



## **MINUTES**

### **36th meeting of LDAC Working Group 5 - HORIZONTAL ISSUES**

**Wednesday, 15 October 2025, afternoon session 14:00-17:00h CEST**

**Thursday, 16 October 2025, morning session 09:30-12:00h CEST**

**Venue: NH Brussels Carrefour de l'Europe**

(Rue Marché aux Herbes-Grasmarkt Straat, 110, 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.

The complete list of attendees is included in ANNEX I.

#### **2. Adoption of minutes of the last WG5 meeting – 11 March 2025**

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- Update from DG MARE regarding the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation.**

The EC representative gives a presentation in which it is reported that the main framework of the CFP is currently being evaluated and that the study will be published in spring 2026. The aim is to improve legislation, but the EC representative cannot comment on the proposals.

As for the issue on how the role of Advisory Councils (ACs) is perceived, Ms. Julia Rubeck, EC representative, adds that the data compiled through the different ACs have been used in the evaluation. In fact, she highlights that there are several areas where ACs may be the main stakeholders, influencing policy-making. She informs that in future Inter-AC meetings more information will be provided on this evaluation.

Regarding the financial framework and the possibilities for using the MFF, she notes that in 2026 a dedicated session will be organised as soon as progress has been made in this regard.



#### **4.2- Exchange of views and way forward.**

After discussion among the members, the following **ACTIONS** are agreed on:

- **After sending the [LDAC position paper in response to the EU public consultation on the summarised report on the evaluation of the CFP regarding work progress and future actions in terms of the EU external policy and the international dimension of the CFP](#), a series of dedicated focus groups will be held to prepare recommendations on specific matters, including sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs), regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) in terms of fisheries.**
- **Terms of reference (ToR) will be drafted to set up a focus group (FG) and will be sent to all working groups, not only to WG5, in order to organise a discussion group with all interested members.**

#### **5. Implementation of revised Fisheries Control Systems: aspects related to external fleets.**

##### **5.1- Update from DG MARE on state of play and next Inter-AC stakeholder meeting.**

No EC representative was present to discuss this item. Unit D.4 justified this fact conveying the following message: *"The Control Regulation and associated dimensions are always discussed at specific meetings attended by all advisory councils and are not presented individually, as the Control Regulation does not have a regional dimension. In order to ensure a consistent approach with all of them, we are trying to schedule a specific session on the sidelines of the online meeting between advisory councils on 18 November"*.

##### **5.2- Feedback from LDAC on provisions related to external fleet and 5.3- Way forward.**

Members agree on the following ACTION:

- **To remind the Commission that they still have not sent a response to the [LDAC letter sent in April](#) and to request an Inter-AC follow up workshop with the DG MARE control unit on this matter.**

#### **6. Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing**

##### **6.1- Presentation/film by EJF on IUU fishing in the squid fishery of the Southwest Atlantic and reaction by the members.**

The EJF representative, Mr. Jesús Uriol, gives a presentation that is available [here](#).

Besides, the EJF short film on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the shrimp fisheries in the Southwest Atlantic is screened, which is available [here](#): [Short film](#).

The full report is available [here](#).

This is followed by a debate among the members, highlighting ideas such as the need to clearly differentiate between European and Asian operators and unfair competition.



It is also important to note that the study distinguishes what the Spanish fleet does in order to emphasise the fight to achieve a level playing field and that the rest of member countries cannot act in a lax way regarding imports control.

#### **6.2- Overview of EU IUU carding process in relation to dialogues with non-EU countries: feedback from MARE on questions from members.**

The EC representative, Ms. Pavlina Nikolova, deputy head of unit, gives an update on the following countries:

- Senegal: it has a yellow card since May 2004. The EC is worried about this country. Since 2020, evidence has been gathered on illegal activities by import fleets, without any measures being taken to certify catches.

- Cameroon: it has a red card since 2023. They still have no control over their fishing fleet and vessels are still being included in the IUU fishing lists. There is concern about them not having acquired a commitment with the EC and the little progress they have made is very slow and incomplete. Although a fisheries act has been adopted, there are no prospects of the red card being withdrawn.

- Comoros: it has a red card and progress is still slow, even with the new government, although in 2025 an amendment to the fisheries act was finalised in line with international requirements. A review of the maritime authority responsible for vessel registration is currently planned.

- Ghana: it has a yellow card. A new fisheries act has been passed, but it is not robust enough to lift the EC's concern. A follow-up and mission plan will be carried out at the end of this month.

