

## Executive Committee

### Minutes

Monday, 3 July 2023 (11:00 – 13:30 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 (08.06.23):** adopted

#### Action points of the last meeting

- **State-of-play of the decision made during the last meeting - information**
- Working Groups:
  - Advice on “EU Algae Initiative” to be sent to DG MARE and to the Member States
  - Secretariat to inform the AAC Secretariat of the endorsement of the advice “Inclusion of indicators on economic sustainability in the STECF’s “The EU Aquaculture Sector” Report”
    - Advice on “EU Algae Initiative” sent to DG MARE and Member States (9 June 2023)
    - AAC Secretariat informed (internal procedures ongoing)
- Secretariat:
  - Chair to prepare document with different options, including costs, to be circulated ahead of the next meeting
  - Decision on the appointment to be made at the next meeting, in order to facilitate the set-up ahead of the 2023-2024 operational year
    - Table prepared by the Chair circulated on 28 June 2023
    - Agenda item scheduled for the decision
- AOB:
  - Effects of the revised Fisheries Control Regulation to be considered by the three Working Groups at the September 2023 meetings
    - Pending

#### European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

- **Presentation of EFCA activities and projects, including the ongoing weighing project of fishery products, by Susan Steele, Executive Director, EFCA**



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

The Chair welcomed Ms Steele, recalling the continuous cooperation between the MAC and EFCA, including the participation in the meetings of the Advisory Board of the agency.

Susan Steele (EFCA) emphasised the close working relationship between EFCA and the MAC. The MAC is part of the agency's Advisory Board, providing valuable feedback. Ms Steele provided an overview of the agency, informing that it is one of 42 EU agencies around Europe, being the only agency focused on fisheries. EFCA's mission is to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the Common Fisheries Policy. The agency aims for sustainability and for a level-playing-field for fishers. The general objectives of EFCA are to function at the highest level of excellence and transparency with a view to developing the necessary confidence and cooperation of all parties involved and in so doing, to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

Ms Steele presented the multiannual programming of the agency for the 2023-2027 period. There are four multiannual objectives: 1) enhanced cooperation of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance, 2) promote compliance through an effective and harmonised application of Union inspection procedure, 3) assist the EU in its international dimension in accordance with Article 30 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation, and 4) provide operational support to national authorities in Coast Guard functions. The Executive Director provided an overview of the six Joint Deployment Plans undertaken by the agency.

Ms Steele explained the agency's work on the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which happens in coordination with the Member States. This work allows for common situational awareness, ensuring a focus on the risks. Potential risks include licensing, access to resources, displacement of fishing efforts, and gear conflict. The Virtual Coordination Network ensures that legislation is shared among the members. The Executive Director further explained the agency's support to regional Control Expert Groups. EFCA provides support to foster a harmonised application of fisheries related regulations concerning control and inspection. As an example, in 2022, EFCA assisted with the implementation of the landing obligation, in the areas of evaluation of compliance, and Remote Electronic Monitoring pilot projects.

Ms Steele gave an overview of the agency's efforts concerning training. The agency develops training material in cooperation with the Member States. A Core Curriculum is provided to fisheries inspectors, which is available in several languages. There are modules of e-learning platform available. In 2022, EFCA organised 43 events for EU inspectors/officials and ten events for non-EU inspectors. There are 1188 active users in the e-learning platform. 2967 officials from the EU, Member States, and third countries benefit from EFCA.

Ms Steele outlined the agency's chartering of means, thanking the MAC for the presence at the launching event of their chartered patrol vessels: Ocean Protector, Ocean Guardian, and Ocean Sentinel. The first two vessels are deploying in the Atlantic Joint Deployment Plans, while the Ocean Sentinel is covering the Mediterranean Joint Deployment Plan. The vessels serve as vehicle for inspections done by Member States's inspectors and EFCA's staff. The vessels are being equipped with



drones and with antipollution equipment. EFCA also charters an airplane to support Joint Deployment operations.

