

## Executive Committee

### Minutes

Thursday, 30 January 2025 (16:00 – 17:30 CET)

Copa Cogeca (Meeting Room A), Rue de Trèves 61, 1040 Brussels

Interpretation in EN, ES, FR

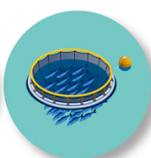
Welcome from the Chair, Yobana Bermúdez

#### [Presentation](#)

Adoption of the agenda and of the last meeting's minutes (18.09.24): adopted

#### Action points

- State-of-play of the action points of the last meeting - information
- Common Fisheries Policy:
  - Secretariat to circulate a questionnaire to the members on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy to gather feedback from the members to be considered at the Working Groups at the January 2025 meetings
    - Pending the publication of the public consultation by the European Commission to serve as basis for future advice
- Working Groups:
  - Draft advice on “development of fishery sustainability indicators by STECF” to be put forward for consideration and potential adoption via written procedure
  - Proposal of letter with questions on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive to be put forward for consideration and potential approval via written procedure
    - Draft advice considered from 23 September to 8 October 2024 (decision to return the file to Working Group 1)
    - Letter approved on 9 December 2024
- European Parliament:
  - Secretary General to maintain members informed on the co-organisation of the event in the European Parliament on the role of the Advisory Councils
    - Agenda item scheduled (16:40CET)
- Financial Reserves:
  - Finance Officer to proceed with a brief comparison of offers from various financial institutions and, in case of similar rates, to proceed with a six-month savings account under ING
    - Six-month savings account under ING established
- Inter-AC Brexit Forum:



- Withdrawal to be formally communicated to the other members of the forum
  - Withdrawal communicated at the 19 September 2024 meeting of the forum

## Membership of the General Assembly

- **Presentation of new member Feedback EU by Yves Reichling (Feedback EU)**

Yves Reichling (Feedback EU) provided an overview of Feedback EU, an environmental campaigning NGO based in the Netherlands. He explained that the organisation's scope includes farmed fish, with a particular focus on the farmed salmon supply chain. Mr Reichling outlined his role as the lead of a programme exploring farm fishing practices in Norway and West Africa. He described the organisation's work, which includes conducting investigations, producing journalistic reports, engaging in projects, and undertaking advocacy efforts. He emphasised that Feedback EU takes pride in its evidence-based approach, which underpins all aspects of its work.

- **Endorsement of applications for membership:**

- **Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE)**

Luigi Tozzi (SAFE) presented an overview of Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE), describing it as an EU consumer organisation dedicated to promoting civil society engagement in debates on food safety and food systems. He explained that SAFE focuses on key topics such as environmental sustainability, labelling, food security, and safety. The organisation's mission is to protect EU consumers while contributing to the fight against climate change. Mr Tozzi highlighted that one of SAFE's primary advocacy goals is to promote clear and understandable food labelling.

Based in Brussels, the organisation has a team of 12 staff members and represents 42 member organisations across 21 Member States. While the main source of funding comes from member contributions, SAFE is also actively involved in EU Horizon projects, with 11 projects currently underway. He highlighted the organisation's involvement in an algae project and its coordination of three projects addressing novel food and non-communicable diseases. He added that SAFE's Secretary General collaborates with the European Food Safety Authority. Looking ahead, the organisation plans to launch awareness campaigns on food labelling, ultra-processed foods, sustainability labelling, and non-communicable diseases. Mr Tozzi emphasised that SAFE aims to represent the voice of consumers within the MAC, underscoring the value that consumer perspectives can bring to the Advisory Council's work.

Pierre Commère (PACT'ALIM) welcomed SAFE's application, acknowledging the importance of having a consumer organisation within the MAC. Mr Commère asked whether SAFE's focus extended beyond food safety to include food security, highlighting the importance of both dimensions for the industry.

Luigi Tozzi (SAFE) confirmed that SAFE considers food safety and food security as interlinked issues, since food safety has an economic impact for farmers and fishers. Mr Tozzi highlighted that, in the previous year, there was a decrease in the purchasing power of consumers, while the administrative



burden for farmers and fishers increased. Therefore, it was important to address food security to ensure the affordability of food products.

