



DRAFT MINUTES

35th meeting of LDAC Working Group 5 - HORIZONTAL ISSUES
Wednesday, 12 March 2025, 09:30-17:00h CET
Venue: Martin's Brussels EU Hotel - Boulevard Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels

Chair: Julien Daudu (EJF)
Vice Chair: Daniel Voces (Europêche)

1. Welcome by the Chair

WG5 Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu, welcomes all members and observers, including rapporteurs, representatives of the European Commission and of EU Member States' national administrations, and notes apologies from Mr. Juan Manuel Trujillo (ETF) for his absence.

The complete list of attendees is included in ANNEX I.

2. Adoption of minutes of the last WG5 meeting – 16 October 2024

The minutes of the previous WG5 meeting are approved with no changes or additional comments.

3. Approval of the agenda

The draft agenda is approved with no changes or comments to it.

4. Evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

4.1- Discussion between LDAC members on the [public consultation regarding the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy](#) (deadline: 21 April 2025)

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, explains that on 27 January the EC launched this consultation in order to compile information and feedback on the performance of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Regulation No. 1380/2013 in order to support the evaluation of this Regulation.

After discussion among the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed on:

- **The LDAC will participate in the evaluation of the CFP initiated by the Commission and will focus on its external dimension¹.**

4.2- Way forward: LDAC Focus Group for a dedicated advice.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **To draft the terms of reference for the Focus Group and launch a call for interest to all working groups (not only WG5).**

¹ The LDAC sent a position paper in response to the public consultation
https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_position_paper_in_response_to_CFP_Evaluation_May2025.pdf

5. Fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

5.1- Overview of EU IUU carding process: questions from members to MARE.

The EC representative, Mr. Roberto Cesari, notes that they have been using IT-CATCH for eight months, in fact, they are developing material on this subject for member states and operators to use this system, with this aspect being a priority.

He comments that the EC has carried out a study on convenience flags in order to update the effects of the latter. He highlights that it is included in the International Ocean Governance agenda. Results will be available in July 2025.

He then reports on developments in the following countries:

- **Venezuela:** communications have been going on for some time, in December 2024 replies to the questionnaire sent by the EC were received.
- **Korea:** the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) was introduced in 2017. In addition, there is a working group on IUU fishing. Their certification system will cover all species caught as well as additional information. It came into force at the end of October 2024. It should be noted that they notified this template to the WTO.
- **Japan:** the CDS came into force in December 2022 and covers species of squid and cuttlefish. The EC has met with them to explain the application and requirements of the systems used against IUU fishing.
- **Senegal:** dialogues have been recently held. In 2024 Senegal was given a yellow card, but they still have many deficiencies, which were compiled both in a list of deficiencies and in a list of recommendations. Contact between the two parties continue, they are meant to send details of the actions they have taken since November 2024.
- **Thailand:** they were given a yellow card in 2019. In June 2024 they attended the working group on IUU fishing, where the EU expressed its concern regarding the sanction system. In addition, they are changing their systems regarding transshipments and labour matters (this excluded from DG MARE's mandate). Their bill is currently before the Senate, so there is no clear timeline yet. The main pending concerns are: applicable sanctions to serious infringements and their regulations on transshipments, among other. Next week a meeting will be held with the representatives of Thailand to move forward. For the EU it is essential that the sanction system be reversed.
- **Taiwan:** the working group on IUU fishing will be meeting in the coming months. Its actions will focus on controlling the distant water fleet.
- **China:** since 2015 they have a bilateral working group on IUU fishing which meets at least once a year. They are currently drafting a multiannual work plan covering 2025-2029, which they will be monitoring. However, he notes that there have not been many developments since 2023 and that the EC is not happy. He says that the limit of the Chinese distant water fleet has to be maintained in the next 5 years (462 vessels, it has decreased by 89 units). This is the political line they follow. They have to pay attention to "wild" fisheries, which was removed from policy documents. Due to the importance of Chinese trade in the EU market, control is strictly being monitored. In fact, there are only 7 Chinese importers authorised to import into the EU. In 2023, 35 companies were sanctioned. On the other hand, no progress has been made in terms of port state measures and review of national fisheries. The last bill includes port state measures, but efforts need to be made to insist that they improve.

