation i), since, otherwise, it would become merely a quote of the regulation on Autonomous Tariff Quotas.

The Chair informed that, prior to the meeting, FEDEPESCA suggested the addition of draft recommendation j, which read “eliminate the VAT tax for healthy and sustainably sourced fishery and aquaculture products, as a way to guarantee access to affordable nutritious products.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) informed that he was not opposed to the general aim, but expressed concern with some of the wording, since it made it seem like some products were not sustainable or healthy. Mr Guillaumie highlighted that “sustainability” was defined, in principle, in the Common Fisheries Policy, but that “healthy” was not defined. Therefore, a definition of healthy should be included, especially to avoid image and communication problems in the sector.

The Secretary General stated that, in most Member States, there was a VAT tax on food products. Draft recommendation i) was suggested by FEDEPESCA. In Spain, the national government agreed on 0% VAT on several “essential food products”, but did not include fisheries and aquaculture products.

In relation to the wording “healthy and sustainably sourced”, the Secretary General recalled that a discussion on the matter took place when developing the advice on “health and environmental value of seafood”, adopted on 8 October 2021. At that time, industry members called for a “low and harmonised VAT tax rate” for fisheries and aquaculture products, while NGO members were against a broad reduction, since the products are not all the same. The wording agreed by all members in that advice was “a low and harmonised VAT tax rate across the EU for healthy and sustainably sources fishery and aquaculture products”.

Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPECA) argued that the purpose of draft recommendation i) should not be specifically about VAT tax. It should be about encouraging the Commission to consider different ways to decrease prices, for example through a reduction on the VAT tax or taxes on companies. Mr Alonso disagreed with the reference to “healthy and sustainably sourced”, because it further encouraged initiatives similar to the Nutri-score labelling.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) stated, in a context of high inflation, there should be an appropriate level of taxation for healthy products. In Spain, 20% of health costs are related to diseases due to unhealthy diets, representing a very high expenditure. Under the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission is looking into the promotion of fair, healthy and sustainable food systems. Therefore, the taxation should also be healthy, fair and sustainable, so that the citizens are encouraged to take up healthy food sources. In Spain, fisheries products have a 10% VAT rate.

Yobana Bermúdez (Conxemar) suggested to refer to an elimination or reduction of VAT for healthy diets, as supported by scientific data.

Pim Visser (VisNed) cautioned that VAT rates were a competency of the Member States. In the case of the Netherlands, VAT rates could not be used to promote fish or meat products. Therefore, the reference should be as generic as possible. Mr Visser agreed with the suggestion of Ms Bermúdez.



The Chair suggested amending draft recommendation j) to “take measures to face the increased costs for operators and consumers, for example, eliminate or reduce the VAT tax based on healthy diets, as supported by scientific guidance”.

The Working Group reached agreement on the draft recommendations in section 5.

The Chair provided an overview of the remaining sections of the draft advice. The Chair read out the additional paragraph proposed by Ms Álvarez in section 2: “The retail trade suffered significant increases in the cost of energy, fuel and raw materials, while facing a weak demand with decreases in consumption. As an example, in Spain, there was a decrease between 13% and 20% in every month of 2022 until October when compared to the same months of the previous year”. Taking into account the suggestions of FEDEPESCA, the Chair proposed to rephrase part of section 4 to read: “The Spanish support was only provided to the producing sectors, not covering the rest of the supply chain”.

The Working Group reached agreement on the draft advice on disturbances in the market of fisheries and aquaculture products due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

- **Way forward**

The Chair proposed to put forward the agreed advice to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential adoption.

European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA)

- **Consideration of draft advice on suggestions for 2023 work programme**

The Chair recalled that, under the Work Programme of Year 7, there was a commitment to adopt advice on suggestions for the work programme of EUMOFA. The Secretariat circulated a questionnaire from 8 to 16 December 2022. Replies were received from APROMAR, FEAP, EAPO, SPFPO, and Européche. The draft advice was circulated on 12 January 2023. The Chair emphasised that the purpose was to identify studies that would be relevant for EUMOFA to carry out. Taking into account the limitations of EUMOFA, a prioritisation of topics could be needed.

The Working Group proceeded with the consideration of the draft advice on “European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA): Suggestions of studies to be integrated in the Work Programme (2023)”.

The Secretary General explained that the subsection “aquaculture: sea bream, sea bass, meagre, rainbow trout, sole, turbot” in section 2 “price structure analyses” was based on the replies of aquaculture members to the questionnaire. Several of these species were already covered in the advice “Clarifications on MAC advice on EUMOFA Case Studies”, adopted on 10 September 2020. In the recent period, EUMOFA undertook studies on several of these species, for example, a study on fresh gilthead seabream (Spain, Germany, France) on January 2022, a study on portion trout (Germany, Italy, Poland) on October 2021, a study on COVID-19 impacts on farmed species focused on turbot and caviar on March 2022, a price structure analysis on turbot (Spain, France, Netherlands)



on April 2018, and a study on meagre (Spain, Greece, Italy) on March 2022. Therefore, it was important to determine whether it was relevant to recommend these species again.