*The Executive Committee endorsed Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE) as a new member of the General Assembly.*

- **Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)**

The Secretary General read a letter on behalf of Ms Lief Hendrikz of the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST). In her letter, Ms Hendrikz expressed thanks for the possibility to join the MAC, expressing willingness to add value to the Advisory Council's leadership on seafood traceability and the fight against IUU fishing. The GDST is a non-profit organisation that manages the first standard for digital interoperable traceability for the global seafood industry, shaped by industry, for industry and endorsed by the FAO. The GDST champions and advances the adoption of implementation of their standard via practical tools, dialogue, and collaboration with global industry actors, facilitators, stakeholders and software providers, alongside working governments.

GDST's Core Standard supports data sharing for the seafood industry, increasing supply chain visibility to enable collaborative action on key issues such as IUU fishing. In their view, the fourth industrial revolution is being driven by data, but the lack of a standard approach to reported data and the absence of a common software language between systems, leads this data to be inaccessible and sharing revolves around duplicated effort. Based on the GS1 framework, the GDST Core Standard is seafood-specific and related to the sharing of data relating to sustainable, ethical and responsible processes in wild-capture and aquaculture supply chains. It consists of what data needs to be captured at each stage of the supply chain and how data is shared through a common software language.

*The Executive Committee endorsed Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) as a new member of the General Assembly.*

## Working Groups

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

Julien Lamothe (ANOP) informed the Executive Committee that, at the 29 January 2025 meeting of Working Group 1:

- Members heard a presentation from Raúl Prellezo (STECF EWG Chair) on the 2024 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet. The Working Group agreed to develop advice on the Terms of Reference of the next edition of the report. The Secretariat would circulate a questionnaire to collect feedback as soon as possible.
- A presentation by DG MARE on the 2025 work programme of EUMOFA was heard. Members agreed to draft advice on the basis of discussions had in the Working Group. In the next months, the Secretariat would circulate a questionnaire to prepare for future advice on the 2026 work programme of EUMOFA.



- Members heard a presentation from DG MARE on the ongoing testing for a fisheries-specific sustainability indicators tool. Afterward, members considered draft advice on the topic, reaching consensus on the outstanding paragraphs. The Working Group decided that the agreed draft should be put forward to the Executive Committee for consideration and potential approval.
- A presentation on the section dedicated to Producer Organisations of the ongoing study on Common Market Organisation Regulation commissioned by DG MARE was heard, with members exchanging views afterwards.
- An update was given by the Secretary General on the workshop on Producer Organisations that took place on 28 January 2025. The output from the workshop would be used for the development of joint advice with the South Western Waters Advisory Council.

The Secretary General informed that, as agreed at the meeting of Working Group 1, AIPCE, ANFACO-CECOPECA, CEP, CONXEMAR, FEICOPESCA, and PACT'ALIM submitted a redrafting of one of the paragraphs of section 7 of the draft advice on "Development of Fishery Sustainability Indicators by STECF". Additionally, following a suggestion from Oceana, a footnote had been added to recommendation a) of the same draft advice.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) requested the addition of his organisation to the paragraph put forward by AIPCE-CEP. Mr Voces expressed support for the overall draft advice.

*The Executive Committee approved the advice on "Development of Fishery Sustainability Indicators by STECF".*

- **Reporting by Pierre Commère, Chair of Working Group 2**

Pierre Commère (AIPCE) informed the Executive Committee that, at the 29 January 2025 meeting of Working Group 2:

- Members heard a presentation on the 2024 edition of "The EU Fish Market" report of EUMOFA by representatives of DG MARE and EUMOFA experts.
- Members heard a presentation on the AIPCE-CEP's "EU Seafood Supply Synopsis" study, which highlighted the importance of external aquatic products supply for the EU processing industry.
- Members heard a presentation about illegal fishing by third countries in the waters of French Guyana. Representatives of the Outmost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) and the Vice-president of the Territorial Community of French Guiana participated too. The Working Group agreed to proceed with joint advice with the CCRUP on the entrance of IUU fishing products in the market of the Outermost Regions. The CCRUP would prepare the first proposal of text, which would then be considered by the MAC too.
- DG MARE provided an update on trade policy developments, including on the consequences of the judgments of the Court of Justice on the trade agreement and the fisheries agreement with



Morocco, the EU-Mercosur trade agreement, and the negotiations for free trade agreements with Thailand and with Indonesia.