- **French Guiana**: there were only contacts and the progress report was sent. Their legal framework needs to be improved. There are doubts regarding Panama's control over these fleets and concern about the sanction system, since law enforcement is not good. Product traceability needs to be improved as well. In summer 2025, the EC is planning a visit to Panama.
The EC suggested a series of measures, sending letters to Surinam, Guiana and Brazil. The most advanced dialogue is with Surinam, although they are analysing the responses received to the questions sent by the EC.
A videocall will be held with the representatives of French Guiana to continue cooperating.
- **Ecuador**: the country's representatives (fisheries minister and former minister) were in Brussels. They have security problems and presidential elections will be held in April. He does not know whether the EC will be able to visit in the short term.
- **Brazil**: the EC sent them a letter in February 2025 regarding the incidents that took place. Although it looks like they have made progress, they have been given a 45-day period to reply.
- **Vietnam**: it is a priority country for the EC. In 2024 they had a meeting in Brussels. Although they have the relevant legislation, problems at political level are still being identified. In addition, they must monitor vessels engaged in poaching. It seems that they are committed, in fact, it is a transparent country regarding its information. The EC is encouraging them to keep striving. For the time being, the EC has to wait for more results until they return there.
- **Ghana**: despite it not being a dormant agreement, there is now a new minister that does not seem to follow the guidelines set by the former one, so they will contact them again, as it is their second yellow card, having failed to keep the promise made by the former minister. Moreover, the trawler fleet needs to be controlled, since it went from 70 to 24 licenses, so they must see how the situation evolves.

After a round of questions, the EC representative replies the following regarding these countries:

- **Panama**: the problem with reefers shows that they are to blame for having been given a second yellow card. Most of these reefers are Asian, so the solution put forward by the EC is to monitor and penalise them in a deterrent manner and to reinforce control. Tangible results are needed in the case of Panama.
- **USA**: he informs that there has not been any communication whatsoever with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) since the beginning of the year. In May/June the working group on IUU fishing will meet in Washington, so it is understood that there will be news there.
- **Senegal**: their biggest problem is having control over the fleet and over port state measures. The lack of product traceability led to Senegal receiving a yellow card. There is hope that the market will not have to be closed, but improvements are necessary as the situation cannot continue as it is.
- **Gambia**: there is no precise decision regarding this country, the same as with Senegal, but the EC is much concerned in both cases. The EC has been trying to have conversations with Gambia for two and a half years now.
- **Guinea-Bissau**: the challenge is to make them understand the risk posed by operators who change flags. This country is very active and this could be a consequence of the red card received by Cameroon.
- **Liberia**: problems continue.

- **Sierra Leone:** they have a yellow card and are not very active.
- **Uruguay:** there is no dialogue.
- **Philippines:** the EC is very much concerned. There is no information, moving forward is essential.
- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Thailand:** this country has worked with the EC for many years, but they cannot have an FTA with two yellow cards. A meeting will soon be held with Thailand.

5.2- Presentation and discussion on a possible draft LDAC advice on control of imports of fisheries products into the EU market.

The Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu, explains EJF's proposal on the effective implementation of EU import control rules in all Member States, the presentation is available here: https://ldac.eu/images/AC_advice_import_controls.pdf

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **The LDAC Secretariat will distribute among WG5 members EJF's draft proposal entitled "Urgent need for effective implementation of EU import control rules across Member States" and encourages members to send their feedback.**

5.3- Way forward: next steps for the draft LDAC advice.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **That the draft proposal be presented at the next meeting of the Market Advisory Council, Working Group 2 (to be held online on 27 March). Subsequently, a consultation will be launched among the members with a view to adopting a joint LDAC-MAC advice on this matter, provided that an agreement is reached.**

6. EU proposal on conservation of fish stocks in relation to products coming from non-sustainable fishing.

6.1- Presentation of Advice from European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) - Javier Garat/Daniel Voces.

Mr. Daniel Voces, EUROPÊCHE, summarises the EESC advice on "Civil society's recommendations towards a European Ocean Pact" that has been prepared at the request of the European Commission.

The document is available on the following link: <https://ldac.eu/images/EESC-2024-04595-00-00-PA-TRA-EN.pdf>

6.2- Exchange of views with MARE on the EC reply to the LDAC advice on the need to address sustainability concerns in the EU-Norway relations (September 2024)

Mr. Daniel Voces, EUROPÊCHE, explains that there is a Regulation from 2012 that was used only once against Faroe Islands.