The Chair encouraged the aquaculture members to clarify whether it would be an update of the same studies or whether there would be something different.

Garazi Rodríguez Valle (APROMAR) stated that her association would like to see the differences in prices between the different levels of the sales chain, which is information that is not included. This should cover first point of sale and price to the consumers. In her view, it would be relevant to undertake these studies, but Ms Rodríguez was not opposed to waiting for the following year.

Laurène Jolly (DG MARE) explained that, under the price structure analyses, EUMOFA was already analysing the differences in prices between the different levels of chain. Several of the species mentioned were recently covered, for example sea bass in 2018, trout in 2022, and sea bream in 2022. Ms Jolly encouraged the members to check the list of available studies in the EUMOFA website, in order to avoid a repetition of recent studies.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) highlighted the relevance of the methodology of the price structure analyses undertaken by EUMOFA, which could be expanded to other products. Mr Guillaumie expressed agreement with Ms Jolly's intervention.

Rasmus Nielsen (STECF) commented that sole might not be a very relevant species to analyse. Based on his knowledge, there was a very limited number of companies producing that species in aquaculture. In the case of turbot, Spain was essentially the only Member State producing this species in aquaculture. Mr Nielsen volunteered to provide papers published on sea bream and sea bass.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) argued that, in the price structure analyses, the same species must be compared. In previous studies, there were issues with the data gathered, because the data was not always checked in the different points of the supply chain. For example, hake can be sold in different markets, but not actually be the same type of hake at the point of origin.

The Chair suggested the scheduling of another discussion on the mentioned aquaculture-related studies at the March 2023 meeting. In the meantime, the Secretariat, with the assistance of the Commission, could check with the aquaculture members about overlapping of topics. The Chair proceeded with subsection 2.2 on tuna, highlighting that the purpose was to recommend relevant studies to EUMOFA.

The Secretary General explained that, in the questionnaire, Europêche suggested a study on processed tuna loins. Prior to the meeting, AIPCE-CEP sent suggestions of additional text to this subsection of the draft advice, plus the request of another case study on tuna.

The Chair stated that, with the amendments proposed, the text would be about semi-processed tuna loins and about canned tuna.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) clarified that semi-processed tuna would be the same as tuna loins.



Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) informed that, the previous time that EUMOFA undertook a study on tuna, it was very difficult to gather data from the sector. Mr Nikolian encouraged the sector, in case another study would be undertaken, to participate in the study.

Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPESCA) emphasised the importance of a precise text on tuna. Besides the concerns around Autonomous Tariff Quotas, there were many evolving dynamics related to tuna, which impacted the EU market. The study should not have a narrow perspective.

The Chair commented, in the context of suggestions of market studies to be commissioned under EUMOFA, that the second and third paragraphs proposed by AIPCE-CEP were nonessential.

Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPESCA) underscored that the main discussion was about the supply of the processors and the competitive environment of the different parts of the supply chain. It is not only a matter of semi-processed and processed products, but the environment surrounding the supply, including the problems in receiving supply from certain countries. There are different issues affecting the supply of the EU processing industry.

The Chair asked if there was agreement to suggest studies on semi-processed and on canned tuna.

Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPESCA) argued that, since the text mentioned the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the energy crisis on prices, it went into competitiveness, global environment, and the fleet. To have a debate on such topics, it was necessary to see the real supply from the EU fleet, the destination of the supply, the status of the landings, and the needs met by Free Trade Agreements. Mr Alonso recommended further discussions between himself, Europêche representatives, and other interested parties, in order to ensure that the study was relevant.

The Chair suggested to schedule another discussion on the tuna studies at the March 2023 meeting, plus that, in the meantime, the Secretariat and the interested parties would clarify the aim of the suggested studies.

The Secretary General emphasised that the purpose of the draft advice was to recommend topics for EUMOFA studies, which meant the identification of products and relevant Member States. It was not necessary to send a comprehensive text on fisheries control, labelling, or other requirements, since these would not be covered in the studies of EUMOFA.

The Chair proceeded with an overview of the suggestions for thematic analyses, which includes sea bass and sprat.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) confirmed his continued interest in a thematic analysis on sea bass, highlighting that the production and market of this species is highly influenced by imports, mainly from Turkey. Therefore, understanding the market behaviour of this species was quite complex due to the reduced available information for EU producers.

The Chair explained that, on raw data, there was a request for the provision of data on imports and exports of aquaculture products, particularly from third countries such as Turkey. The Chair commented that it was a very broad request.



