

Executive Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 30 March 2023 (13:30 – 17:00 CET)

Zoom

Interpretation in EN, ES, FR

Welcome from the Chair, Yobana Bermúdez

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

Adoption of draft agenda and of the last meeting's minutes (27.01.23): adopted

Action points of the last meeting

- **State-of-play of the decision made during the last meeting - information**
- General Assembly & Executive Committee:
 - Secretariat to initiate the administrative procedures to replace Mr Sean O'Donoghue with Mr Julien Lamothe in the MAC ASBL, including publication in the Belgian Official Gazette
 - Changes filed with the services of the clerk's office of the Court of Enterprises
 - Change of mandate holds in the bank requested
- AOB:
 - Draft advice agreed by Working Group 1 (Ukraine, Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet, awareness on the role of Producer Organisations, EUMOFA studies) and by Working Group 2 (Economic Report on the Fish Processing Industry) to be put forward for consideration and approval through an urgent written procedure
 - Mentioned pieces of advice adopted on 3 February 2023
 - Change of mandate holds in the bank requested

Common Market Organisation, Supply of Raw Material, Future Strategies

- **Speech by María Isabel Artime García, Secretary General of Fisheries of Spain**

The Chair highlighted that, in previous occasions, members encouraged increased engagement with Member States in meetings. As Ms Artime García had been recently appointed as Secretary General of Fisheries of Spain, a letter was addressed to her inviting her deliver a speech on market-related matters. The Chair provided an overview of Ms Artime's professional experience and thanked Spain for the continued support and engagement.



María Isabel Artime García (Spain) underscored the importance of the Advisory Council for the development and strengthening of the EU market of fishery and aquaculture products, in which the entire supply chain was represented. The EU market is the largest global market of imports with 16% of the total value of imports. The EU market includes demanding consumers that are concerned about having high quality and sustainable products. For example, European consumers want to know where the product is sourced and how it is processed. And the demand of such information is growing.

Ms Artime explained that, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which revealed the fragility of the production sector, it also demonstrated the strategic importance of the food production sector. The Russian invasion of Ukraine also led to further fragility, which caused price fluctuations and affected food security. It is agreed that an energy transition and less dependence on fossil fuels are needed. With this background and demanding EU consumers, one of the main challenges that needs to be tackled is the profitability of EU production across the entire value chain. The EU must enhance self-sufficiency and reduced external dependency, while working on the energy transition of the sector. Therefore, coordinated actions with the Advisory Councils and Producer Organisations (POs) are needed.

Ms Artime mentioned that, according to the recent report on the implementation of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation published by the European Commission, the CMO is believed to have positive effects on meeting the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), including ensuring competitiveness, market stability, and transparency. Apart from listing some points that need to be improved, the Commission identified the POs as a key stakeholder of the CMO to improve market conditions and address food waste through their Production and Marketing Plans (PMPs). The PMPs developed by POs played a very relevant and essential role, especially during the pandemic, enabling the EU to re-activate storage aids, promote online marketing, among other measures. Expanding the participation of stakeholders and promoting innovation in the production plans is also important when tackling challenges ahead. Promoting the value of the EU products in the EU market is needed, she added.

Ms Artime exemplified that the Inter-Branch Organisation Interfish España was a relevant initiative, constituting a forum that includes different professions involved in the value chain, and that the Spanish authorities want to promote as effective tool to boost the sector as a whole. The Secretary General highlighted that, in Spain, there are also fishermen's guilds ("Cofradías"), which the authorities continue to encourage the assessment of their conversion into POs, which would facilitate the access to funds. The Spanish authorities are finalising the legislative framework to facilitate this, including by clarifying concepts and better definition of the requirements for recognition.

Ms Artime emphasised that another fundamental element of the CMO was the commitment to product quality through a system based on traceability and the improvement of information to the consumer, which would also benefit the implementation of the Fisheries Control Regulation. At EU-level, it is important to continue moving in this direction and for the CMO Regulation to foresee mandatory consumer information requirement for prepared and canned products, so that there is an equivalence of information obligations with fresh products. The Secretary General recognised that compliance with these requirements would represent an important effort for companies along the entire value chain, so these new obligations should be introduced in a gradual manner.