He states the importance and full support for a review of this regulation in order to prevent unsustainable practices by non-EU countries.

Regarding the term "shared stocks" it seems it only refers to those in the Northwest Atlantic, although it could also apply to other shared stocks or fisheries.

The main claim is that the proposal be streamlined as much as possible and that not too many amendments that compromise the text be introduced.

Regarding joint management, in the event that countries do not actively introduce sustainability measures, trade measures should be imposed.

Besides, with specific mention to Norway, it is recommended that strategic partnerships be established with like-minded countries (e.g. Iceland) in order to strengthen the EU position in the Northwest Atlantic. Immediate action is required by Norway, particularly regarding mackerel and cod in the Northwest Atlantic.

He highlights that both inclusion and transparency are essential in coastal states, and so is stakeholder engagement.

Lastly, two amendments are recommended:

- 1) To notify member states and relevant coastal states.
- 2) To clarify the relationship between this Regulation and the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Regulation.

After some comments from the members, the EC representative, Ms. Camille Gallouze, notes the following:

- She confirms that there is a proposal by the EC, since there is the political will to adopt this measure.
- They do not wish to focus on Norway, since the current instrument is applicable to all maritime basins and there is comprehensive allocation of all the relevant parties based on scientific advice, also for future instruments.
- The intention of the EC with this proposal: for it to be a sustainability instrument, with a case by case assessment, trying to maintain its general nature, hoping that the regulation for specific stocks, situations and countries will be useful.
- The process is currently awaiting the adoption of amendments by the European Parliament, after which a tripartite dialogue will be held on this specific regulation.

6.3- Way forward: elements for drafting the LDAC letter/advice.

Mr. Julien Daudu, Chair, notes that this matter will be followed, pending the European Parliament's opinion.

7. Social Dimension of CFP and labour issues linked to imports and trade

7.1- Update of work by the European Social Committee (Europêche and ETF)

Ms. Rosalie Tukker, Europêche, summarises the actions carried out since the last WG5 meeting, which are the following:

- The Fishers of the Future Final Conference took place.
- Social Committee projects came to an end, the "Fisheries Speak" app was launched in order to improve communications on board.
- Guidelines to hire non-European citizens following ILO standards were published. In addition, contract models are included. In this regard, it is worth noting the ILO's keen interest in the results regarding achieving equitable treatment for migrant fishers.
- They conducted a specific training programme for medical practitioners on health on board and medical examination of seafarers. (Following the guidelines they issued 3 years ago together with IMO).
- Preparation of a legal analysis to combat slavery and recommendations on due diligence.
- They wish to provide a revised course on STCW in order to make it more interesting and online, if possible, although some countries still do not allow it.
- They have created a specific web site for social dialogue addressing projects and actions.

7.2- Forced labour: proposal to start working on indicators for implementation of the Fisheries Control Regulation, Forced Labour Regulation and Due Diligence Directive

The Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu, suggests including as a priority in the next annual work programme to start work on a proposal on forced labour related to the implementation of the new Control Regulation.

He believes this matter should be closely followed, even at the European Parliament.

7.3- Next steps: items for LDAC contribution/advice on social dimension.

The following **ACTIONS** are agreed:

- **Regarding forced labour and the proposal to start working on indicators for the application of the Fisheries Control Regulation, the Regulation on Forced Labour and the Directive on Due Diligence: to consider the possibility of adding this matter to the LDAC work programme for 2025-2026.**
- **The LDAC Secretariat will send the information to the STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) on EU Fisheries Social Data, which will meet from 31 March to 4 April (EWG 25-02).**

8. Update from MARE on the [European Ocean Pact](#)

The EC representative, Mr. Felix Leinemann, reports that the EC is conducting a consultation in this regard, since there is the need for a pact to tackle the pollution crisis, given the risk that some policies may not take into account the efforts that are needed to go beyond the EU. They need to face these challenges and take on the responsibility with their member states, also ensuring the resilience of coastal communities and highlighting the importance of blue economy.

