



LDAC WORKING GROUP 2

ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC RFMOs AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS)

36th Meeting – Brussels, 13 March 2025

Venue: Hotel Martin's EU, Brussels (Boulevard Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels)

Time: 09:00–13:00 CET

1. Welcome by the Chair

The Chair, **Mr Iván López**, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants, including representatives from DG MARE (Units B2 and C1), Member States, members from fishing sector and other interest groups.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the **35th WG2 meeting** (Brussels, 17 October 2024) were adopted **without comments**.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted, with the addition of an item on **Norway–Svalbard** to be discussed at 09:30h due to availability of the invited speaker.

4. North-West Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)

Report by MARE: Mr Bernard Blaskiewicz (DG MARE, Unit B2)

Main highlights from the NAFO 2024 Annual Meeting:

- Reopening of Cod 2J3KL with internal quota allocations of 5% in total to be distributed among right holders EU Member States.
- Adoption of a **new precautionary approach (PA) framework** with defined reference points.
- **Redfish 3LN:** Scientific uncertainty and complex negotiations led to a satisfactory compromise leading to a one year TAC for 2025 subject to revision.
- Agreement to conduct a **new performance review** (last in 2018), initially proposed by the US.
- **Data sharing** to be enhanced via the UN FLUX system.
- Measures adopted to **protect redfish in the Irminger Sea**.

Forthcoming work (2025):

- Virtual meetings under the NAFO RBMS framework.
- Ongoing work on the **MSE for Redfish 3LM** and PA framework.
- **Main RBMS and SC meeting in Tallinn (July 2025).**

Interventions:

- *Mr Edelmiro Ulloa (ARVI)* expressed appreciation for DG MARE's work and stressed concern about Russian overfishing (with a unilateral TAC of around 25,000t annually) of Redfish in Subdiv. 3M, undermining conservation efforts by NEAFC. He also asked about the future involvement in US in NAFO following Trump's administration and made a plea to MARE for more flexibility in the quota transfers for yellowtail flounder for 3LM between EU fleets from different MS.
- *Mr Iván López* highlighted NAFO as a positive governance example with good communication with stakeholders and the LDAC, and he asks for including its role in the future implementation of the UN BBNJ agreement, once it is adopted and enters into force after ratification of 60 signatory parties.
- *Mr Bernard Blaskiewicz (MARE)* thanked for the questions and acknowledged the reduced US involvement in Pacific RFMOs that might be an indicator for NAFO as well. He stressed the need to reinforce in NAFO ecosystem-based approaches (EBA).
- **Action: Members agreed to resume work on the production of 2025 advice in June–July 2025, following receipt of the Scientific Council report.**

5. North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

Report: Ms Cannelle Beauchesne (DG MARE, Unit C1)

5.1 DG MARE report on outcomes of 43rd NEAFC Annual Meeting (London, 12-15 Nov 2024)

Main outcomes (NEAFC 2024 Annual Meeting):

- Historical failure to adopt the NEAFC compliance report for first time due to objections made by Norway and Russia.
- Limited progress on management of **vulnerable stocks and redfish in the Irminger Sea**.
- Non-approval of proposals to restrict Russian vessels in international waters, though Russia's catch limits were not recognised as NEAFC allocations.

5.2 Feedback to [EC reply on LDAC advice in preparation of NEAFC annual meeting 2024](#)

Interventions by LDAC members and observers:



- *Mr Edelmiro Ulloa, Aivaras Labanauskas and Emil Remisz* expressed frustration over persistent non-compliance and continued fishing by Russia despite objections from other contracting parties including the EU.
- *Mr Iván López* remarked that NEAFC functions well on non-fisheries issues but performs poorly on fisheries management due to political blocks and unilateral decisions. EU fishers are frustrated cause they see that NEAFC is blocking landings from Russian catch in EU ports but they end up entering the EU market often through other ports or countries such as Norway.
- *Ms Josephine Woronow (PEW)* encouraged the EU to lead on integrating **Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM)** and asked that they propose to create a dedicated **Working Group on Ecological Objectives**.
- *Cannelle (MARE)* responded that they take note of this request on a WG on ecological objectives. On EBA, she reminded that the workshop is not likely to take place at PECMAS1 meeting (march), but they will ask to include half a day for it in the second meeting that will be held in person.

Action: The LDAC will produce a number of recommendations to DG MARE to consider advancing EBA and governance coherence through PECMAS and international fora.