In relation to the upcoming legislative proposal on a Sustainable Food System Framework, Ms Artime informed that the Spanish authorities were favourable to the development of an harmonised focus about sustainable production of food, plus that the promotion of added value in sustainable production was part of the identity of the European production model. The Secretary General commented that the Spanish authorities were waiting for more details from the Commission about the initiative, which should count on the participation of public administrations and of the sector to reach the aims of the initiative. In the view of Spain, this model should serve as a basis to communicate the quality of the fishery and aquaculture products of the EU, which have high biological value and low carbon footprint, with emphasises in the differential value of the Spanish and EU products in comparison with competing products from third counties, which do not follow the same rigorous production rules.

Ms Artime highlighted that, from July 2023, Spain would hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Spain would be focusing on:

- Fisheries and the promotion of the consumption of fish as a source of high quality and first necessity food.
- Sustainable and profitable fishing activity, in the long-term, to help maintain its environment, plus its essential economic role for the production of food and the fixation of population in coastal areas.
- Defence of the EU fishing sector, so that in can operate in equal conditions in comparison with competitors from third countries.
- Transparency and traceability to meet the demands of consumers and to supply the EU market with high quality and sustainable products.
- The transition towards a more energy efficient production model based on innovation.
- Promotion of POs, as a motor for the development of the sector.

Ms Artime encouraged the members to actively participate to reach the described objectives.

- **Exchange of views**

The Chair asked if Ms Artime and the Spanish administration agreed with the conclusions of the recent report on the implementation of the CMO Regulation.

María Isabel Artime García (Spain) replied that she agreed that the outcome of the CMO Regulation was position, bur added that there should be more ambition from the Commission on to move forward, especially on the promotion of the value of EU products. Within the EU, high standards on sustainability goals are applied and that needs to be stressed. More could be done to improve transnational POs too.



Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) expressed his appreciation that Spain shared the same assessment of CMO as the Commission. The Commission identified some challenges that need to be tackled with the Member States, including regular checks on how POs are operating and the enforcement by Member States. In relation to the Sustainable Food System Framework, Mr Nikolian informed that the impact assessment was being finalised and that the legislative proposal would be published by September 2023. There was alignment between the Commission and Ms Artime on the importance of the framework. Regarding the issue of “Cofradías”, the Commission representative highlighted that the issue had been recently discussed. The CMO Regulation does not prevent their application for recognition as POs. The European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) can provide technical assistance in the application procedure.

María Isabel Artime García (Spain) thanked the Commission for the support and for the consideration for the “Cofradías”.

Guus Pastoor (AIPCE) drew attention to the EU’s current dependence on imports from third countries and the competitiveness of the EU processing industry. In order to change course, the EU would have to boost supply. However, catches are not expected to grow in the EU fishing industry. The aquaculture production is still under development. From the point-of-view of the processing industry, maintaining the competitiveness of the industry is important. Otherwise, there would be increased imports of processed products. In his view, this dimension was lacking from the analysis on the CMO.

María Isabel Artime García (Spain) agreed that the profitability and competitiveness of EU producers as well as the entire value chain needs to be ensured. However, it is not just about increasing the number of catches, as respecting the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) principle is crucial. The Secretary General mentioned that aquaculture also plays an important role that can complement the fisheries sector. She also highlighted the importance of having an equal playing field with third countries which have Free Trade Agreements with the EU.

María Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) expressed agreement with Ms Artime’s intervention, especially on product information available to consumers. Ms Álvarez stressed that there is a need to improve information throughout the value chain and traceability and also the availability of data to consumers.

María Isabel Artime García (Spain) responded that tackling the problem of traceability was challenging, but that it was a goal that needed to be pursued. The profitability and the sustainability of the EU companies need to be taken into consideration.