Ms Steele presented the EU cooperation on Coast Guard, which happens in collaboration between EFCA, EMSA and FRONTEX. There are over 400 bodies involved in coast guard activities in the EU. A live online platform was developed to provide information on the authorities responsible for different areas, plus contact points and training material. The cooperation involves information sharing, surveillance services, capacity building, risk analysis, and capacity sharing.

Ms Steele also presented the agency's support role in the implementation of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy. Areas of intervention include implementation of Joint Deployment Plans to ensure the EU's contribution to the fisheries control in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, support to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and control fora with third countries, capacity building in the framework of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements, fight Illegal, Unregulated, Undocumented fishing at international level, and projects. The Executive Director provided examples of current work on the international dimension.

Ms Steele highlighted the specific objectives of EFCA related to the IUU Regulation. EFCA provides technical assistance and support to the European Commission on their duties under the IUU Regulation. EFCA facilitates assistance to Member States to combat IUU activities with regard to the obligations under the regulation. Member States are responsible for control of activities in their waters/territories, vessels flying their flag, and their nationals. The European Commission formulates policy to be adopted by the legislators and verifies its implementation by Member States. EFCA coordinates and assists Member States and the European Commission. The Executive Director provided examples of assistance to the European Commission, including evaluation missions to non-EU countries, and to the Member States.

Ms Steele presented the EFCA IUU Exchange Programme, a pilot project originally presented in 2018, further elaborated in 2019. The Terms of Reference were adopted in December 2019. The pilot project was launched according to the feedback received from the participating Member States: Spain, Denmark, Netherlands, and Germany. There were two exchange events held in December 2019 and in January 2020. The project was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but was resumed in 2023. The Executive Director also presented the work on Integrated Maritime Service, which in cooperation with EMSA, including Copernicus satellite images, provides a control tool useful for IUU checks and verifications. There are also several projects financed through contribution agreements, such as the Coast Guard project, PESCAO, eFishMed, support to Algeria, and on weighing.

Ms Steele provided details on the weighing project. EFCA was the successful tender applicant for the project in 2021. The project originated from the Commission's implementation report on the Control Regulation from 2017 and 2021. The reports point to significant differences in the quality and approaches taken by Member States for establishing sampling plans, control plans, and associated procedures. There was a lack of standardised methodologies and sampling plans across Member States and a lack of statistical basis to ensure the representativeness of sample sizes for weighing. The methodologies required to develop these plans were also identified as a potential problem due to the lack of clarity in how they should be applied.



Ms Steele summarised the expected results of the weighing project. First, an overview of Member States weighing procedures and practices. Second, an overview of methodologies set in the Implementing Regulation for drafting sampling plans, control plans, and common control programmes. Third, identification of best practices for weighing and recording of catches. Fourth, advance on standardised methodologies for sample weighing and produce harmonised guidelines and methodologies to ensure accurate and efficient weighing and ensure control and inspection of the weighing provisions for each type of fisheries products. The Executive Directive outlined the cooperative approach to the tasks as well as the fisheries and Member States to be covered by the study. She further outlined the timeline of the study from 2022 to 2024.

- **Exchange of views**

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) asked about the mandate of the agency on aquaculture matters.

Susan Steele (EFCA) responded that EFCA's mandate cover only fisheries, as a common policy of the EU, so there was no mandate for aquaculture matters.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO), concerning the weighing project, wondered if the issues brought up by the MAC in its letter of 27 July 2022 to DG MARE on the influence of weighing and de-icing were taken into account in the project's terms of reference. This would cover the national plans and the coordination between fisheries control rules and food safety rules. Mr O'Donoghue expressed concern that, in some national control plans, the Commission services were insisting on bycatch sampling to determine the accurate weighing. Therefore, he wanted to know if the weighing project was considering this problem.

Susan Steele (EFCA) explained that the national control plans were part of the project's terms of reference. The food safety regulations are also taken into account. The project will provide an overview of the control plans in place. On the sampling plans, Ms Steele stated that the aim was to ensure statistical significance. If the sample is too small or not repeated, then it is not statistically significant to be considered.