- Liberia: it has a red card. There have been no recent developments and they still have not solved key issues (effective application of the legal framework, monitoring, control and surveillance system for vessels operating in distant waters and operational sanctions).

- Sierra Leone: small progress was achieved in 2024, but there is a lack of real interest in cooperating. The EC is still waiting for answers.

- French Guiana: there are suspicions of illegal activities. They had exchanges with countries like Surinam, Venezuela or Brazil based on the VMS information conveyed by France.

- Venezuela: the EC received a response to its questionnaire after eight months.

- Ecuador: it has a yellow card. Last Monday there was a videocall between the Commissioner and the Ecuadorian minister. Responses were received to the questions posed to them in September, but it is still necessary to resolve the issues of landing



control, effective control of processing plants, low levels of weight volume declarations, and reporting to ICCAT.

- Panama: it has a yellow card. A mission will be soon carried out.

- Philippines: the yellow card was withdrawn in May 2015. A report on the process is expected to be received this month, as the commercial fleet is not fully covered by the VMS. They are amending their fisheries act in order for the industrial fleet to fish in the areas devoted to artisanal fishing. The EC does not rule out taking measures in this regard, as they see that the commitment is not enough.

- Thailand: the IUU fishing WG met one month ago, where the royal ordinance on the origin of fisheries products became a reality, after being approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives on 16 and 17 September. However, there is concern about the loosening of controls that had been tightened in 2015, when it still had a yellow card. The EC will be attentive and vigilant.

- Korea: a meeting will be held at the end of 2025, control is performed in line with PSMA. Vessels are deployed in the WCPFC area.

- China: it adhered to PSMA in May 2025. Although the first guidelines have been published, more specific work is needed in the IUU fishing WG in order to study their implementation. Progress is being made in the review of their fisheries act, which is in the approval phase. Since 2023, eight companies had their licences revoked and one company was penalised for using false ownership certificates.

### **6.3- Exchange of views with DG MARE.**

Discussion starts with a reference to the LDAC advice on beneficial ownership regarding joint ventures in third countries.

On the other hand, the importance of EU member states cooperating among themselves and with third countries is stressed in order to identify IUU fishing activities or those supporting them, and to take measures against them.

On the question of how to apply article 40 on legal ownership, the EC representative, Ms. Nikolova, notes that the EC is closely cooperating with the member states to find ways to improve the implementation of this article. Some of their recommendations could help improve information sharing (such as registration) and also the possibility of using money laundering records for investigation purposes.

She recalls that the EC does not have access to fleet registries in third countries, or to fishing licences, or to authorisations in third countries operating vessels in non-EU countries.



As for developments regarding Chile: she replies that there is no regular dialogue in the framework of the IUU fishing Regulation, but they do exchange information regarding the implementation of the catch system. In fact, in the new catch certificate model, in the section devoted to fishing gear, the gear used must be indicated. Member states that control shipments at EU borders are meant to verify fishing regions and catches as well. In practice, the CDS does not allow imports to be blocked for this reason, but more information will be available when IT CATCH becomes operational.

She then reminds attendees that issuing or withdrawing a card when having sufficient documentary evidence is not just a matter of time but of supporting information accepted by legal services; it is not a random process.

As for the issue of transparency in RFMOs, there is concern about who has access to that information, whether it is the RFMO itself who registers and compiles this information.

Regarding Senegal: she informs that there are two different processes: on the one hand, the yellow card (DG MARE) and on the other, notification on trade (DG TAXUD). Even if the starting point is fraud, DG TAXUD is concerned about rules of origin. DG MARE checks the legality of catches and the fishing process.

#### **6.4- Way forward: next steps for drafting LDAC advice.**

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **To add to the agenda of the next WG5 meeting an item on the EU study on convenience flags.**

#### **7. Presentation by DG MARE on UNOC and Our Oceans Conference**

The EC representative, Ms. Anna Poppo, reports that EU participation in UNOC was successful and high-level, with more than 60 states represented, highlighting its continued leadership in ocean governance.

USA was not present at the conference. China was present but did not participate much. The European delegation was made up of more than 150 members from practically all European institutions, led by President von der Leyen and Council President Costa. On the first day, they both made an EU joint statement. In addition, Commissioner Kadis participated in the panels on "Ocean Action", "Fisheries" and "Marine Pollution".