Vanya Vulperhorst (Oceana) mentioned that Mexico was looking into the implementation of the EU’s traceability and import systems, which demonstrating the success of the EU’s systems. Under the revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation, there was still a pending question about the inclusion of processed products. Ms Vulperhorst wondered about the setting-up of an ambitious framework where traceability of information can be ensured, while also highlighting the added value of the EU products. She called on Spain to act ambitiously in the context of the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations.



María Isabel Artime García (Spain) responded that further analysis was needed on the Mexican initiative, in order to determine whether the same goals as Spain were followed. Ms Artime emphasised the need of engagement with stakeholders on the development of an ambitious framework.

The Chair thanked Ms Artime for participating in the meeting. The Chair mentioned that the European Year of Skills could be an opportunity to address skills in the sector, including in the context of Transnational POs. The MAC would also be working to achieve the goals of the upcoming Sustainable Food System Framework and remained available for future exchanges.

María Isabel Artime García (Spain) thanked Ms Bermúdez for the invitation. In relation to the European Year of Skills, Ms Artime emphasised the importance of the initiative and, especially of integrating younger generations in the sector.

Common Market Organisation (CMO)

- **Presentation on the report on the functioning of the Common Market Organisation by Commission representative (MARE A4)**

The Chair thanked the Commission for the inclusion of references to the work of the MAC in the report on the functioning of the Common Market Organisation.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) thanked the MAC for the valuable inputs throughout the reporting process on the CMO.

Christophe Vande Weyer (DG MARE) presented the outcomes of the report on the functioning of the CMO. The report is one of the pillars of fisheries package and it is structured around the five chapters of the CMO. The essence of the report is not an evaluation but more information on the implementation of the progress made since the reform of the CMO. The key learning is the reformed CMO has achieved the CFP objectives, especially regarding competitiveness, market stability transparency, and ensuring a diverse supply of seafood to customers.

The POs proved to be instrumental in improving the market condition. One of the main measures of the reformed CMO is the PMPs to be implemented by POs. Under the second programming period of the CMO, the Commission will follow closely how Member States support the PMPs in their national programmes. From the report, it is evident that the PMPs enabled the POs to switch to a more market-oriented approach. In terms of increasing profitability, the PMPs also have direct impact on the upstream activities, including avoiding food waste, which suggests that the PMPs enable the POs to better manage their business and contribute the conservation objectives of the CFP.

Thanks to the PMPs, the POs were able to swiftly adapt to the changing market condition, including Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. While the PMPs helped improve competitiveness through the common framework, it has been noted that the marketing standards do not sufficiently promote sustainable products. The reformed market policies set standards in term of



market intelligence. The EUMOFA is one of the major achievements and became a reference for data on food commodities, which is also relevant to the POs when facing crisis.

As for the future improvements, the POs will continue to be given attention, including an examination on how Member States carry out checks on the compliance of POs. DG MARE will continue assisting producers across the Member States in the establishment of Transnational POs. The fact that consumer information and marketing standards do not fully increase consumers' awareness on sustainability is acknowledged, but this is expected to be improved in the future with the sustainable food system initiative.

- **Exchange of views**

María Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) requested more information on the next steps following the report. Ms Álvarez emphasised that FEDEPESCA and other organisations in Spain have difficulties in improving traceability and the real-time information sharing, so she wanted to know how this could be improved.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) replied that labelling had been identified as one of the main challenges. In some Member States, the information available to consumers does not meet the necessary standards. To tackle this, an exercise will be launched to gather information on the national labelling system in place across the Member States. The Commission will also regularly assess if the POs are functioning in accordance with regulatory requirements, as these are crucial tools for the implementation of the CMO and the CFP.