- DG MARE provided an update on the call for evidence for eventual sustainability indicators in view of the next Autonomous Tariff Quotas round. Members considered the draft advice presented on this topic. Before proceeding with further consideration, the Working Group agreed that an informal drafting group would finalise the document. Afterward, the document will be put forward for formal consideration via an urgent written procedure.
- DG MARE provided an update on the upcoming additional traceability rules for fresh and frozen fishery and aquaculture products, in the context of the implementation of the revised Fisheries Control Regulation. The Commission representative also provided an update on the study to be launched ahead of the implementation of the rules for prepared and preserved products. The Working Group considered draft advice on traceability rules for fresh and frozen fishery and aquaculture products. The Working Group agreed that an informal drafting group would finalise the document before proceeding with an urgent written procedure.

- **Reporting by Benoît Thomassen, Chair of Working Group 3**

Benoît Thomassen (FEAP) informed the Executive Committee that, at the 30 January 2025 meeting of Working Group 3:

- Oceana presented their report “Fishy labels: What do we know about the seafood we buy in supermarkets?”, the “Follow the Fish” movement, and several consumer polls undertaken by the organisation. During the ensuing exchange of views, members made comments on the methodology and messaging. The comments will be relevant for the future discussions on the Common Market Organisation Regulation.
- DG SANTE provided an update on upcoming legislation on the maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in certain foodstuffs, which was followed by an exchange of views with the members. The Commission representative also held an exchange with the members about the maximum levels of mercury in canned tuna products.
- Members heard a presentation on the section on consumer provisions of the ongoing study on the Common Market Organisation Regulation commissioned by DG MARE. As this section was still in the early stages, the consultant was not able to provide many details.
- WWF presented their project “Re-thinking fish boxes”. Members initiated the consideration of the draft advice on the reuse targets foreseen under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation. Due to time constraints, the Working Group agreed to proceed with a written procedure.

## European Parliament

- **Reporting back on the joint event with the Aquaculture Advisory Council and the North Sea Advisory Council to raise awareness about the role of the Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy by Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**





The Secretary General outlined the event co-organised with the Aquaculture Advisory Council and the North Sea Advisory Council at the European Parliament. The aim was to introduce the role of the Advisory Councils to the new members of the Committee on Fisheries. The event was hosted by MEP Sander Smit, MEP André Rodrigues, and MEP Ana Miranda. The event included an exchange of views, which counted on interventions from representatives from the other Advisory Councils. MEP Le Callennec and MEP Junco García were also in attendance. During the exchange, the MEPs expressed their willingness to reestablish the practice of “liaison MEPs” for each Advisory Council, to ensure dialogue on fisheries and oceans-related matters. The Secretary General informed that a report summarising the event would be prepared and circulated.

Daniel Voces (Europêche), concerning the selection of hosts for the event, the request should be to the Chair of the Committee on Fisheries. If not available, then to the Vice-Chairs in their protocolar order. Mr Voces emphasised the importance of political neutrality when engaging with the European Parliament.

The Secretary General expressed understanding for the concerns of Mr Voces. The Secretary General explained that the office of MEP Sander Smit, First Vice-Chair of the Committee on Fisheries, had informally expressed interest in hosting the event. Despite requests sent to the office of the Chair of the Committee, no response was received. When approaching MEPs from other political groups, their offices expressed apprehension to co-host in an event with two EPP MEPs, which would be the case if MEP Carmen Crespo and MEP Sander Smit were both co-hosts. Therefore, the organising Secretariats agreed to proceed instead with one host MEP for each of the four political groups publicly supporting the mandate of the European Commission, while prioritising Vice-Chairs and coordinators. Unfortunately, despite several attempts, no MEP of the Renew group was available.

## European Oceans Pact

- **Preparation of the mandate for the High-Level Roundtable (21 February 2025)**

The Secretary General provided an update on the preparation of the mandate for the upcoming High-Level Roundtable on the European Oceans Pact, scheduled for 21 February 2025. He informed that the Chairs of each Advisory Council had been invited to participate in the exchange. The roundtable invitation highlighted five key discussion points: 1) The key challenges facing the EU's ocean governance model, and the priorities for addressing these challenges; 2) The key measures needed to protect biodiversity and promote ecosystem-based management of the ocean, to sustain its climate function, health and productivity; 3) An effective marine knowledge value chain that supports EU competitiveness in ocean technologies and solutions, translated into market innovation; 4) The priorities for supporting the resilience and sustainability of coastal communities in the various sea basins of the EU; and 5) The priorities for supporting the resilience and sustainability of coastal communities in the various sea basins of the EU.