5.3 Update on ICES work with OSPAR and NEAFC

The Executive Secretary, Alexandre Rodriguez, summarized the content of the LDAC question submitted and the reply provided by ICES at a recent annual coordination meeting between the ACs and ICES (MIAC) held in Copenhagen in 2025.

Both the question and the reply can be found under item 1 in the MIAC meeting report: https://ldac.eu/images/EN_REPORT_MIAC_2025.pdf

Action: The LDAC will follow up the work of ICES with OSPAR and NEAFC and will formulate a similar question at next MIAC meeting in 2026 – and will keep its members informed on any news.

6. South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)

Report: Mr Benoit Marcoux (DG MARE, Unit B2)

6.1. Outcomes of the SPRFMO COMM13 annual meeting (Santiago de Chile, 17-21 February 2025)

Main topics discussed at the 2024 Annual Meeting (Santiago de Chile):

- **Jack mackerel:** TAC increased by 25%, beyond EU's preferred 15%.
MSE adoption has now been postponed to 2025.
- **Squid:** No significant progress; ongoing issues with Ecuador and data availability.
- **Bottom fishing:** Implementation delayed due to policy shifts in New Zealand.



- **Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS):** two measures were adopted here- 1. An Updated IUU framework aligned with WTO rules on subsidies; and 2. the port state measures extended for inspection of all vessels carrying toothfish (the EU is already implementing these measures on the EU flagged vessels for CCMLAR).
- **Governance:** New Executive Secretary (NZ) appointed; new Secretariat scientist to be recruited in 2026.

Interventions by LDAC members and observers:

- *Ms Josephine Woronow (Pew)* welcomed alignment from MARE with FAO PSMA and advised on giving priority in negotiations to management of jumbo flying squid fishery and impacts of climate change.
- *Mr Rob Banning (Industry)* thanked the MARE team for their spirit of dialogue and supported progress on MSE and agree an HCR in the next meeting to be held in Panama. He also asked for the inclusion of banking and borrowing of quotas over years into the negotiations as this is important for the EU fleet.
- *Mr Emil Remisz (Chair), Edelmiro Ulloa (ARVI) and Juan Manuel Trujillo (ETF)* raised concerns about **low labour standards for Asian vessels involved in squid fisheries**, referring to recent investigative reports on cases of death at sea on board Chinese fleets fishing in SPRFMO. They asked if there were labour standards discussed there.
- *Mr Daniel Voces (EUROPECHE)* asked DG MARE if they consulted DG EMPL on making this decision at RFMO.

Replies from MARE

- The DG MARE representative, Benoit Marcoux, addressed the questions and clarified the EU competencies and role:
 - The EU has a limited competence on labour standards under the Treaties but expressed commitment to promoting **ILO C188** and **IMO STCW-F** principles through RFMO cooperation. The EU supports the adoption of port states measures aligning with FAO PSMA. Last, he acknowledged that the adoption of MSE would be a great progress as it would bring certainty to fishing operations of the EU fleet and will free up some space for discussion and decision making on other important reasons. He also took note of the point made by the industry representative on making more flexible the banking and borrowing mechanism, saying that it is supported by the EU and the MARE team is keeping this open in the table.
 - There was a proposal by NZ to adopt the standards recently adopted by WCPFC and extend them to SPRFMO. However, several CPCs representing squid jigging fleets from Asia (e.g. China, Chinese Taipei and Korea) did not agree on the basis that a non-binding resolution was already adopted last year. The EU is still hopeful to be able to adopt bare minimum standards for fleets operating in SPRFMO.



- MARE believes that current incidents are not acceptable from a human decency perspective, as they are basic human rights that need to be respected in all vessels. On decisions adopted by RFMOs, the EU applies high standards but they are not the only actors across the table. Adopting something does not mean accepting it is enough (WCPFC) but it is already something that could be a progress.
- He promised to contact DG EMPL to find out the allocation of EU competencies in this field.

6.2 North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC): DG MARE priorities for the annual meeting.

This topic was not dealt with due to the absence of EC representatives despite invitation formulated by the Chair and the Secretariat.

7. Trade Cooperation Agreement (TCA) UK - EU (*no DG MARE attendance expected*)

7.1 Oral report on work of Inter AC Brexit Forum (Brussels, 4 February 2025).

Alexandre Rodríguez summarised this item and explained both the process and the content of this work which is treated confidentially.

7.2 Preparation of next Inter AC Brexit Forum meeting hosted by the LDAC.

Alexandre Rodríguez announced that the LDAC will organise the next Inter AC Brexit Forum before summer holiday (June/July 2025).