Miguel Nuevo (EFCA) confirmed that was the objective with the bycatch sampling. The project originated from a request from DG MARE. EFCA continues to exchange with DG MARE on the matter. Ms Nuevo highlighted that the project was in the evaluation phase, so further details would be available later. He underscored the importance of sampling and accurate weighing, which will be covered in the final report of the project, expected to be published in early 2024. Prior to that, these topics will be discussed with DG MARE at a workshop taking place at the end of 2023.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) commented that the political agreement on the revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation included several references to the work of EFCA, including new roles beyond the existing tasks, for example on the margin of tolerance and the introduction of new Remote Electronic Monitoring devices. Mr Voces asked for information about how, in practice, EFCA would carry out the necessary risk assessment approaches and guidelines, including whether EFCA would wait for the mandate from the Commission or start the work right away. He also asked Ms Steele about her views on the potential involvement of the Advisory Councils on these matters.



Susan Steele (EFCA) responded that the EFCA services were currently undertaking an extensive analysis of the political agreement. Therefore, it was not possible to provide clear timelines, but Ms Steele offered to share information at a later stage. Ms Steele expressed satisfaction with the extension of the agency's mandate. Concerning the involvement of the Advisory Councils, she emphasised that the agency would continue to exchange with the Advisory Councils about its work in the context of the Advisory Board meetings. An online meeting of the Advisory Board would be taking place in October 2023, followed by an in-person meeting in April 2024. Prior to the April 2024 meeting, EFCA would like to organise a workshop on the revised regulation, which would count on the involvement of the Advisory Councils.

The Chair wondered, in the context of the exemplary work of the EU, including EFCA, in the fight against IUU fishing, whether there was a specific partner country that was on the same level as the EU. The Chair commented that this would be relevant in the context of imports into the EU.

Susan Steele (EFCA) emphasised that the EU was leading the fight against IUU fishing, expressing pride in the work achieved by the EU, even though additional work remains to be undertaken.

Signe Aaskivi (EFCA) expressed agreement with Ms Steele.

### Role and Impact of China on World Fisheries and Aquaculture

- **Presentation of European Parliament Policy Department B's study by Irina Popescu, European Parliament, and Nigel Peacock, NAP Fisheries**

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

The Chair recalled that, on 13 December 2022, the MAC and the LDAC adopted joint advice about the Chinese distant-water fleet. A reply from the Commission was still pending. The Chair further recalled that the European Parliament Policy Department B prepared a study on the role and impact of China on World Fisheries and Aquaculture. The European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries is preparing an own-initiative report on the topic. An invitation was sent to MEP Pierre Karleskind to come present the report at the 19 September 2023 Working Group 2 meeting.

Nigel Peacock (NAP Fisheries) informed that the study was commissioned by the European Parliament and finalised at the end of 2022, plus that his presentation would focus on the trade analysis section of the study. The majority of the study was focused on production aspects. Mr Peacock commented that trade data could be very useful to determine potential topics for further investigation.

Mr Peacock summarised the main findings: 1) growing imports of prime whole fresh fish (Atlantic salmon), 2) reducing imports of raw whole frozen fish (northern gadoid white fish), 3) increased imports of prime shellfish (shrimp, squid, scallops), 4) reduced exports of primary fillet products, 4) offset by largely matching increased exports of secondary value-added products, and 5) non-food import of fishmeal is the most important import from a resource impact viewpoint by a large measure.



Mr Peacock outlined the marketing element of the study. The study aimed to use trade data to establish underlying events in China's impact upon the global aquatic bio-resource. It is based upon International Trade Centre data, which provides the ability to back check and a common approach to the data. The data is standardised through Whole Fish Equivalent, so that like can be compared with like. All products are converted to the original whole raw fish weight. He recognised that data is always questionable, especially for 2021, since it was provisional data, when the study was done.

Mr Peacock emphasised that there change underway concerning Chinese seafood imports. Frozen whole fish imports decline as do their contribution to supply. The relative importance of these imports has been declining since 2017. There was an increase in shellfish imports, including shrimp, squid, scallops. Fillet imports were rising, but growth seems to have stalled. This means that China is importing more processed fish, while before it was a fish processor. As for exports, change was also underway. Exports of whole fish and fillets declined rapidly after 2018. There was a decline of primary processed products. Shellfish exports also declined, but less rapidly. On the other hand, value added seafood products soared, as did their percentage of total exports.