Jean-Marie Robert (Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne) expressed agreement with the conclusions of the report, adding that producers would like to be involved in the decision-making process regarding the handling of inflation on fisheries and aquaculture products. Mr Robert emphasised that the PMPs were a good tool and that these should be used to facilitate the dialogue between the fishing industry and the processing sector. He exemplified that, in Working Group 1, members were looking into PMPs in different contexts and Member States to learn good practices.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) agreed that the added value of POs and PMPs had been demonstrated, especially throughout the recent crises.

Vanya Vulperhorst (Oceana) requested an update on the Sustainable Food System Framework and the collaboration amongst the DGs in charge. Ms Vulperhorst wondered whether it would really improve sustainability, plus how it would ensure that the market is strong, when there is no traceability for processed products.

Frangiscos Nikolian (DG MARE) emphasised that, under the legislative proposal for a revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation, the Commission propose a strong traceability for all products, be it processed or fresh, EU produced or imported. Discussions were ongoing under the interinstitutional negotiations and the Commission does have a right to withdraw the proposal. Even though traceability is regulated under the Fisheries Control Regulation, it remains very relevant for the CMO. In the context of the possible EU sustainability labelling, there will be a need for full traceability and



product information. Mr Nikolian informed that the discussion about the Sustainable Food System Framework was at the political level, but it would include a framework to guide other legislation in the years to come.

The Chair thanked the Commission representatives for their participation.

Working Groups

- **Reporting by Julien Lamothe, Chair of Working Group 1**

The Secretary General, on behalf of Julien Lamothe (EAPO), informed that, at the 28 March 2023 meeting of Working Group 1:

- Members exchanged with Commission representatives and EUMOFA experts about the suggested study on the challenges faced by aquaculture products in food outlets. There was agreement on the methodology and scope and of the study. Aquaculture representatives were encouraged to further engage with the EUMOFA experts. There was also an exchange about other suggestions for EUMOFA studies, particularly on products from trawling methods and on selling methods.
- Members reached agreement on the text of the draft advice suggesting an EUMOFA price structure analysis on the supply chain of the EU tuna sector within the global tuna market.

The Executive Committee approved the advice “European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA): Price structure analysis of the supply chain of EU tuna sector within the global tuna market”.

- Members exchanged with the Chair of the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) about the STECF’s Economic Report on the EU Aquaculture Sector. Members expressed support for the development of joint advice on the topic. The AAC would take the lead in the drafting the advice and the MAC would consider the text at a later opportunity.
- Members exchanged with a Commission representative about the implementation of the landing obligation. Members also reached agreement on a draft advice about the implementation in 2022 of the landing obligation.

The Executive Committee approved the advice “Annual Report on the Implementation in 2022 of the Landing Obligation”.

- In the context of the agreed actions to raise awareness on the role of POs, OR.PA.GU. delivered a presentation about projects undertaken by their PO. Another presentation will be scheduled at the next meeting.
- Information was provided on an upcoming workshop on brown crab, organised by the MAC, the NWWAC, and the NSAC, which will take place on 16 May 2023. Information about the workshop was circulated via email and participation was encouraged.



- The position of Vice-Chair of Working Group 1 would remain vacant until there was interest from the members.
- **Reporting by Pierre Commère, Chair of Working Group 2**

Pierre Commère (AIPCE) informed that, at the 29 March 2023 meeting of Working Group 2:

- The Commission delivered a presentation, which usually takes place annually, on the state-of-play of cooperating and noncooperating third countries in the context of the IUU Regulation.
- Based on a proposal from EJF, draft advice was considered on the efficiency of controls to combat products from IUU fishing. Members reached general agreement on the content of the draft text, agreeing to maintain the recommendations, but to shorten the background text. Members agreed that the revised text should be considered by the Executive Committee via written procedure. Members also agreed to cooperate with Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) for a joint approval of the advice.
- The Commission delivered a presentation on the upcoming proposal for Autonomous Tariff Quotas for the 2024-2025 period. Members discussed the general aims of the proposal. Members were encouraged to bilaterally exchange with the Commission too.
- Following contributions from several members, draft advice on the European Year of Skills, especially focused on the needs of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, was considered.