The highlight was the BBNJ agreement, with many new ratifications, which will come into force on 17 January 2026.

On deep-sea mining, worthy of mention is the request for a moratorium as a precautionary pause.

Another relevant topic was plastic pollution, mentioned in many statements, contributions and side events.

Moreover, there was a strong focus on coastal communities and small-scale fisheries.



Attention should be drawn to the fact that many country delegations reinforced that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is the main legal framework for the oceans.

The EC also presented the Ocean Pact in a side event with the presence of President von der Leyen and Council President Costa, the president of France, Cyprus and Greece, or the prime minister of Spain and Sweden, among other, and Commissioner Kadis.

Other noteworthy initiatives were on Digital Ocean, which attracted a great deal of interest among participants.

57 voluntary commitments were tabled by the EU and its member states, worth € 1 billion, that cover different topics and regions. The largest project and amount will be allocated to helping Tanzania achieve a sustainable blue economy.

The Ocean Global Programme was also announced to help partner countries with conservation and sustainability in the high seas, including efforts to ratify and implement the BBNJ agreement.

Furthermore, the importance of basing all ocean-related actions on science and innovation was highlighted.

Besides, she points out that political statements make up the ocean action plan that now needs to be implemented and that Chile and Korea expressed their interest in hosting the next UN Our Ocean Conference to be held in 2028, although it has not been yet confirmed.

As for the Our Ocean Conference, she informs that it was held on 29 and 30 April in Korea, with a total of 277 new commitments.

The EU, led by DG Vitcheva, announced 13 new commitments. This tenth edition reviewed the status of past commitments through a study analysing more than 2,600 commitments announced since 2015, highlighting that 43% have been completed, 38% are in progress and 19% are about to begin. The next edition of this conference will take place in Kenya in the second half of 2026 and will focus on sustainability of actions, justice, innovation and resilience.

## **8. Social Dimension of CFP and labour issues linked to imports and trade.**

### **8.1- Presentation of the Commission's proposal to amend the [Directive](#) on due diligence.**

Mr. Daniel Voces, Europêche, informs that Ms. Von der Leyen announced that certain delegated acts and implementing acts necessary to apply due diligence will be suspended. Therefore, he highlights the importance of analysing the impact and whether the directive continues to apply only to EU companies.

The following **ACTION** is proposed:

- **The LDAC will send a letter requesting the EC to clarify its plans regarding due diligence in the supply chain.**

### **8.2- EC update on the [Forced Labour Regulation](#) (expert group on forced labour...)**



No EC representatives were present to update this item. The reason given was that it is a coordinated exercise with other DGs and it is not possible to contribute at this time; they will seek different options to address this issue.

### **8.3- Update of work by the European Social Committee (Europêche and ETF)**

Mr. Daniel Voces, Europêche, reports that at the last Social Dialogue Committee meeting issues of interest to the LDAC were discussed, such as the following:

- Working group on food security: concern was shown for the reduction of fishing grounds for European fleets and the decline in self-sufficiency in Europe.
- Outcomes of the study on training and certification of EU crew members: an analysis of deficiencies is shown, social partners request the transposition of STCW-F as an EU Directive.
- European Ocean Pact and evaluation of the CFP: there is an interest to know the type of strategies and actions that will be carried out.
- Need for more actions focusing on the social and labour dimension.
- Taiwan: DG EMPL invited them to explain the role of social dialogue and their policy proposals to improve the situation there (e.g. wifi on board).
- MFF: a joint request was made regarding the need for a specific fund for fisheries. This issue will be discussed with Commissioner Kadis on 5 November.
- STECF EWG Social Data: The EC collaborates in the development of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The work for 17 countries has been completed and it is available online.

Then, Mr. Juan Manuel Trujillo, ETF, criticises the EU's draft proposal on labour standards for IOTC, similar to that for WCPFC, and that falls below minimum international standards, as it does not meet ILO C188, IMO STCW-F or the Torremolinos Convention.

He also calls for the strengthening of EMFAF with a view to securing a specific fund for the sector and obtaining at least the same budgetary allocations for future challenges in achieving environmental sustainability or training future fishers, among other aspects.

Moreover, Mr. Nikolas Evangelis, PEW, highlights the importance of implementing the Cape Town Agreement on safety of fishing vessels which requires at least 22 countries to ratify the agreement for it to enter into force.