8. Update from DG MARE on coastal states negotiations and bilateral and trilateral dialogues between the EU and North East Atlantic third countries

8.1 Briefing on state of play of Coastal States negotiations.

The Secretariat announced that no EC attendance was foreseen for this point. The lead negotiator from unit C5, Thomas Brégeon, said that unfortunately he would not be able to attend WG 2 due to an unplanned major commitment on mission. C.5 is however offering to reschedule the two points for the next WG2 meeting.

In absence of the Commission, Tim Heddema (Vice Chair of WG2 and Dutch FPA representative) led this point and gave a detailed summary of the last round of negotiations on mackerel (MACK), blue whiting (BWH), Atlanto-Scandian Herring (ASH).

Summary:

- **Mackerel:** partial agreement reached between UK, Norway and Faroe Islands, not leaving much room for others to join. It cannot be considered as a positive factor towards legitimate agreement, as it cements illegitimate track records. Until after the TCA review, fresh and partial agreement. The only positive thing is the incoming change of Chairs, with the EU taking over the chairing, and Norway and UK are willing to meet.

- Blue whiting: The EU will also take the chairmanship but is the stock that the least is happening, but also the better chances are there due to pressure on Norwegian salmon industry which uses BWH as feed, plus NAPA for pressure as lobbying body including sourced companies and retailers.
- Atlanto Scandian Herring: Talking a lot, best known stock. EU has shut out of the negotiations, Proposal by Norway and Faroe from Jan 2024, which puts EU at zero per cent in grounds where they are not a coastal state, unacceptable as from the EU we have legitimate and historical track records. Proposal not agreed but mild enthusiasm by UK, which is concerning.

Faroese Islands (who will take over the chairmanship) considers its bilateral agreement with Norway agreed in 2024 as the agreement despite negotiating with 5-6 countries as cements their interests. Unlikely that Faroe will organize further meetings in 2025. EU is trying to make the case that it is a coastal state, ASH has been in their waters, but other parties do not agree.

Conclusion: EU to continue defending its status as a **Coastal State** with legitimate historical track-records.

8.2 Bilateral and trilateral dialogues with Norway, UK, Faroe Islands and Iceland.

The bilateral dialogue EU-Norway was “concluded” in November 2024 with pending topic in NW access to EU waters in BWH and EU access on NW to ASH (zero per cent means no access). Industry at least keep making the case in 2007 access was bought with part of quota share. Thrown out then we should be able to set our quotas proportional to that share of 2007.

The EU MS have told the EC not to compromise its 40% access rights on BWH and ASH, playing a tough (right) approach either having all access or not at all to Norway.

Regarding Iceland, it is important to explore alliances with Iceland both in general and in particular for ASH. The LDAC shows full support to this idea.

8.3 Greenland.

This topic was not dealt with in this occasion due to the absence of DG MARE representative on this topic, despite invitation from the Secretariat.

8.4. Norway – Svalbard

The Chair introduced the item, recalling the unresolved issue of EU Arctic Cod quota (5,200 t) since 2021.

Key points:

- The matter was raised in the **High-Level Dialogue** (HLD) between Vice-President Šefčovič and the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs but remains unresolved.
- DG MARE confirmed ongoing discussions at bilateral level between Commissioner and Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Fisheries from Norway.

Interventions by LDAC members and observers:

- *Mr Iván López (AGARBA)* regretted the lack of progress and excessive concessions to Norway in exchange for limited benefits. It is great to have a quota available to fish at the beginning of the year, but not at any expense and by giving up historical fishing rights.
- *Ms Margarita Mancebo (SGP observer – Spanish administration)* asked for clarification on whether the full EU Arctic Cod quota could be fished in Svalbard waters or only part of this quota commiserate with level of access.
- *Ms. Cannelle Beauchesne (DG MARE)* confirmed that EU Arctic Cod quota can be fished at full extent while being subject to access limitations set by Norway. She added that the High level dialogue continues this year, although not with the same format, now being at level of Fisheries Commissioner and Norwegian Fisheries Minister. They have already met once this year and will meet again next week.

Conclusion: The LDAC reiterated the importance of upholding EU historic fishing rights in Svalbard waters.