Mr Peacock provided details on the import origins. There was some broadening of the supply base, but not a coherent trend. Mostly top 3 suppliers account for 50% of the total. As an example, for whole frozen fish, Russia, Norway, and the USA supply 60 to 70%. Vietnam supplies over 80% of fillet (pangasius), which confirms Vietnam's role as a leading processor. At the same time, there was some change and more diverse shellfish sourcing. Concerning export destinations, there was less concentration and a much wider range of target markets. Exports are less concentrated than sourcing, with East Asia as a major destination. Fillets go mostly to the West. The EU continues to be a major client with 31 to 35%, especially Germany. Value-added fish traded more widely, while the EU only takes 4%. Shellfish exports go mostly to wealthier Asian and some Western markets.

Mr Peacock underscored that trade data demonstrated the importance of fishmeal. When non-food bio-marine imports are recalculated as Whole Fish Equivalent, China's global impact becomes clearer. China's largest trade-related impact upon global marine bio-resources is fishmeal. In 2012, when an earlier study was done, around 1 million tonnes of fishmeal were imported, but that rose to 1.8 million tonnes by 2021, equating to 8 million tonnes after a Whole Fish Equivalent conversion multiplier factor of 4.4. China imports 50% of global fishmeal imports. Including domestic production, China is consuming around 60% of the world's production of fishmeal. In terms of relevance for the EU, it was important to keep in mind the Chinese dominance of a critical agriculture and aquaculture raw material.

Mr Peacock explained that China is no longer as important as a fish re-processor. Imports of whole frozen fish are declining. This is matched by the decline of frozen fillet exports. It means that China's former role as fish processor to the world is reducing, particularly of primary products like fillets. In terms of relevance for the EU, EU fish processors may need to look elsewhere for reprocessing. China is also exporting less tilapia, which impacts ACP countries. The decrease in exports of tilapia meant a reduction in cheap protein for consumers in ACP countries, but provided an opportunity for local producers, potentially contributing towards greater self-reliance.



Mr Peacock highlighted that China is becoming a significant player in the tuna sector, but that questions remained. China's imports of raw are declining. According to FAO data, tuna landings are also declining. At the same time, China's fast expanding canned tuna exports imply a 250.000 tonne supply of raw material. It was unclear where the 200.000 tonnes deficit was coming from. This could mean, for example, undeclared imports or greater landings than expected. There were also questions about how the domestic trade was being supplied, which meant that the deficit could be significantly higher. In terms of relevance for the EU, it demonstrated competition for resources and markets.

Mr Peacock stated that Chinese trade data can be difficult to interpret. A trade pattern in Southeast Asia shrimp has confused experts. There were large exports from Ecuador to Vietnam that did not make sense, since Vietnam is a major producer and exporter of shrimp. These are assumed to be in route to China "informally". Since 2015, almost 800 thousand tonnes of shrimp apparently disappeared from the statistics. Therefore, these could have arrived in China, potentially tax-free. In terms of relevance for the EU, it meant that a significant proportion of Ecuadorian exports were diverted into China, possibly creating some sourcing difficulties in the future. Additionally, the credibility of trade data is undermined.

As a conclusion, Mr Peacock highlighted that the trade data demonstrates a very significant impact of China. The trade is changing significantly. There are substantial implications for EU interests. It is hard to determine definitely given anomalies in the data. China is evidently transitioning from primary to secondary processing. Its rising wealth is moving domestic demand up market. Its dominance of the fishmeal sector is very large and rising.

- **Exchange of views**

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) thanked Mr Peacock for the interesting presentation, inviting him to attend the 19 September 2023 Working Group 2 meeting for a more extensive exchange of views. On the identified trade anomalies regarding tropical tuna, Mr Commère mentioned that operators had been drawing attention to these for a while. It is not necessarily only about processed products, but also about semi-processed ones. It would be relevant to undertake work on this matter together with EUMOFA.