The Executive Committee approved the advice “European Year of Skills”.

- Following a questionnaire, draft advice on a potential Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Angola was considered. Members agreed on the draft advice. In a future opportunity, a questionnaire on the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Cabo Verde would also be circulated.

The Executive Committee approved the advice “Possible EU-Angola Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA)”.

- The position of Vice-Chair of Working Group 2 would remain vacant until there was interest from the members.
- **Reporting by Benoît Thomassen, Chair of Working Group 3**

Benoît Thomassen (FEAP) informed that, at the 30 March 2023 meeting of Working Group 3:

- The Commission delivered a presentation about the development of the EU algae sector. As an action point, a questionnaire on the matter would be circulated to the members to gather input for a future advice. The AAC would also be contacted to assess the possibility of joint advice.



- The exchange with the Commission about the upcoming legislation on the maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in certain foodstuffs had been postponed to the June 2023 meeting.
- Conxemar delivered a presentation on plant-based imitations of fisheries and aquaculture products. Concerns were expressed about unclear labelling practices amongst those products. Based on a proposal from Conxemar, members reached agreement on a draft advice about the topic. Members also agreed to, under the new advice, repeat the Annex of the previous advice about this topic.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) stated that the Other Interest Groups representatives generally agreed with the context of the draft advice on improving the labelling legislation for plant-based imitations of fisheries and aquaculture products. Nevertheless, not all the examples provided in the text were misleading, such as figure 3 of the document. Ms Absil expressed preference for a written procedure to remove potentially less relevant examples from the draft advice.

Benoît Thomassen (FEAP) recalled that, at the Working Group 3 meeting, no opposition was expressed. Mr Thomassen encouraged members to, in future occasions, put forward their views at the Working Group's level. He added that he was not oppose to the suggested deletion, since it would not affect the findings.

The Chair, considering the previous interventions, propose to remove the mentioned references from the draft advice, and to launch a written procedure for the consideration and potential approval of the revised draft advice.

Benoît Thomassen (FEAP) continued with the information on the latest Working Group 3 meeting:

- The Good Food Institute delivered a presentation about cultured seafood. In a later opportunity, a questionnaire would be circulated to the members to gather feedback, so that a draft advice can be prepared.
- Prior to the meeting, a questionnaire on the policy options of the Sustainable Food System Framework had been circulated. Members agreed that no further action would be taken until the publication of the Commission's impact assessment.
- Paulien Prent (AIPCE) expressed interest in the position of Vice-Chair of Working Group 3.

The Executive Committee appointed, by consensus, Ms Paulien Prent, as Vice-Chair of Working Group 3 for the 2023-2026 period.

Work Programme of Year 7 (2022-2023)

- **Update on priorities and deliverables by Pedro Reis Santos, Secretary General**

The Secretary General recalled that, in order to receive the annual financing from the Commission, the MAC must meet 50% of the deliverables, which includes both meetings and advice, committed in the annual work programme. The Secretary General reminded members of the overarching priorities



for the operational year. The Secretary General delivered an overview of the state-of-play of the recommendations planned in the Work Programme of Year 7 (2022-2023), adding that the commitments were expected to be met without difficulties.

María Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) congratulated the Secretariat and the members for the work done and the contributions towards the implementation of the work programme.

Pierre Commère (AIPCE) asked about how pieces advice, such as on the European Year of Skills and the EU-Angola Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement, would be considered, particularly if these could replace unmet commitments.

The Secretary General explained that, at the end of the operational year, a final report was submitted to the European Commission, which covered all advice adopted by the MAC, including extra work. To count the additional work as deliverables, an amendment to the work programme, in collaboration with the Commission, would be required. Since the MAC was expected to be able to meet the threshold of 50% of the deliverables, in his view, it was not necessary to initiate the process.

- **Update on the accounts by Dawlat Bik, Financial Officer**

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

The Financial Officer delivered an update on the accounts of the ongoing operational year.