The Secretary General explained that the draft mandate, which was circulated prior to the meeting, had been prepared based on previous agreed positions of the MAC. He highlighted the challenge of preparing the mandate, as not many details on the European Oceans Pact were known yet.



Daniel Voces (Europêche) expressed concern that the European Commission could be hurrying the preparation of the European Oceans Pact to be able to present the document at the next United Nations Oceans Conference, which would take place in June 2025. Mr Voces argued that some of points raised in section 3 about the key measures to protect biodiversity could be improved. He expressed availability to submit written amendments for the consideration of all members.

The Secretary General thanked Mr Voces for the feedback. He suggested to proceed with a written procedure to allow members to provide further feedback on the draft mandate.

### External Representation

- **Reporting back on the following meetings:**
  - **Inter-AC Brexit Forum (19 September 2024) by Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General reported back on the meeting of the Inter-AC Brexit Forum held on 19 September 2024, which was hosted by the MAC. In line with a request from the European Commission, reports from the Inter-AC Brexit Forum were not circulated. He recalled that the Executive Committee had agreed to withdraw from the Forum.

The Secretary General informed that the topics discussed during the forum included: 1) The work of the Specialised Committee for Fisheries and its associated working groups; 2) The removal of electronic monitoring via CCTV projects in the United Kingdom; 3) Fisheries management of non-quota species; 4) Management and control measures within UK waters; 5) Guidelines for the management of special stocks; 6) Enforcement actions undertaken by Scottish authorities; 7) The designation and consultation process led by DEFRA and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) regarding Marine Protected Areas (MCZ) in UK waters; 7) The post-2026 implications of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), as reported by the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC); and 8) The issue of seabass within the Specialised Committee for Fisheries, particularly regarding the reporting of UK catch for commercial shore-based netting. The Secretary General highlighted that none of the topics discussed were directly related to market issues.

- **Inter-AC Meeting with DG MARE (4 October 2024) by Yobana Bermúdez (Chair), Julien Lamothe (Vice-Chair), and Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General provided an overview of the Inter-AC Meeting with DG MARE held on 4 October 2024. The MAC was represented by Yobana Bermúdez (Chair), Julien Lamothe (Vice-Chair), and himself. The minutes of the meeting were previously circulated. The meeting included an exchange of views with DG MARE Director-General Vitcheva. In line with their mandate, the MAC representatives raised points related to the upcoming feasibility study on traceability for prepared and preserved products, the challenges on the trade relationship with the EU and Norway, and the initiative for sustainable fishing and trade of sharks. At the meeting, a presentation about socio-economic aspects of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems took place.



At the Inter-AC meeting, participants held an exchange on the overall functioning of the Advisory Councils, in the context of the implementation of the Delegated Regulation 2022/204. The Secretary General informed that the points raised by him at the meeting, on the MAC, included that there were no issues in the balance of chairmanship positions, that the classification of members as sector/other interest group could be complex, that the entire supply as well as NGOs were represented in the membership, that efforts were being undertaken to attract more aquaculture representatives and more NGOs, that the working practices were continuously improved (more meetings per year, active role by the Secretariat, consensus-approach), that the independent performance review showed positive results, and that the change to a lump-sum approach in the financing was welcomed.

- **EU Agri-Food Chain Observatory (15 October 2024) by Yobana Bermúdez (Chair)**

The Chair provided a brief report on the EU Agri-Food Chain Observatory meeting held on 15 October 2024. The Chair highlighted that the meeting focused primarily on agricultural topics, with no discussions related to fisheries or aquaculture. She informed members that the presentations and minutes from the meeting are available on the European Commission's website.

- **Advisory Board of the European Fisheries Control Agency (15 October 2024) by Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General provided an overview of the Advisory Board meeting of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), held on 15 October 2024. At the meeting of the Advisory Board, he drew attention to several pieces of advice adopted by the MAC, including 1) the Energy Transition in EU Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2) the Terms of Reference for the Study on Feasible Traceability Systems for Prepared and Preserved Fishery and Aquaculture Products, 3) the EU –Norway Trade Relationship, 4) better protecting sharks through sustainable fishing and trade, and 5) the study supporting the evaluation of the Landing Obligation. The Secretary General recalled that the minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated.