Javier Ojeda (FEAP) stated that, since the issue was already covered in the request for a thematic analysis on sea bass, the section on raw data could be deleted.

The Chair drew attention to the importance of the suggestion of a study on plant-based imitations of fisheries and aquaculture products under section 5 “other issues”.

The Secretary General explained that several broader topics were included in section 5 “other issues”, which provides more flexibility to the Commission on how to tackle these, instead of merely through price structure analyses and thematic analyses.

Franciscos Nikolian (DG MARE) stated that EUMOFA was dedicated to fisheries and aquaculture data, in line with the CMO Regulation, so plant-based imitation products were out of the scope.

The Chair commented that, if it was not possible for EUMOFA to undertake such a study, then there should be an alternative manner for the Commission to undertake it.

Franciscos Nikolian (DG MARE) suggested that, if there was available funding, the MAC could consider hiring an external consultant for such a study.

The Secretary General wondered if plant-based limitations could be taken into account as another factor in the evolution of consumption under the “Fish Market” report.

Laurène Jolly (DG MARE) highlighted that, even if plant-based imitation products were in the scope of EUMOFA, the segment was so limited that it would be extremely difficult to collect data. It was not significant enough to assess market impacts.

Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista (ANFACO-CECOPECA) expressed doubts about the appropriateness of suggesting such a study through EUMOFA. Nevertheless, Mr Alonso emphasised the importance of the topic. It would be important to collect information on the matter.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) expressed interest on the topic of plant-based imitations as well as on lab-grown products.

The Chair suggested to remove the reference to plant-based imitation products from the draft advice, but to exchange about it under a future meeting, in order to determine an alternative way to collect information about the market developments. The Chair suggested that DG AGRI could be the appropriate addressee.

Yobana Bermúdez (Conxemar) agreed that it was important to discuss about plant-based imitation products, since there were products in the market that, in their advertising and labelling, used fish-related names and imagery. Ms Bermúdez argued that it was a clear offensive against the fisheries and aquaculture value chain.

The Chair provided an overview to the suggestions of studies on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and on trawling.



Paul Thomas (EAPO) stated that the purpose of the study on trawling would be to gather information on the market of products coming from trawling activities. Prior to the meeting, EAPO sent a suggestion to delete the reference to recent campaigns, since the main aim would be to collect data on trawling, not on the campaigns.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) requested clarification that the purpose was to study data on fish production coming from trawling.

The Chair suggested changing the reference to “data on fish caught through trawling methods”. The Chair provided an overview of the suggestion of a study on selling methods.

Pim Visser (VisNed) wondered if the study would be covering the first sale or only after the first sale. The new trends, for example e-commerce, are particularly relevant in the steps after the first sale.

The Chair suggested to amend the reference to be “selling methods at first sale and after first sale”.

Laurène Jolly (DG MARE) recalled that, in 2021, EUMOFA published a study about online sales of fishery and aquaculture products. The study was focused on online sales at the consumer level. It would be a bit early to redo the mentioned study. If the suggestion was to cover other parts of the supply chain, then it would be different from the 2021 study.

Visser (VisNed) stated that there had been a widening of the methods for the first sale. In the past, first sale was focused on the local traders, but that, currently, there was a wider market.

- **Way forward**

The Chair proposed to put forward the agreed advice to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential adoption. The suggestion of a study on plant-based imitation products would be discussed in a future meeting. At the next meeting, draft advice concerning studies about tuna products and about aquaculture products would be considered.

Awareness and Role of Producer Organisations (POs)

- **Consideration of draft advice on the role of Producer Organisations and awareness about the role of the CMO Regulation**

The Chair recalled that, at the previous meeting, it was agreed that draft advice on improving communication on the role of the CMO Regulation and of the Producer Organisations would be developed. EAPO prepared a proposal of draft advice, which was circulated on 13 January 2023. Prior to the meeting, a suggestion of additional text from APROMAR was received.

Paul Thomas (EAPO) explained that, prior to the meeting, his association sent a suggestion to delete the first recommendation to the European Commission on the inclusion of Producer Organisations in ongoing discussions on consumer information and sustainability claims, since the previously suggested engagement already took place in the context of the MAC. Mr Thomas provided an overview of the remaining draft recommendations.



Nicolás Fernández Muñoz (OPP72) expressed satisfaction that steps were being taken to recognise the role of Producer Organisations. Regardless of their size and specific measures, EU Producer Organisations are present in the market and in the research levels. Nevertheless, there was insufficient knowledge about Producer Organisations, including their benefits, at the Commission's level. There was insufficient sharing of information about the measures undertaken by Producer Organisations. The different measures carried should be linked. Mr Fernández expressed hope that the MAC would serve as a meeting point for sharing of knowledge on this matter.