The strategic objectives of the ocean pact are:

- Blue economy: it has to be sustainable and motivated to have an industry that is also sustainable, with zero emissions that accelerate support for the transition to blue economy sectors and promote the innovative blue economy.
- Ocean health: in order to recover biodiversity and live in a sustainable way.
- Robust knowledge framework: the ocean pact must consider all these issues and raise awareness among citizens.
- International ocean governance and ocean diplomacy: the EU has to show its leadership in this regard.
- Maritime security

Mr. Leinemann then explains that the EC, for more than two decades, has implemented an integrated maritime policy to care for and protect the oceans, with directives, communications on international ocean governance, a common fisheries policy focused on sustainable fishing, regional cooperation, etc. Therefore, they must continue working to achieve a consistent approach. In fact, the Commissionaire's mission letter includes the evaluation of the CFP, an external fisheries policy with clear principles for fisheries, aquaculture, building of vessels, a view of agriculture and food, a clean industry law that refers to the blue economy, linking the European Ocean Pact to the resilience strategy.

Public consultation with stakeholders is now underway and many proposals have been received. In fact, on 21 February, the Commissionaire held a "high-dialogue" with the participation of the LDAC.

Even the EESC discussed the Ocean Pact this morning and the Danish presidency will also present its conclusions.

The EU specific communication is planned to be presented on European Maritime Day, which this year is being held in Cork (Ireland), as well as on the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 2025) in Nice from 9 to 13 June.

There is a round of questions and answers by the members, and the EC representative replies as follows:

- On where fishing fits in, how it is addressed and how it can be kept at the heart of the Pact, he indicates that they value it highly. They focus on coastal communities, although fishing is changing and they will support this transition. They need to analyse the situation and the state of stocks and study how coastal communities can be helped.
- As for the level playing field for products imported into the EU and the fight against IUU fishing, he notes that there is a policy devoted to this and confirms that this will also be present in the Ocean Pact. On the LPF, he says that there must be full transparency regarding food entering our market.
- Regarding the implementation of standards and the consistency of policies, he notes that the importance of these will be recalled and how to implement them correctly.
- As for animal welfare, deep-sea mining and the role of Advisory Councils (ACs), he points out that the latter must monitor this pact. The EC is discussing how to carry out such monitoring. The idea is to simplify and make the best use

possible of the tools we already have. He confirms that both animal welfare and deep-sea mining will also be included in the Ocean Pact, and that they will launch a study on flags of convenience. What is not considered in the Ocean Pact is having a specific database. However, transparency is desired in these matters.

9. International Ocean Governance – Report and update on UN processes

9.1- Update on preparations for 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3, Nice, June 2025) and Our Oceans Conference (Korea, April 2025) and exchange of views with MARE on priorities for these events, in particular, UNOC3.

The EC representative, Ms Anna Popova, explains that this conference will focus on topics such as marine protected areas, climate change and climate security, as well as on digital oceans, among other.

The EC has been very active and she highlights that on the 8th edition of the Conference 40 commitments were achieved. Today, the EU is allocating €300 million to fulfil 13 commitments. The idea is that next week the Council will approve the commitments.

The United Nations Ocean Conference is considered the most important one, where both the EU and the member states play an outstanding role. In fact, she emphasises the importance of accelerating and mobilising all actors in order to achieve sustainable management.

She informs that this year they have sent their input for interactive dialogues on oceans (7-8 panels) and have already appointed their panelists.

Moreover, she notes that the results of the conference will be compiled into a political declaration.

Among the priorities of the Conference there is addressing ratification of BBNJ and having a treaty on plastic and another one on subsidies.

As for having an ocean sustainability platform, she highlights that this is one of the main challenges, as the ocean does not have a specific platform.

Furthermore, she points out that in negotiations about a political declaration, they wish to strengthen the language and to call for action in order to promote SDG14.

Lastly, she says that at Our Ocean Conference there will be new commitments to support developing countries and the Ocean Pact will be addressed with the objective of strengthening leadership.

At UNOC, there will be several side events focusing on ocean diplomacy, and she notes that although they have not been confirmed yet, there will be an event on the role of RFMOs.

She notes the importance of promoting UNCLOS as well as constructive dialogues.

Then, there is a round of questions and the EC representative replies as follows:

- On the fight against IUU fishing, she says that they are doing as much as they can. They continue working with their partners to improve scientific work and to foster it, but by means of regulations.
- As to whether they will count on the fisheries sector for any of the side events, her answer is yes, and she notes that they will count on the industry and that

they wish to invite representatives of the European Parliament. She states that the deadline to present projects for side events is 14 March.