### **8.4- Next steps**



The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **PEW (Mr. Nikolas Evangelis), together with other social partners (Mr. Daniel Voces and Mr. Juan Manuel Trujillo), volunteers to draft a letter to be sent to the EC highlighting the importance of member states ratifying the four main social conventions: ILO C188, OMI STCW-F, Cape Town Agreement and Torremolinos Convention.**

## **9. EU strategy for fisheries external action: exchange of views with DG MARE**

### **9.1- Update by Secretariat on process**

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, recalls that the LDAC response to the UE call for evidence on external action is available on the following link: [LDAC response to Call for Evidence EU Strategy Fisheries External Action 15Sept2025.docx](#)

He then informs that the EC has indicated its preference for discussing it separately and specifically, as Ms. Isabelle Garzon is not available.

### **9.2- Next steps**

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, notes that next week feedback will be compiled, and the following **ACTIONS** are agreed:

- **To invite the Executive Committee and Working Group chairs and vice chairs to a meeting with Isabelle Garzon in order to organise a workshop at the beginning of 2026.**
- **To set a date and venue and prepare a series of questions and an agenda for the meeting in advance.**
- **There are no objections to doing this jointly with the MAC, if so decided.**

## **10. International Ocean Governance: BBNJ**

### **10.1- Update/presentation from DG MARE on the proposal for a [directive](#)**

The EC representative, Ms. Arianna Broggiato, reports the entry into force of the BBNJ Treaty on 17 January 2026, as 60 ratifications have been achieved (including the EU and 16 member states).

Regarding the current situation of the Preparatory Committee, she explains that it was decided to create a group of experts to study the steps to be taken in the future, so they expect a notification to be made in this regard. There is a positive atmosphere, even though the Plastics Treaty was not adopted.

In addition, the EC adopted a proposal on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regarding the marine genetic resources, which was referred to the EP, that supported the proposal, although the amendment will be voted on today in the Environment Committee. For its part, the Council is more fragmented due to issues of competency, with tripartite dialogues expected to begin in November. Although some obligations will be implemented at EU level, there is a need to ensure a level playing field in terms of sustainability.



Then, the members make comments and ask questions, to which the EC representative, Ms. Broggiato, reacts as follows:

Co-chairs are preparing a decision draft on the relationship between BBNJ and other international frameworks and bodies in time for PrepCom3.

The atmosphere at PrepCom2 is very positive compared to that of the previous year.

She points out that the EU is willing to sign and ratify all maritime matters to protect the EU and implement the treaty, but not all countries are ready in terms of national legislation.

With regard to sovereignty, it should be noted that no reference is made to the CFP in the explanatory statement; the EC considers that, as the EU is a party to the agreement, the CFP is national legislation of one of the parties, rather than presenting EU own rules and setting a precedent for the other party to hide behind this national legislation.

On the other hand, as far as COP is concerned, it is yet to be decided where it will take place.

#### **10.2- Way forward: identification of elements for draft LDAC advice on the implementation of the IOG agenda of the EU.**

The following **ACTIONS** are agreed:

- **DG MARE B1 Unit will share with the LDAC Secretariat the draft decision prepared by the co-chairs on the relationship/linkages between BBNJ and other international frameworks and bodies (including RFMOs) in time to send feedback (December 2025-January 2026) for PrepCom3 in March/April.**
- **The LDAC will consider the possibility of setting up a working group to provide comments in writing and/or organise a videocall between an LDAC delegation and DG MARE B1 do address this issue.**
- **The Secretariat will draw the relevant questions from the members and will send them in writing to the DG MARE B1 team for internal clarification.**
- **Mr. Daniel Voces, Europêche, suggests preparing a piece of advice to address some of the issues regarding the EU Directive proposal on BBNJ. Some potential topics are: implementation of the non-undermining principle for RFMOs, linkages between RFMOs and BBNJ, international legal instruments.**

#### **10. Commission proposal for a Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034:**

##### **11.1- Presentation by the European Commission.**

The Chair, Julien Daudu, reports that this matter will be presented at an Inter-AC meeting on 18 November, so the members are requested to send their specific questions to the Secretariat in order for them to be conveyed to the EC representatives.



### **11.2- Exchange of views with members.**

Ms. Béatrice Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, believes that funding is of the essence for SFPA partners, and emphasises the importance of contacting DG INTPA, that is also participating in Global Europe.

Mr. Daniel Voces, EUROPÊCHE, points out his concern about the new proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), noting that he will share his questions and doubts with the different members.

Mr. Juan Manuel Trujillo asks how the collision will be avoided so that these funds are state aid for fishing.

