

MINUTES
LDAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting: Martin's Brussels EU Hotel (Bd. Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels)
Thursday, 7 March 2024
14:30-17:00h

Chair: Iván López van der Veen
Vice Chairs: Vanya Vulperhost, Juan Manuel Liria and Marc Ghiglia
Rapporteurs (Secretariat): Alexandre Rodríguez and Manuela Iglesias

1. Welcome by the LDAC Chair

The Chair, Mr. Iván López van der Veen welcomes members, observers, DG MARE representatives and UNCTAD guest experts.

He then conveys apologies from WG2 Chair, Mr. Xavier Leduc, and WG2 Vice Chair, Mr. Tim Heddema, who cannot attend owing to availability and health problems, respectively.

He then congratulates recently appointed working group Chairs and Vice Chairs, thanking the outgoing positions for their work all these years.

After this acknowledgement, he mentions International Women's Day celebrated on 8 March, noting that the theme chosen this year is "Invest in women: Accelerate progress". In addition, he points out that the new WG1 and WG4 chairs are women, as well as the LDAC vice chair and the new WG4 vice chair, with the LDAC wishing to achieve gender balance in terms of representation in positions in the near future. He recalls the LDAC commitment in this regard. In fact, he highlights the preparation in recent months of the updated version of the advice on visibility, promotion and the key role of women in fisheries, with special emphasis on artisanal coastal communities, this being a topic where work is still in progress.

Besides, the Chair informs that there is the necessary quorum (over 50%) for adoption of decisions by members present or represented.

The complete list of attendees is included in **ANNEX I**.

2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda is then approved with no comments or modifications.

3. Approval of the minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting – Madrid, 8 November 2023

The minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting held on 08 November 2023 in Madrid are approved.

4. Presentations on horizontal topics of relevance for the LDAC:

4.1. Trends in Global Ocean Economy and “Ocean Trade” database

Mr. David Vivas, UNCTAD, gives an interesting presentation that is available on the following link to the meeting website:

https://ldac.eu/images/Presentation_for_LDAC_07_March_2024_David_Vivas_REV_2.pdf

This project shows in macro-economic figures the value of ocean trade in terms of products and allows for filtered searches and classification of results by products linked to the TARIC tariff code, by regions, subregions and countries. It shows that ocean economy is quite diversified and it is estimated at 1.36 billion dollars in 2021. By continent, Asia and Europe account for 85% of world trade (according to the volume of imports and exports). Trade flows mainly move from East to West and vice versa (and not from North to South or vice versa). There is also potential for diversification, and it shows that the combination sea-industry including catching, processing and trading fisheries is one of the sectors with a larger regulatory framework and with a large number of non-tariff regulations and measures. As for the main barriers, sanitary barriers are primarily identified.

4.2. EU “Fishers for Future” initiative

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, Secretary General, informs that after inviting DG MARE to explain what the project entails, they replied indicating their preference to give this presentation in the second half of the year, since they are now preparing a hybrid dedicated presentation event to be held on Tuesday, 19 March 2024 in Brussels. The aim of this event is to present the methodology used and the preliminary results of these months' work (including datasheets or profiles for standard fishers) in order to engage stakeholders so that they provide feedback. Moreover, in the medium term, the idea is to engage the general public in a discussion about the present and future of fishers and the sector.

The event will focus on three topics:

- Current and future identity and roles of fishers in society.
- Factors and trends influencing sustainability and profitability of the fisheries sector in the long term and the well-being of the fishing communities.
- Challenges and opportunities arising from interactions between fishers and other maritime players.

All members have been sent an invitation via email by the LDAC Secretariat. Further information on the event may be found on the following link: <https://eu.eventscloud.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=200272142&> and about the project in general on this link: [Setting the scene for the Fishers of the Future - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/setting-the-scene-for-the-fishers-of-the-future)

4.3. Update on the evaluation of the EU Regulation 734/2008 on the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) in the high seas

The EC representative, Mr. Vassilis Dokalis, DG MARE B1, informs that the Regulation came into force in 2008, transposing UN resolutions and international rules in this regard (UN Res. 61/105 or FAO Deep-Sea Fisheries Guidelines in 2009, 2011-2016-2022 reviewed by the UN).

He points out that in the European Union there are few flag member States operating in FAO area

41, which is where more emphasis is made since these are international waters not subject to the control of RFMOs.

It is recalled that the main aim of Regulation 734/2008 is to ban the use of bottom trawl gear that may result in irreparable damage to the ecosystem when no scientific assessment has been carried out or there is no specific information about it. To this end, it is recalled that it is mandatory to have a special fishing permit to operate in these waters and that there are a series of technical measures (closures) adopted based on seabed mapping. In addition, there is an observer programme on board vessels operating in these waters. Furthermore, Member States are obliged to draft implementation reports twice a year, although just a few actually do so.