The Secretary General highlighted that the comparisons between the budgeted and actual expenses were based on the approved budget, but that additional income from the membership fees and from financial contributions of the Member States were expected.

Reimbursement Rules

- **Update on the guidelines on reimbursement of travel expense and substance allowances**

The Secretary General informed that DG MARE was preparing new financial guidelines to assist the Secretariats of the Advisory Councils. The draft version of the financial guidelines included suggestions of higher reimbursement rates for accommodation and of per diem allowances. There was the possibility of different scales and allowances based on the country of the meeting or the possibility of a daily allowance of 113 euros and an accommodation allowance of 168 euros per night. Therefore, members were encouraged to express their preference.

Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat circulated a draft version of new guidelines for reimbursement and allowances. These follow closely the financial guidelines of DG MARE, but several adjustments were proposed, particularly:

- Foresee the same values of daily allowances for staff, experts and members – The aim would be to facilitate the implementation.



- In the case of members, foresee the values for accommodation and travel as strict ceilings, based on budgetary availability. The accommodation value would be provided as allowance. In the case of staff and experts, the values would serve as guidance – The aim would be to avoid the refusal of participation in meetings due to high hotel or flight costs during a specific date.
- Due to the significant number of members travel from locations lacking direct flights, exceptional rule allowing +2 days of reimbursement when a layover is required.

The Secretary General emphasised that the purpose of the circulation of the new draft MAC guidelines was merely to gather preliminary views from the members. The adoption of the new guidelines should wait for the final version of the financial guidelines from DG MARE.

Guus Pastoor (AIPCE) highlighted that the organisation of some meetings in person and other meetings remotely had been efficient and cost-effective. To facilitate the implementation of the rules by the Secretariat, Mr Pastoor suggested to end the currently applied reduction of the per diem allowance when lunch is provided at meetings.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP), in relation to the suggested exceptional rule of +2 days of reimbursement, wondered if it could be applied when, in the context of the layover, the member stayed in different cities/hotels.

The Secretary General informed that the draft guidelines would be amended to reflect these requests, including an explicit reference to the layovers.

María Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) expressed agreement with Mr Pastoor's suggestion of a fixed amount for the per diem allowance, in order to avoid additional administrative burdens on the Secretariat.

Statutes and Rules of Procedure

- **Information about update to the Statutes and Rules of Procedure**

The Secretary General informed that, due to enter into force of a new Code of Companies and Associations in Belgium, there was a need to adapt the Statutes and potentially the Rules of Procedure of the MAC by 1 January 2024. Changes in the new code included:

- Removal of the precise address (only mention the region).
- No longer required that number of members exceed number of directors.
- Minimum notice period for convening general meetings is increased from 8 to 15 days.
- Liability of director is extended to correspond to the liability of company directors.
- Associations can be declared bankrupt.



- Clarifications of scope of day-to-day management.

The Secretary General further informed the modifications and references to the new code must be integrated in the Statutes to be proposed by the board of directors and approved by the General Assembly. The decision of the General Assembly is to be filed in the Clerk's office of the Commercial Court, which will be followed by publication in the Annexes of the Belgian Official Gazette. The Secretary General added that he was in contact with a consultancy specialised in Belgian administrative matters, so that the update could be finalised by September 2023 meetings.

Inter-Advisory Council's Coordination

- **Reporting back on the following meetings:**

- **Inter-AC Brexit Forum (24 February 2023)**

The Secretary General recalled that the Inter-AC Brexit Forum is composed of the MAC, NSAC, NWWAC, PELAC, and LDAC. The Secretary General informed that he was present at the 24 February 2023 meeting. At the meeting, there were exchanges with the Commission about the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, the request from DG ENV to ICES on fishing pressure value, management and enforcement measures by Scottish authorities, effort calculation in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and data exchanges between the EU and the UK on limits for non-quota species. Therefore, no market-related topics were addressed.