- As for whether they will consider fisheries as main stakeholder in terms of ocean sustainability and whether this will be visible during the Conference, her answer is yes, that they will take it into account as one of the main points.

9.2- Way forward: identification of elements for draft LDAC advice on Implementation of EU IOG agenda.

This point was not specifically addressed.

10. Impact of climate change for high seas fisheries and external fleets:

10.1- Update on LDAC work plan.

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, gives an explanatory presentation that is available on this link:

https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_Work_on_Climate_Change_High_Seas_DWF_March_2025.pdf

Then, there is some discussion among the members about the way forward.

10.2- Way forward: Organisation of an Advice Drafting Focus Group/horizontal event.

The following **ACTIONS** are agreed:

- **The LDAC Secretariat will send the members the recommendations and outcomes of the workshop held in Stockholm in May 2023.**
- **A general advice proposal will start to be drafted and subsequently the possibility of preparing a more detailed one will be considered.**
- **The SWOT analysis on the presentation will be updated.**

11. Update on EFCA forthcoming meetings

11.1- Outcomes of the last Advisory Board (October 2024) and preparation of the next Advisory Board (Vigo, 23 April 2025)

The Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu, summarises the outcomes of the last Advisory Board meeting held in October, the minutes of which are available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/FINALConclusions_AdvBoard_EFCA_15Oct2024.pdf

Prior to the next Advisory Board meeting to be held in April, the aim is to follow up on the following aspects:

- Follow up on the update of EFCA work priorities linked to the CFP external dimension.
- Follow up on the Indian Ocean JDP and international projects (WASOP in Central Africa and SWIOFC in Southwest Indian Ocean) in which EFCA participates.
- Follow up on future challenges related to the implementation of the new Fisheries Control Regulation.
- Follow up on COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO's training proposal (IT Catch and SMEFF databases) and work to include safety rules within possible areas for cooperation, among other.



11.2- EFCA 20th Anniversary event (Vigo, 23 April 2025) – decision on LDAC participation and input.

It is agreed that the LDAC will attend EFCA's 20th anniversary and the Advisory Board meeting.

12. AOB

With no further issues to address, the Chair, Mr. Daudu, announces that the next WG5 meeting will be held in October 2025 in Brussels (exact date to be confirmed).

To conclude, he thanks participants for their contributions, the interpreters for the quality of their work and the Secretariat for their coordination work and efforts throughout the year.

CLOSURE

**Annex I: List of LDAC WG5 attendees
Brussels, 12 March 2025**

Working Group Members

1. Julien Daudu. EJJ
2. Daniel Voces. EUROPÊCHE
3. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
4. Tim Hedemma. Pelagic Freezer trawler Association
5. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
6. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
7. Anne-France Mattlet. Europêche Tuna Group
8. Raúl García.WWF
9. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
10. Javier Garat.CEPESCA
11. Edelmiro Ulloa. Opana / OPP3/ Acemix / Agarba
12. Emil Remisz. High Seas Fish Producers Organization
13. Anertz Muniategi. ANABAC
14. José Ramón Fontán.ANEPAT
15. Ignacio Fresco.OCEANA
16. Despina Symons. EBCD
17. Héctor Fernández. Bolton Food
18. José Manuel Beltrán. OPP-Puerto Burela
19. Rob Banning.PFA
20. Janne Posti.Conxemar
21. Maximilian Schwarz.EBCD
22. Iñigo Azqueta.ANFACO-CECOPECA
23. Christine Xu. Aquatic Life Institute
24. Juan Manuel Trujillo / Andrea Albertazzi. ETF
25. Francisco Mari. BFW
26. Nikolas Evangelides. The Pew Charitable Trusts
27. Juana Parada. ORPAGU

Observers

28. Roberto Cesari. EC. Unit B4
29. Camille Gallonze, EC, Unit C.5
30. Felix Leinemann, EC
31. Anna Popova, EC
32. Catherine Davis. Fauna & Flora
33. Irina Popescu. European Parliament.
34. Marcus Breuer. European Parliament.
35. Pedro Reis. MAC
36. Stephanie Czudaj. GIZ
37. Benoit Guerin. BG Sea Consulting
38. David Wodlund. SGP (Spanish General Secretariat for Fisheries)

LDAC Secretariat

39. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
40. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
41. Marta de Lucas. LDAC (Zoom)