On the other hand, he highlights that the EU has also prepared two other complementary regulations on the high seas related to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs): the SMEFF Regulation and the Deep-Sea Access Regulation (mainly in EU waters).

As for the assessment, he explains that the EC presented a [report](#) in 2010 before the EP and the Council on the impact of EU regulations and their potential amendment. It was decided to postpone it until the UN approved new provisions in 2016 on VMEs. In the mean time, FAO adopted guidelines in 2009 and the FSA Review Conference in New York in 2019.

Finally, the process to assess the Regulation in the EU started in 2019. The assessment covers the whole time period from 2008 until today. In order to complement this assessment, the EC launched a specific study in 2020 which is publicly available https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8a9b0297-3b24-11ee-bd8d-01aa75ed71a1?pk_source=ec_newsroom&pk_medium=email&pk_campaign=MARE+Newsletter

Then the DG MARE representative informs that there was a public consultation for data and evidence collection during 12 weeks that finished on 5 February. Complete information about the said consultation is available on the following link:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/1884-Protecting-vulnerable-marine-ecosystems-in-the-high-seas-from-bottom-trawling-evaluation_en

He notes that only 23 replies were received, where it was mainly highlighted that although the regulation has been successful, there is a need to strengthen its implementation and enforcement, indicating also the need to improve scientific research on the seabed in VMEs.

Then there is a round of questions by the members:

- Daniel Voces (EUROPÊCHE) explains that they participated in the consultation and he highlights that his organisation has signed an agreement with OPRAS (Organisation for the Protection of South Atlantic Fishery Resources) supporting the possibility to set up an RFMO for the South Western Atlantic area for improved management there. He notes that the European fleet reports all its catches in these waters as it is a compulsory legal requirement set out in the SMEFF Regulation.
- Edelmiro Ulloa (OPNAPA) notes the lack of a level playing field for European and non European (mainly Asian) fleets in international waters, something especially obvious in this area, and insists on the need of having an RFMO.

- Alexandre Rodríguez, Secretary General, adds that the LDAC sent a piece of advice on this topic back in 2016, many of the arguments and reflections of which are still valid, highlighting that the EU should focus its efforts on international diplomacy at UN level to ensure a level playing field and compliance by all countries. To this end, it should ask flag states to apply in their national legislation the international obligation arising from UN Resolution 61/105 to ensure a level playing field and full compliance with international obligations by their fleets.

The EC representative, Mr. Dokalis, notes down the comments received and clarifies some of the questions asked, indicating that many of these arguments have already been collected in the public consultation phase and in targeted interviews.

4.4. 5th FAO-IMO-ILO Ad Hoc Joint WG meeting on IUU fishing and related matters

In view of the fact that Mr. Ment van der Swan, Europêche, could not attend the meeting and in order to provide an update on this regard, Mr. van der Swan sent the following information in writing:

"Social development: The FAO-IMO-ILO Joint Working Group (JWG) 5 recommends states that when regulating their fishing capacity they ensure that adopted measures do not have a detrimental effect on fishers' working conditions (e.g. on their accommodation) and to consider their net tonnage (NT) instead of their gross tonnage (GT) as one of the factors determining the fishing capacity of a fishing vessel.

States are advised not only to delegate to representatives of the ministry in charge of fisheries but also to the ministries in charge of social affairs, and of security in fishing vessels and at sea in the FAO-IMO-ILO JWG on IUU fishing and related matters.

In addition, JWG 5 adopted recommendations on forced labour, abandoned fishers and protection for observers.

Recently, at a Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group meeting guidelines were adopted for medical examination of fishers mainly based on guidelines adopted by the EU sectoral social dialogue committee for sea fisheries. Since 2011, fishers are no longer included in the guidelines for medical examination of seafarers.

As soon as the governing bodies of the three United Nations organisations have adopted JWG 5 recommendations, I will provide the LDAC with more detailed information".

The following **ACTION** is agreed: **to follow the progress of the FAO-IMO-ILO JWG**

5. Update by the LDAC Chair and Secretariat on:

5.1. Seminar on EU Fisheries Investments in Third Countries (Berlin, 23 May)

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, informs that preparatory work for the joint LDAC-CFFA seminar is still in progress. The session will last one day and will be held at the Bread for the World (BFW) headquarters in Berlin on Thursday, 23 May.