Nigel Peacock (NAP Fisheries) responded that the trade data did not allow for a distinction between tuna loins, a semi-processed product, and canned tuna, processed products, but recognised that tuna loins were likely to be an important element in the anomaly. Mr Peacock expressed availability for further exchanges and support.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) confirmed the values mentioned for molluscs and shellfish. Mr Guillaumie wanted to know if the references to "scallops" as used on the strict sense of "*Pecten maximus*" or in a broader sense encompassing other bivalve species. He argued that sanitary conditions for the production of molluscs in China were "catastrophic", which led to many Chinese consumers preferring to consume French oyster instead of Chinese ones. This would explain the increase in exports.

Nigel Peacock (NAP Fisheries) responded that the data did not allow for a distinction of species and, since China imported from different parts of the world, it was not possible to make specific



assumptions on the species. Mr Peacock explained that, in the conversion to Whole Fish Equivalent, FAO conversion figures were used. In the case of shellfish, the conversion results can be strange, since it includes the shell, leading to a significant multiplier effect. In reality, scallops are often traded as just meat without the shell. He agreed with Mr Guillaumie that there were food hygiene problems, based on his own work experience in the dairy sector in China. In that case, Chinese consumers, particularly the affluent and middle-class segments also tended to prefer European products due to the hygiene and labelling standards.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) wanted to know more about the Chinese production of fishmeal. Chinese fishing vessels operate around the world and with a significant presence in Western Africa. Ms Absil wanted to know how this production was reflected in the trade data. For example, if the fish was processed in Mauritania, it could count as an import from Mauritania or as Chinese production.

Nigel Peacock (NAP Fisheries) drew attention to a previous study by Dr. Daniel Pauly that demonstrated that there was significant confusion about the classification of Chinese resources. Mauritanian fishmeal is identified as an import from Mauritania, even if the raw material was potentially caught by Chinese fishing vessels. Mr Peacock added that, often, the fishmeal processing plants are actually of Chinese ownership. He emphasised that the currently available data was more reliable than that from ten years ago.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) recalled that the European Commission declared a zero-tolerance approach in the fight against IUU fishing. Considering the strong evidence of IUU fishing practices by Chinese vessels and by other vessels with Chinese ownership operating across the world, Mr Voces wondered why China had not been identified with a “yellow card” by the Commission in the context of the IUU Regulation. According to previous advice from the MAC, countries linked to IUU fishing and serious labour abuses should not benefit from preferential market access. Mr Voces wanted to know if the utilisation of Additional Tariff Quotas had been considered in the study, including whether China should benefit from this preferential market access.

Nigel Peacock (NAP Fisheries) responded that, in the elaboration of the study, he had been responsible for the trade aspects. The IUU fishing aspects, which were the most important part of the study, had been covered by other authors.

Irina Popescu (European Parliament) informed that, in January 2023, at a meeting of the European Parliament’s Committee on Fisheries, Dr Pauly presented in detail the IUU fishing aspects of the study. Several MEPs also asked about the lack of a “yellow card” given the evidence of IUU fishing practices by China. Dr Pauly expressed agreement to the issuing of a “yellow card”. Ms Popescu encouraged Mr Voces to read directly the section of the study dedicated to IUU fishing.

The Chair emphasised the importance of the study, given the increasing dependency on China. The Chair encouraged Mr Peacock and Ms Popescu to continue exchanging with Working Group 2.

## Secretariat

- **Decision on the appointment of the Secretariat**





*The agenda item took place in-camera.*

## Work Programme of Year 8 (2023-2024)

- **Presentation of draft budget**

The Chair, from the two versions of the draft budget circulated ahead of the meeting, asked the Secretary General to present the “hybrid Secretariat” version (direct work contract for the Secretary General position and outsourcing of the support staff positions via a services contract).

The Secretary General proceeded to present the requested version of the draft budget. In terms of resources to be received under the next operational year, the draft budget was prepared under the assumption that the financial contributions from the Member States will remain at the same level as under Year 7 (€ 27.000). It was assumed that the number of members will remain the same. The Commission’s contribution, under the annual financial grant, is expected to be € 300.088,90, meaning a 2% increase compared to Year 7, in line with the inflation rate in the EU’s Multiannual Financial Framework. The grand total of resources available in Year 8 is expected to be € 367.188,90.