- **External Advisory Board of VeriFish project (28 November 2024) by Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General recalled that, previously, the Executive Committee agreed to his participation as a member of the External Advisory Board of the VeriFish project. The Secretary General informed that he participated in a meeting of the External Advisory Board held on 28 November 2024, which focused on the overall indicator framework and on aquaculture attributes. Due to overlapping commitments, he was not able to attend another meeting focused on fisheries attributes.

The Secretary General informed that, at the board meeting, he asked about the inclusion of processed products in the project' scope, but the response was not entirely clear. He also asked about the coverage of economic sustainability. The coordinators responded that research on the availability of data and indicators was ongoing. He also drew attention to the importance of differentiating data from official public sources and from private initiatives.





The Secretary General informed that minutes of the meetings were prepared by the project. These could potentially be circulated, if there was agreement from the coordinators.

- **Roundtable discussion on 2025 fishing opportunities (3 December 2024) by Yobana Bermúdez (Chair) and Christine Absil (Vice-Chair)**

The Chair provided an overview of the roundtable discussion on 2025 fishing opportunities, held on 3 December 2024. The Chair informed that, at the meeting, in line with the previously agreed mandate, she raised points on the annual economic reports of the EU fishing fleet, of the EU aquaculture sector, and of the EU fish processing sector, plus that Ms Absil raised points related to consumer information, particularly in the context of the HORECA sector. During the roundtable exchange, the importance of the upcoming European Oceans Pact was mentioned. The Commissioner emphasised the importance of the Advisory Councils.

- **Inter-AC Secretariats coordination meeting (22 January 2025) by Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General informed that he participated in a coordination meeting among the Secretariats of the Advisory Councils held on 22 January 2025. The Secretariats exchanged about the independent performance reviews and agreed to share information on the celebrated contracts and the corresponding Terms of Reference, to facilitate the implementation of similar reviews across the Advisory Councils. Participants exchanged about the public consultation on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy and agreed to proceed with recommendations directly to the European Commission. The Secretariats exchanged on the preparations for the 2025 edition of the European Maritime Day. The Commission expressed interest in the organisation of another workshop about stakeholder engagement by the Advisory Councils, which should focus the European Oceans Pact as a central theme. The Oceans Pact would also be addressed at the European Ocean Days.

The Secretary General recalled that, following the feedback from participants of the workshop on stakeholder engagement of the 2024 edition of the European Maritime Day, joint draft advice would be prepared for the consideration of the members.

## AOB

None.



### Summary of action points

- European Oceans Pact
  - o Secretariat to launch a written consultation on the draft mandate for the 21 February 2025 High-Level Roundtable.



## Attendance List

Representative	Organisation	Role
Amélie Laurent	Oceana	Member
Anna Rokicka	Polish Association of Fish Processors (PSPR)	Observer
Benoît Thomassen	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Christine Absil	Good Fish Foundation	Member
Daniel Voces	Europêche	Member
Dominic Rihan	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Member
Emiel Brouckaert	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Gaetane Le Breuil	European Fishmeal	Member
Gerd Heinen	European Commission	Expert
Giorgio Rimoldi	ANCIT / Unione Italiana Food	Member
Giuseppe Scordella	COPA-COGECA	Member
Guus Pastoor	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Member
Iñigo Azqueta Ruiz-Gallardón	ANFACO-CECOPECA	Member
Janne Posti	Conxemar	Member
Javier Ojeda	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo	ETF	Member
Julien Lamothe	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) / ANOP	Member
Jules Danto	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) / Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne (via proxy)	Member
Laure Guillevic	WWF	Member
Luigi Tozzi	Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE)	Observer
Katarina Sipic	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE) / European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)	Member
María Luisa Álvarez Blanco	FEDEPESCA	Member
Maximilian Schwarz	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat



Representative	Organisation	Role
Pablo Cadarso	CONXEMAR	Member
Pedro Reis Santos	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Pierre Commère	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Member
Thibault Pivetta	European Molluscs' Producers Association (EMPA)	Member
Yobana Bermúdez Rodríguez	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Chair
Yves Reichling	FeedbackEU	Observer