At this event there will be prestigious and multidisciplinary speakers (from international bodies, national administrations, fleet representatives and managers of fishing companies in third countries, academics, among other.) The seminar will be divided into three sessions dealing with different topics where the legislative and institutional framework applicable to these companies will be presented, among other, as well as actual case studies of companies based in African coastal countries in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. A large participation of delegations from African countries and small-scale fisheries organisations is expected, as well as representatives of the European Commission, FAO, African Union, ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT or AFRIFISH-Net, among other.

The seminar will conclude with a series of recommendations presented by the appointed drafting team. The ultimate aim is to adopt a formal declaration that will help lay foundations to provide a robust framework to acknowledge and contribute to improving the functioning of this type of investments with regard to the external dimension of the CFP, focusing mainly on finding potential synergies with the framework upon which sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) are based. In the next few weeks, the LDAC Secretariat will circulate the relevant information as well as a link to register for the event.

5.2. Inter-AC event on European Maritime Day (Svendborg-Denmark, 30-31 May 2024)

The Secretary General, Alexandre Rodríguez, informs that several ACs will hold a joint dedicated event to commemorate European Maritime Day (EMD) entitled: *"EU Advisory Councils: Stakeholder engagement in policymaking for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture production and value chains"*.

It will be held in Svendborg, Denmark, only in face-to-face format.

For more information on EMD and to register to attend this event, please click on the following link: https://maritime-day.ec.europa.eu/index_en

6. Report on actions agreed at LDAC working groups and Inter-AC meetings:

6.1 Summary report by the Chairs and/or Vice Chairs of:

- **Working Group 1 (Highly Migratory Stocks and its RFMOs)**

Mr. Michel Goujon, WG1 Chair, summarises the joint CCRUP-LDAC meeting for the preparation of a potential LDAC advice on IOTC.

He then mentions the topics on which WG1 will be working in the coming months:

- Conservation and management measures for sharks, including the attached fins policy
- Focus Group on ICCAT
- Focus Group on WCPFC
- Focus Group on IOTC

- **Working Group 2 (North Atlantic fisheries agreements and RFMOs)**
In view of Mr. Leduc's and Mr. Heddema's absence, Mr. Iván López, as LDAC Chair, summarises the areas on which WG2 will be working in the coming months:
 - Draft advice on NAFO
 - Draft advice on Norway and fisheries sustainability
 - Draft advice on NEAFC (including aspects relating to the ecosystem approach and joint work carried out by OSPAR and NEAFC supported by ICES)
- **Working Group 4 (SFPAs with third countries)**
Mr. Julio Morón, WG4 Chair, summarises the areas on which WG4 will be working in the coming months:
 - Advice on the retrospective report about the assessment of fisheries agreements and the MRAG study on future challenges
 - Follow-up on actions and line of work set out in partnerships with ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT, AFRIFISH-Net
 - Follow-up on EFCA's work
 - Exploring future collaboration actions with projects in the Indian Ocean
- **Working Group 5 (Horizontal issues)**
Mr. Julien Daudu, WG5 Chair, summarises the areas on which WG5 will be working in the coming months:
 - Critical review and recommendations on how to improve the external dimension of the CFP
 - Impacts of climate change on fisheries
 - Underwater mining
 - Working and social conditions in fisheries (ILO): follow-up on the FAO-ILO-IMO forum

6.2 Report on the inter-AC coordination meeting with DG MARE (Brussels, 6 Feb 2024)

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, summarises the Inter-AC coordination meeting, where Director Charlina Vitcheva explained key aspects regarding governance as well as the priorities in the EC agenda (e.g. landing obligation, Fishers for the Future, Brexit, work at RFMOs or energy transition). Then a review of the most important activities of the different advisory councils was carried out, concluding in a brief round of questions and comments. Due to the fact that the floor was limited to a few minutes and to two interventions per AC (one in the morning and one in the afternoon), the EC will be requested to reconsider other formats for future Inter-AC meetings in order to make them more dynamic and interactive.

6.3 Creation of an Inter-AC Forum on coastal states negotiation and bilateral & trilateral dialogues between the EU and North East Atlantic third countries (Norway, UK, Faroe Islands...)

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, explains that he would like the LDAC to cover more RFMOs than those covered now (NAFO, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, NEAFC) in terms of follow-up and drafting of advice and recommendations.

To this end, he suggests including the following RFMOs:

- North Pacific Ocean (NPFC) and SPRFMO (mainly of interest for the pelagic fleet) in WG2, since they used to be addressed in the extinct WG3 and no follow-up has been carried out ever since.
- Indian Ocean: SIOFA and maybe SWIOFC.
- Antarctic Ocean: CCAMLR.