In terms of eligible staff costs, € 120.056 were foreseen for the expenditure related to the Secretary General’s position, following informal negotiations with the Chair on the future work contract, which includes the gross salary, holiday pay, the employer’s social security contribution, and other benefits. Based on the table circulated by the Chair on the costs of outsourcing the support staff, € 25.306,04 of costs were foreseen for the Finance Officer position, and € 38.342,53 were foreseen for the Administrative Officer position.

In terms of participation in meetings, an increase from the € 56.524 expected in the budget of Year 7 to € 70.324. The increase in costs accounts for the foreseen increase of members’ reimbursement rates and the increase of the per diem allowance, in line with the new draft “Guidelines for Reimbursement and Allowances due to Travel, Accommodation, and Subsistence Expenses”, which follow the new draft financial guidelines of DG MARE, as previously discussed. The official adoption of the new reimbursement guidelines was pending the official adoption of the new financial guidelines by DG MARE, but this was expected to take place before the start of Year 8. Additionally, € 2.524 are foreseen for the participation of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs in the Inter-Advisory Councils meetings organised by DG MARE, since, with the introduction of the lump-sum approach, DG MARE will not longer provide reimbursements for these meetings.

In terms of preparation of meetings, three groups of meetings are foreseen to take place in person. For the rental costs, it is assumed that moderately priced venues will be used. The cost of licensing Zoom for the organisation of online meetings is also included. Under this section of the budget, the cost for the provision of lunches at the three groups of meetings are also included. The costs foreseen in the draft budget of Year 8 are similar to those foreseen in the budget of Year 7. As for dissemination costs, small amounts are foreseen for the maintenance of the website, copyright of images used online, and for e-mail services.



In terms of operating costs, the eligible costs of renting office space, data processing equipment, and overheads (equipment, phone/fax/mobile, internet connection, supplies/consumables, cleaning) are based on the table prepared by the Chair on the outsourcing of support staff.

In terms of interpretation and translation costs, the costs foreseen in the budget of Year 7 are maintained in the draft budget of Year 8. As for other contracts, € 3.500 are foreseen for the annual external financial audit, € 4.183,20 are foreseen for the external accounting services. In comparison with the previous operational year, a new cost of € 1.636,20 is foreseen for professional services, which would cover the payroll agency to handle the work contract of the Secretary General.

The Secretary General highlighted that, if the table prepared by the Chair on the outsourcing of support staff were to be followed, there would be a deficit of around € 42.000. If the Executive Committee would choose to proceed with the outsourcing of the support staff, cuts would be necessary, for example in estimated work time of the support staff, the reimbursements for the participation in meetings, the rental costs for the preparation of meetings, and in operating costs.

The Chair stated that, once the tender for the outsourcing of the support staff was prepared, the draft budget could be adjusted to account for the deficit. The work time of the support staff could be reduced to around half. As the Secretary General would be mostly teleworking, the operating costs could also be significantly reduced.

Javier Garat (Europêche) expressed confidence that the draft budget could be adjusted, matching the submissions received under the tender procedure.

The Chair proposed to move ahead with the launch of the job recruitment offer for the Secretary General position on the website as well as the launch of the tender position. An Evaluation Committee would analyse the submissions received. At the September 2023 meeting, the Executive Committee would be able to make the final decision. The Chair underscored the importance of having the Secretariat fully in place in September, in order to guarantee the normal functioning of the MAC.

The Chair informed that she had received a request from ANFACO-CECOPESCA to, under Year 8, change to the organisation of hybrid meetings, instead of the current system that combined fully in-person and fully online meetings.

The Secretary General explained that the draft budget of Year 8 was prepared under the assumption that there would be three groups of in-person meetings and two groups of online meetings, in line with the previous agreement of the Executive Committee on the organisation of meetings. A change to a hybrid setting would imply several changes to the draft budget. The Secretary General recalled that the draft budget would need to be submitted to the European Commission by the end of July 2023, as part of the application to the annual financial grant.