Mr. Iván López, AGARBA, points out the danger of leaving the use of these funds for fishing to the discretion of member states, which will lead to unlevel playing field and different sectors competing for EU funds. In addition, there will be inequalities among the different member states in terms of implementation (decarbonisation, energy efficiency, etc.) and this may even affect internal competition among member states.

Mr. José Ramón Fontán, ANEPAT, explains that, in their case, they are partners with a vessel with French flag in the Gran Sol fishing ground. The French administration's approach was that offshore wind farms could provide funding for the fisheries sector, so he would like France to clarify this information, which could perhaps be discussed at an Inter-AC meeting.

## **12. European Fisheries Control Agency**

### **12.1- Update from EFCA on work priorities related to the international dimension (including catch certification checks and state of play of involvement in EU projects outside Europe and Indian Ocean JDP).**

The EFCA representative, Ms. Rita Santos, gives a presentation that can be found in this

link:

[https://ldac.eu/images/EFCA\\_International\\_Projects\\_Rita\\_Santos\\_16102025.pdf](https://ldac.eu/images/EFCA_International_Projects_Rita_Santos_16102025.pdf)

### **12.2- Exchange of views with members.**

After some discussion, the following **ACTION** is agreed on:

- **The members wishing to ask specific questions shall send them to the Chair, Mr. Daudu, and the Secretariat in order for them to be posed at the next EFCA Advisory Board meeting.**

### **12.3- Members' priorities for the next EFCA Advisory Board**

The importance of the following is particularly noteworthy:

- 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 in which EFCA participates.
- Follow up on future challenges related to the implementation of the new Fisheries Control Regulation.



It is confirmed that the LDAC will attend the EFCA Advisory Board meeting to be held in April 2026 in Vigo.

Finally, the Chair, Mr. Daudu, informs that at the Advisory Board meeting on 21 October he will provide a summary of all the opinions gathered as well as of the work carried out over the last few months. Information will also be provided on the advice expected in the coming months, and members are encouraged to send any questions they wish to be forwarded to EFCA by next Monday.

**AOB (only information points)**

With no other issues to address, the Chair, Mr. Daudu, announces that the next WG5 meeting will be held in March 2026 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, 15 and 16 October 2025**

**WORKING GROUP MEMBERS**

1. Julien Daudu. EJF
2. Daniel Voces. EUROPÊCHE
3. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
4. Tim Hedemma. Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association
5. Sergio López. OPP Burela
6. Christine Xu. Aquatic Life Institute
7. Rob Banning. PFA
8. Julio Morón. OPAGAC/AGAC
9. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
10. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
11. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
12. Anne-France Mattlet. Europêche Tuna Group
13. Luis Vicente. ADAPI
14. Raúl García. WWF
15. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
16. Edelmiro Ulloa. Opana / OPP3/ Acemix / Agarba
17. Emil Remisz. High Seas Fish Producers Organization
18. Anertz Muniategi. ANABAC
19. José Ramón Fontán. ANEPAT
20. Ignacio Fresco. OCEANA
22. Renee Heal. DSCC
23. Francisco Fernández. OPROMAR
24. Marc Ghiglia. UAPF/CNPMEM
25. Xavier Leduc. UAPF
26. Joelle Philippe. CFFA-CAPE
27. Despina Symons. EBCD
28. Juan Manuel Trujillo / Andrea Albertazzi. ETF
29. Francisco Mari. BFW
30. Nikolas Evangelides. The Pew Charitable Trusts
31. Juana Parada. ORPAGU
32. Iris Ziegler. Seas at Risk
33. Jose Ramón Muriel. ANAMAR
34. Margot Angibaud. EUROPECHE



35. Amanda Heitmann.DPPO
36. Mati Saveret. ELDFA
37. Dominic Rihan. KFO

#### **Observers and rapporteurs**

38. Jesús Urios, EJF (Zoom)
39. Herman BOS or Julia RUBECK (Zoom). DG MARE
40. Pavlina Nikolova, Desirée Kjolsen. DG MARE
41. Arianna Broggiato. DG MARE
42. Anna Poppova. DG MARE
43. Rita Santos. EFCA
44. Stephanie Czudaj. GIZ
45. Yago Rosado. OCEANA
46. Teresa Molina Schmid. SGP Spain

#### **LDAC Secretariat**

47. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
48. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
49. Marta de Lucas. LDAC (Zoom)