9. EU–Norway Relations

9.1. Presentation on Norwegian perspectives on fisheries and trade relations with the EU

Mr Thord Monsen (Counsellor of Fisheries and Trade, Norwegian Mission to the EU)

Mr Monsen thanked the LDAC for the invitation offered and reviewed the longstanding bilateral cooperation between Norway and the EU in fisheries management, acknowledging strains caused by Brexit and geopolitical tensions

Key points:

- Annual EU–Norway fisheries consultations remain functional and fluid despite political challenges.
- Cooperation with Russia continues only at a minimal technical level for Barents Sea stock management, with data exchange limited to sustainability control.
- Norway affirmed alignment with EU sanctions on Russia and clarified that they have no coordination with Russia for the negotiations in NEAFC.
- Fisheries and seafood trade remain deeply interlinked, with 55% of Norwegian exports going to the EU.



9.2. Q&A and exchange of views from the floor with LDAC WG2 members.

Interventions by LDAC members and observers:

- *Mr Iván López (EBFA)* questioned Norway's approach to Brexit, Svalbard rights, and redfish management, stressing the EU's historic role as a key partner.
- *Ms Véronique Mountfort (Oceana)* raised concerns over Russian landings in Norwegian ports and the traceability of reprocessed fish exports to the EU.
- *Mr Monsen* explained Norwegian inspection systems consisting in a robust mix of electronic sales notes, catch certificates, and active Coast Guard oversight.
- *Mr Tim Heddema and Mr Daniel Voces (Europêche)* called for deeper dialogue and equal treatment on quotas and access, particularly for haddock and shrimp.

Conclusion:

Participants welcomed the participation of Mr Monsen in this meeting and were in favour of supporting the ongoing **high-level dialogue** between the European Commissioner and Norwegian Minister asking for stronger engagement of stakeholders in future rounds.

7. Any Other Business

No additional items were raised. The Chair thanked all participants and DG MARE representatives for their contributions and closed the meeting at 13:00h.

8. Summary of Actions / Recommendations

No.	Topic	Action / Recommendation	Responsible / Timeline
1	NAFO	Resume preparation of LDAC advice following receipt of the Scientific Council report.	LDAC Members
2	NEAFC	Support creation of WG on Ecological Objectives and integration of EBA principles. Follow ICES work with OSPAR and NEAFC	DG MARE / LDAC LDAC / ICES
3	SPRFMO	Encourage adoption of MSE for Jack mackerel and improvement of labour standards.	DG MARE / Industry / NGOs
4	Coastal States	Reinforce EU position as Coastal State in ASH and Mackerel negotiations.	EC / Member States / LDAC



No.	Topic	Action / Recommendation	Responsible Timeline	/
5	EU–Norway Relations	Continue High-Level Dialogue to resolve outstanding issues (Svalbard cod, haddock EC / Norway by-catch, shrimp quotas).		
6	Transparency and Traceability	Monitor Russian reprocessed products entering EU via Norway to ensure compliance with sanctions.	DG MARE / MS Authorities	
7	LDAC Follow-Up	Include discussion on labour conditions in LDAC Secretariat / RFMO fleets in WG5 cross-cutting meeting.	WG5 members	



Annex 1. List of participants

LDAC Working Group 2 North Atlantic and Pacific RFMOs and Access Arrangements Brussels, 13th of March 2025

WORKING GROUP 2 MEMBERS

1. Emil Remisz. High Seas Fish Producers Organization. WG2 Chair.
2. Tim Hedemma. Pelagic Freezer trawler Association. WG2 Vice Chair.
3. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA. LDAC Chair.
4. Edelmiro Ulloa. Opnapa / OPP3/ Acemix / Agarba
5. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
6. Daniel Voces. EUROPÊCHE
7. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
8. Julien Daudu. Environmental Justice Foundation
9. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
10. Iris Ziegler. Seas at Risk
11. José Ramón Fontán. ANEPAT
12. Juan Manuel Trujillo. European Transport Federation
13. Rob Banning. Dutch Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association
14. Josephine Woronoff. The Pew Charitable Trusts.
15. Despina Symons. EBCD

REGISTERED OBSERVERS

16. Bernard Blazkiewicz. MARE C.1 (NAFO)
17. Benoit Marcoux. MARE B.2 (SPRFMO)
18. Cannelle Beauchesne, MARE C.1 (Norway-Svalbard)
19. Thord Monsen – Mission of Norway to the EU (EU-Norway)
20. David Wodlund. MAPA Secretaría General de Pesca
21. Margarita Mancebo. MAPA Secretaría General de Pesca (Zoom)
22. Luis Belmonte. MAPA Secretaría General de Pesca (Zoom)
23. Benoit Guerin. BG Sea Consulting

LDAC SECRETARIAT

24. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
25. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
26. Marta de Lucas. LDAC (Zoom)