- **Presentation of priorities, deliverables and planning by Pedro Reis Santos, Secretary General**

The Secretary General presented the draft Work Programme of Year 8, which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The section on “MAC Work Priorities” lists the following “overarching long-



term and short-term work priorities” 1) Sustainable Food System Framework, 2) Trade Agreements & Trade Policy Instruments, 3) Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing & Global Governance, 4) European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products, 5) Landing Obligation, 6) Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 7) Fisheries Control Regulation, and 8) Substantiating Environmental Claims and Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for unprocessed Marine Fish products. The “work priorities identified for each Working Group and Focus Group” reflect the distribution of competences across the three different Working Groups. There was some preliminary feedback from MARE A4 to further clarify the competences.

The Secretary General emphasised the importance of the “planned recommendations for Year 8”, as these represent the commitments from the MAC to DG MARE in terms of deliverables. Under the lump-sum approach to financing, the MAC must meet at least 50% of the deliverables, in order to receive the full financial grant from the Commission. The Secretary General listed the proposed recommendations, while providing some more additional information:

1. Work Programme of EUMOFA, including suggestions of analysis topics and talks: In a similar manner to previous operational years, members would provide suggestions of products/species and Member States to be covered in EUMOFA studies. Suggestions of topics for the workshops organised by EUMOFA could also be an option.
2. Analysis of market-related aspects of the new Fisheries Control Regulation: The topic was raised at the previous Executive Committee meeting.
3. Legislative Proposal on Sustainable Food System Framework: The legislative proposal is expected to be published in September 2023.
4. 2024 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet: The adoption of advice with suggestions for the Terms of Reference of the report is an established practice.
5. Annual Report on the implementation in 2023 of the landing obligation: Every year, the Commission publishes a report on the landing obligation. It is established practice for the MAC to adopt advice on the impacts on the market.
6. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: In previous years, there were presentations on the topic by Other Interest Groups members, which resulted in the adoption of advice.
7. Development of sustainability criteria for fishery and aquaculture products: Under the revision of the marketing standards framework, DG MARE asked STECF to develop sustainability criteria. The work undertaken by STECF will be relevant for the upcoming legislative proposal on the Sustainable Food System Framework. At the end of 2023, STECF will be holding meetings to further develop certain sustainability criteria.
8. 2023 Economic Report on the Fish Processing Industry: The purpose would be to adopt advice with views on the biennial economic report.



9. Integration of sustainability considerations in the Additional Tariff Quotas (ATQs) framework: At the 7 June 2023 Working Group 2 meeting, a Commission representative presented the upcoming revision of the Additional Tariff Quotas framework to integrate sustainability considerations. The Commission services welcomed views from the MAC on this matter.
10. Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for unprocessed Marine Fish products: In the past, a Focus Group on PEFCR was established, which resulted in the adoption of advice. According to information provided by DG MARE, the Technical Secretariat is restarting its work. Under the legislative proposal on the substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims, additional work on PEFCR is foreseen.

The Secretary General informed that, prior to the meeting, he received additional feedback from EAPO, which suggested three new topics for advice: 1) Annual EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement implementation report (Border Target Operating Mode), 2) Marine Action Plan, and 3) Energy Transition (increase of operational input costs). Additionally, he suggested including advice on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims, in line with the action points agreed at the last Working Group 3 meeting.

The Secretary General provided an overview of the planning of meetings, which was prepared under the assumption that the meetings would take place either fully in-person or fully online. Meetings are foreseen in November 2023, January 2024, March 2024, May 2024, and September 2024. In comparison to Year 7, the difference would be the meetings in November, which represents an additional group of meetings. On a few occasions, several members and Commission representatives commented that there was significant gap between the September and the January meetings, which was why meetings in November were being introduced.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) highlighted that, based on his experience, hybrid meetings were more expensive and more complex to organise, while providing for a worse experience for the participants. Therefore, considering quality and costs, it was better to continue with meetings fully in-person and fully online. Regarding the proposed recommendations, Mr Guillaumie stated that he was not familiar with the details of the Annual EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement implementation report, but that it would likely be relevant. He expressed support for the inclusion of the three other topics.