The Secretary General further recalled that, at the request of the Commission, the minutes of the meeting would not be circulated or made publicly available. The next meeting was planned to be held in April 2023 and to be organised by the MAC.

- **Inter-Advisory Councils (9 March 2023)**

The Secretary General recalled that the MAC was represented, in person, by the Chair and himself, and, remotely by Christine Absil, Julien Lamothe, and Pierre Commère. Among the agenda items, the introduction of MARE A4, the presentation of the CFP package, specifically the CMO Regulation, and the Court of Auditors report on IUU fishing were particularly relevant. The presentations delivered by the Commission were circulated via email and made available on the website. Minutes would be prepared by the Commission and circulated.

On the different agenda points, the Secretary General highlighted:

- MARE A – He intervened to thank for the continued good collaboration. In relation to the topics mentioned by Director Al Khudshairy, he mentioned that the MAC was working on advice on the European Year of Skills, plus that Working Group 3 would be addressing the EU Algae Initiative to focus on the market and consumer aspects.
- Presentation of the CFP package – Director-General Vitcheva explicitly thanked the MAC for the contribution to the report on the implementation of the CMO Regulation. The Chair intervened to thank the Commission services for the report and for taking into account the advice of the



MAC, plus for including footnotes to it and references to the regular exchanges. In her intervention, the Chair delivered several comments based on the adopted advice:

- The CMO helped and supported the objectives of the CFP, including strengthening competitiveness, improving transparency and stability of the markets, and ensuring a diverse supply of products;
- POs are central structures for the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products and to meet the objectives of the CFP. There is general agreement with the report, even though there are still challenges for the small-scale fleet and for transnational POs.
- In the context of the Sustainable Food System Framework and the improvement of consumer information, the MAC adopted advice on the sustainability criteria being developed by STECF and on the upcoming framework. Members were pleased that the measurement and communication on environmental and social sustainability in fishery and aquaculture products is being integrated in the Sustainable Food System Framework.

Pierre Commère (AIPCE) recalled that, besides the representatives attending on behalf of the MAC, the other members had the possibility to follow the meeting as observers.

- **Informal meeting with MARE A4 (23 March 2023)**

The Secretary General informed that MARE A4 expressed interest in an informal coordination meeting, especially following the appointment of the new MAC Chair. From the MAC's side, the meeting was attended by the Chair, Christine Absil, and himself. From the Commission's side, it was attended by Director Al Khudhairi, Frangiscos Nikolian, Christophe Vande Weyer, and Miguel Lizaso. The Management Team was informed of the meeting and the topics beforehand. The agenda items were the following:

- Relevant of topics in the Work Programme and agendas of the meetings: MARE A4 expressed general satisfaction with the work of the MAC. There was a mention of the difficulty for MARE to coordinate with other DGs. The Secretary General asked for replies to previous advice on trade policy instruments and on the STECF's annual report on the EU fishing fleet. Commission representatives expressed some interest in the work on plant-based products. MARE A4 drew attention to the recent communication on the EU algae sector. In relation to taxonomy, fisheries will be covered at a later stage and following a new platform of experts.
- Exchange of views with Director Al Khudhairi at 8 June 2023 Executive Committee meeting: Agreement on an exchange of views about Farm to Fork Strategy initiatives, particularly coordination among DGs, upcoming legal obligations to operators, and consumer information / labelling requirements.
- Expansion of MAC membership: Difficulties in attracting more NGO members were expressed, plus there were calls for the Commission to bilaterally encourage NGOs to join the Advisory Councils. There was an overview of the geographical scope of the current memberships, which,



in the view of MARE A4, represents the most significant markets. There were suggestions of promotional activities in the context of the European Maritime Day, the Barcelona Seafood Expo, and the Conxemar Fair. The Secretary General called on the Commission to increase the awareness of national authorities about the Advisory Councils and their role.