The idea behind following up on these RFMOs, prior to developing a full piece of advice, is to respond to specific questions that may be put forward by European Commission negotiators in order to optimise time, expertise and resources.

In addition, the Chair proposes to set up an Inter-AC forum with DG MARE that is similar to that on Brexit for bilateral and multilateral negotiations with North Eastern Atlantic countries (Norway, Iceland, Faroe...) transferring some matters that are currently addressed in WG2 and adding other interested ACs (NWWAC, NSAC, PELAC). He believes that this would result in improved coordination among all actors concerned (DG MARE representatives and common members participating in several ACs) allowing for an optimisation of time and resources.

Lastly, he clarifies that, in principle, the item on Svalbard would remain within WG2.

WG2 Chair elect taking over on 1 June, Emil Remisz, voices his support for the proposals tabled by the Chair and offers his collaboration to formalise them.

The following **ACTION is suggested: LDAC Chair (Iván López) and WG2 Chair (Emil Remisz) agree to make a list of RFMOs and to draft a specific proposal to be formally approved at the next Executive Committee meeting scheduled for May in Berlin.**

7. State of play of partnerships and collaborations:

7.1. FAO

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, Secretary General, informs that progress of the newly established [FAO Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management](#) will be followed up.

He also notes that a consultant representing FAO will attend the Berlin Seminar to present a recent study on the modalities and types of fisheries agreements in the world.

As for LDAC interaction in future FAO meetings, the unit on International Governance will be consulted as to what the best way to proceed is, recalling that so far attendance is granted in their capacity as members of the EU delegation, but that there might be a possibility to request observer status, which would entail different rights and obligations.

Finally, he informs that although there was a FAO consultation on social responsibility in fisheries and aquaculture value chains focusing on analysing the specific Annex addressing industrial fisheries, development of the remaining Annexes is yet to take place, with special interest in that on processing and artisanal fisheries. The LDAC has been allocated a seat to participate as qualified stakeholder and the Secretariat will keep members informed on future consultations.

7.2. ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, Secretary General, reports that there has been an important change in ATLAFCO, since a new Executive Secretary was appointed some weeks ago replacing Mr. Benabbou. The LDAC will send a welcoming letter as soon as possible and will contact the new Secretary appointed by the Moroccan government, Mr. Taoufik El Ktiri, inviting him to organise the annual coordination meeting in the coming months.

7.3. AFRIFISH-Net

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, Secretary General, explains that there is a smooth relationship with the AFRIFISH-Net Secretariat and Chair and that work is evolving in an appropriate way thanks to the monthly virtual coordination meetings held between both organisations that foster collaboration in the fields agreed in the MoU signed last year in Stockholm.

As a result, a series of actions are being carried out, and information about them will be timely provided in future meetings.

With no other issues to address, the session is adjourned by the LDAC Chair, Mr. Iván López, thanking speakers for the quality of their presentations, members and observers for their attendance and participation, the LDAC Secretariat for their technical work and their efforts in organising and coordinating logistics and documents, and the sound technician and the interpreting team for their technical quality and excellent work, respectively.

The meeting is closed.

ANNEX I: List of attendees
Long Distance Advisory Council Executive Committee
Brussels, 7 March 2024; 14:30-17:00h

Members

1. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
2. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
3. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
4. Raúl García. WWF Spain
5. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
6. Edelmiro Ulloa. OPP3/OPNAPA/ACEMIX
7. Despina Symons. EBCD
8. Felicidad Fernández. ANFACO-CECOPECA/AIPCE
9. Emil Remisz. NAPO
10. Juan Manuel Trujillo. ETF
11. Iris Ziegler. SEAS AT RISK (Zoom)

Chairs and Vice Chairs of Working Groups

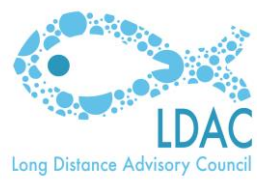
12. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL (WG1)
13. Julio Morón. OPAGAC (WG4)
14. Julien Daudu. EJF (WG5)
15. Daniel Voces. EUROPECHE (WG5)

Observers

16. Janne Posti. CONXEMAR Brussels
17. Joelle Philippe. CFFA-CAPE
18. Margarita Mancebo. Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) Secretariat General for Fisheries, Spain (Zoom)
19. David Vivas. UNCTAD
20. Vassilis Dokalis. DG MARE B1
21. Konstantinos Kalamatis. EP MEP Assistant MATO/MILLÁN MON.
22. Carlos Lorenzo. Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) Secretariat General for Fisheries, Spain
23. Alberto Martin. MSC Spain

LDAC Secretariat

24. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC



25. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC

26. Marta de Lucas. LDAC (Zoom)