The Chair agreed with Mr Guillaumie's assessment of hybrid meetings. The Chair proposed to maintain the assumption that the meetings would be fully in-person or fully online. If needed, the future organisation of meetings could be further discussed at the September 2023 meeting.

## AOB

None.



## Summary of action points

- Role and Impact of China on World Fisheries and Aquaculture:
  - Topic to be addressed in a more comprehensive manner in Working Group 2, including potential further exchanges with Nigel Peacock
- Secretariat:
  - Secretary General to send e-mail to DG MARE's Advisory Councils Coordinator requesting information on the appropriate procedures as well as the acceptability of a "hybrid solution" (direct work contract for the Secretary General position and outsourcing of the support staff positions via a services contract) for the organisation of the Secretariat
  - Invitation to tender for the outsourcing of the administrative and financial services to be published on the website, based on the previous open tender procedure
  - Secretary General to prepare a comparison between the tender procedure and the costs of hiring of support staff directly
  - Recruitment offer for the Secretary General position to be published on the website
- Work Programme of Year 8 (2023-2024):
  - Amended draft Work Programme to be formally submitted to DG MARE and put forward for approval by the General Assembly
  - Draft budget to be further amended by the Management Team and the Secretariat to eliminate the foreseen deficit
  - Amended draft budget to be formally submitted to DG MARE and put forward for approval by the General Assembly



## Attendance List

| Representative             | Organisation  | Role        |
|----------------------------|---|-------------|
| Aitana López Albaquero     | Spain   | Observer    |
| Anne-France Mattlet        | Europêche   | Member      |
| Aoife Curtis               | Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)  | Member      |
| Bruno Guillaumie           | European Molluscs Producers Association (EMPA)  | Member      |
| Bruno Mocinha              | Portugal  | Observer    |
| Catherine Pons             | Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)   | Member      |
| Christine Absil            | Good Fish / Marine Stewardship Council (via proxy)  | Member      |
| Daniel Voces               | Europêche   | Member      |
| Dawlat Bik                 | Market Advisory Council   | Secretariat |
| Els Bedert                 | EuroCommerce  | Member      |
| Fang-Chia                  | Market Advisory Council   | Secretariat |
| Gaëtane Le Breuil          | European Fishmeal   | Member      |
| Irina Popescu              | European Parliament   | Expert      |
| Isabel Mariño Prieto       | Conxemar  | Member      |
| Javier Ojeda               | Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)   | Member      |
| Javier Garat               | Europêche   | Member      |
| Julien Lamothe             | European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) / Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne (via proxy)                | Member      |
| Justyna Radzewicz          | Poland  | Observer    |
| Katarina Sipic             | European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)                            | Member      |
| Laure Guillevic            | WWF   | Member      |
| María Luisa Álvarez Blanco | Federación de Asociaciones Provinciales de Empresarios Detallistas de Pescados y Productos Congelados (FEDEPESCA) | Member      |
| Marcus Breuer              | European Parliament   | Expert      |
| Marine Cusa                | Oceana  | Member      |





Market Advisory Council

| Representative     | Organisation  | Role        |
|--------------------|---|-------------|
| Massimo Bellavista | COPA COGECA   | Member      |
| Miguel Nuevo       | European Fisheries Control Agency   | Expert      |
| Nigel Peacock      | NAP Fisheries   | Expert      |
| Paul Thomas        | European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)   | Member      |
| Pedro Reis Santos  | Market Advisory Council (MAC)   | Secretariat |
| Pierre Commère     | EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE) / European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP) | Member      |
| Quentin Marchais   | ClientEarth   | Member      |
| Rosalie Tukker     | Europêche   | Member      |
| Sean O'Donoghue    | Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)  | Member      |
| Signe Aaskivi      | European Fisheries Control Agency   | Expert      |
| Susan Steele       | European Fisheries Control Agency   | Expert      |
| Vanya Vulperhorst  | Oceana  | Member      |
| Yobana Bermúdez    | EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)  | Chair       |