- **Informal meetings in the European Parliament (22 March 2023)**

The Secretary General explained that he received informal information that MEP Bilbao Barandica would be rapporteur of an own-initiative procedure report of the European Parliament about the CMO Regulation, so he had request an informal meeting to know the timeline and to increase awareness about the MAC's advice on the matter. As the Chair was travelling from Vigo to Brussels, the Secretary General took the opportunity to schedule the meeting with her present. Around the same time, the office of MEP Karleskind expressed interest in discussing his upcoming own-initiative report on China. He added that the Management Team was informed of the informal meetings and the topics beforehand via email, plus in a meeting.

The Secretary General informed that, in the meeting with Ms Bilbao, the MEP was provided with a copy of the advice on the CMO Regulation. The Secretary General and the Chair analysed the text of the advice with her and invited her to exchange with the members in a future MAC meeting, once the report is further developed. In the meeting with Mr Karleskind, the MEP was provided with copies of the advice on the CMO Regulation and on China. Overviews were provided on both pieces of advice and Mr Karleskind was invited to exchange with the members at the September 2023 meeting about the own-initiative report on China. Mr Karleskind provided information on upcoming files of the PECH Committee, namely that MEP Nuno Melo would be rapporteur for an own-initiative report on IUU and food security, and that MEP Rosa D'Amato would be rapporteur for an opinion on banning forced labour.

AOB

- **Impact of inflation on the consumption of fisheries and aquaculture products**

María Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) drew attention to the lack of assessment on the impact of inflation on the consumption of fisheries products. Ms Álvarez wondered about the situation across the different Member States, particularly the measures taken to mitigate the impact and to encourage consumption. In the case of Spain, there had been a decrease in consumption and an increase of the prices. Ms Álvarez exemplified that Portugal had recently eliminated the VAT tax for several food products, including some fisheries ones.

The Chair agreed with the suggestion, since it would be useful to know the situation in the different Member States and how it was addressed.



Summary of action points

- Working Groups:
 - Draft advice on “Improving the Labelling Legislation for Plant-Based Imitations of Fisheries and Aquaculture Products” to be considered via written procedure
- Reimbursement Rules:
 - Suggested changes to be integrated into the new draft guidelines on reimbursements
 - Once the new financial guidelines of DG MARE are finalised, adoption of the new draft guidelines on reimbursements to be considered
- Statutes and Rules of Procedure:
 - Secretariat to proceed with the necessary update of the Statutes and Rules of Procedure to meet the requirements of the new Code of Companies and Associations of Belgium
- AOB:
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, agenda item on impact of inflation on the consumption of fisheries and aquaculture products to be scheduled



Attendance List

Representative	Organisation	Role
Alexandra Philippe	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Alexandre Rodríguez	Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)	Observer
Benoît Thomassen	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Bruno Guillaumie	European Molluscs Producers Association (EMPA)	Member
Christine Absil	Good Fish	Member
Christophe Vande Weyer	European Commission	Expert
Dawlat Bik	Market Advisory Council	Secretariat
Elena García Caballero	Spain	Observer
Els Bedert	EuroCommerce	Member
Emiel Brouckaert	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Felicidad Fernández	ANFACO CECOPECA	Member
Frangiscos Nikolian	European Commission	Expert
Georg Werner	Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)	Member
Guus Pastoor	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Member
Isabel Mariño Prieto	Conxemar	Member
Javier Ojeda	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne	Member
Julien Lamothe	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Katarina Sipic	European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)	Member
María Luisa Álvarez Blanco	Federación de Asociaciones Provinciales de Empresarios Detallistas de Pescados y Productos Congelados (FEDEPESCA)	Member
María Isabel Artime García	Spain	Observer
Marine Cusa	Oceana	Member
Pedro Reis Santos	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Pierre Commère	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Member





Market Advisory Council

Representative	Organisation	Role
Roberto Carlos Alonso Baptista	ANFACO-CECOPESCA	Member
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche	Member
Sean O'Donoghue	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Sophie Kuijten	European Parliament	Observer
Vanya Vulperhorst	Oceana	Member
Yobana Bermúdez	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Chair