The Chair thanked Mr Fernández for the encouraging statement, adding that the aim of the suggested actions was to increase the recognition of the role of Producer Organisations in the market.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) suggested a correction in section 1 “introduction” to read “associations regrouping several POs”.

Garazi Rodríguez Valle (APROMAR) expressed her appreciation for the inclusion of the example suggested by her association under section 2 “examples of POs pursuing the objectives of Article 7 of the CMO Regulation.

Nicolás Fernández Muñoz (OPP72) stated that it was positive to include examples in the draft advice. Nevertheless, the choice of examples should be done carefully, since there were many actions available across the EU.

The Chair suggested the inclusion of a footnote highlighting that the examples in the draft advice were a small set of examples and that many others would be available across the EU. The Chair emphasised that the focus of the draft advice were the recommendations.

- **Way forward**

The Chair proposed to put forward the agreed advice to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential adoption.

AOB

- **Conclusion of Mr O’Donoghue’s 2020-2023 term as Chair of Working Group 1**

The Chair recalled his experience in the position of Chair of Working Group 1, highlighting the significant work achieved and the multi-stakeholder cooperation. In all draft texts, consensus was reached. The Chair thanked the members for their cooperation across the years. The Chair also thanked DG MARE for the continued support.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) thanked Mr O’Donoghue for his efforts in the establishment of the MAC. Mr Nikolian highlighted the increasing number of recommendations adopted by the MAC across the previous three years. He also thanked Mr O’Donoghue for the shared expertise.



Summary of action points

- Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet:
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential approval
 - Secretariat to request, via email, an update from DG MARE on the state-of-play of the reply to the advice of 24 May 2022
- Russian Invasion of Ukraine:
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential approval
- European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA):
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, agenda item to be scheduled for a consideration of draft advice with suggestions for studies on tuna and on aquaculture products.
 - In the development of the new draft advice, Secretariat to liaise with Europêche and AIPCE-CEP concerning the studies on tuna and with APROMAR concerning the studies on aquaculture species
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential approval
- Awareness and Role of Producer Organisations (POs):
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential approval
 - Secretariat to contact DG MARE to publicise the revised “Production and Marketing Plans: Guidelines and Good Practices” document



Attendance List

Representative	Organisation	Role
Alen Lovrinov	Omega 3 Producers Organisation	Member
Alessandro Manghisi	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	Member
Alonso Abreu Lozano	Asociación de Armadores Punta del Moral (OPP80)	Member
Anna Rokicka	Polish Association of Fish Processors (PSPR)	Member
Asmira Sophie Sandermann	European Fishmeal	Member
Bruno Guillaumie	European Molluscs' Producers Association (EMPA)	Member
Catherine Pons	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Christine Absil	Good Fish	Member
Daniel Voces	Europêche	Member
Eduardo Míguez López	OP77 Puerto de Celeiro	Member
Elena Garcia Caballero	Spain	Observer
Fabián Ben Conde	Federación Nacional de Cofradías de Pescadores (FNCP)	Member
Francesca Peretti	ClientEarth	Member
Frangiscos Nikolian	European Commission	Expert
Garazi Rodríguez Valle	APROMAR	Member
Isabel Mariño Prieto	Conxemar	Member
Jaroslav Zieliński	Polish Fish Producers Association (PFPA)	Member
Javier Ojeda	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne	Member
Jennifer Reeves	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	Member
Jens Høj Mathiesen	Danish Seafood Association	Member
Jérémie Souben	FEDOPA	Member
José Carlos Escalera	Federación de Cofradías de Pescadores de Cadiz (FECOPESCA)	Member
Juana Maria Parada Guinaldo	OR.PA.GU.	Member



Representative	Organisation	Role
Katarina Sipic	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE) / European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)	Member
Laurène Jolly	European Commission	Expert
Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco	Federación de Asociaciones Provinciales de Empresarios Detallistas de Pescados y Productos Congelados (FEDEPESCA)	Member
Massimo Bellavista	COPA COGECA	Member
Miguel Lizaso	European Commission	Expert
Mike Turenhout	Visfederatie	Member
Nicolás Fernández Muñoz	OPP72	Member
Patrick Murphy	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO)	Member
Paul Thomas	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Pedro Luis Casado López	Asociación de Armadores Punta del Moral (OPP80)	Member
Pedro Reis Santos	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Pierre Commère	Association Des Entreprises de Produits Alimentaires Élaborés (ADEPALE)	Member
Pim Visser	VisNed	Member
Rafael Piñero Scapachini	EuroCommerce	Member
Rasmus Nielsen	STECF	Expert
Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista	ANFACO-CECOPECA	Member
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche	Member
Sean O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Chair
Sergio López García	OPP Puerto de Burela	Member
Yobana Bermúdez	Asociación Española de Mayoristas, Importadores, Transformadores y Exportadores de Productos de la Pesca y Acuicultura (CONXEMAR)	Member

