

MINUTES
LDAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Venue: Hotel Martin's EU (Bd Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels)
Thursday 13 March 2024
14:00h-16:30h CET

Chair: Iván López van der Veen
Vice Chairs: Vanya Vulperhost, Julio Morón and Marc Ghiglia
Secretariat (rapporteurs): Alexandre Rodríguez and Manuela Iglesias

1. Welcome by the LDAC Chair, Mr. Iván López van der Veen

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, welcomes LDAC members, observers and representatives of Member States, as well as invited experts and officials of the European Commission (DG MARE). He reminds attendees that this is an in-person meeting, with only a handful of invited experts and members following the meeting remotely for justified reasons. Simultaneous interpretation services are provided from/to English, French and Spanish.

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

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

2. Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved with no comments or modifications.

3. Approval of the minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting

The minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting held on 7 November 2024 in Madrid were circulated in writing prior to the meeting and are put forward for adoption. They are approved without comments or modifications.

4. Presentation of EU work priorities related to International Ocean Governance and External Dimension of CFP – Fernando Andresen Guimaraes Director B - DG MARE

The newly appointed Director B from DG MARE, Fernando Andresen Guimaraes, started his intervention by pledging his commitment to listen the LDAC concerns and read our advice as a privileged forum of dialogue with stakeholders with knowledge and expertise in the international dimension of the CFP.

Mr Andresen-Guimaraes continued by summarising the work priorities identified by MARE for 2025. He referred to the complex geopolitical environment that has an impact on European overarching policies beyond fisheries. He also underlined the opportunities to enhance EU role in the regional arena and strengthen cooperation with partner countries.

Key themes highlighted by Director B of MARE, Mr. Andresen Guimaraes

1. Policy and legislative framework: he mentions the mission letter issued by Von der Leyen to Commissioner Kadis, including the formulation of an EU Oceans Pact, emphasis on competitiveness and level playing field, and reinforcing the External Dimension of the CFP. In relation to the latter, he announced the imminent launch of a consultation on an EU strategy on Fisheries External Action, aimed to conclude with a Communication to be published on 2026, and of which the ED of the CFP is part of it.
2. International Ocean Governance - Multilateral, regional and bilateral fora and agreements. He highlighted as landmark event for this year the third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice in mid-June. DG MARE will push for speedy ratification of BBNJ, reactivating the High Ambition Coalition for reaching 60 ratifications. He also showed its motivation to create an international platform for Ocean Science. At multilateral level, there is a hope to conclude WTO work to reach an agreement on fisheries subsidies at the 14th Ministerial Conference that will be held in 2026.
3. Regional level: EU work and engagement in RFMOs. They have a great influence and impact on sound conservation and management of fish stocks, but also a platform to deliver on BBNJ treaty and fostering fair competition and level playing field between fishing operators, ensuring compliance and helping in the fight against IUU fishing. He reminded that the EU tabled 45 proposals in all RFMOs where it is a contracting party, adding up to more than 30pc of the total. Some examples are the proposal on FADs in IOTC; NAFO management measures on northern cod; CMM for tropical tunas in ICCAT, including management of BFT; proposals for implementation of fins naturally attached policy; or enforcement of MPAs in CCMLAR, amongst others.

One aspect to highlight is the major legislative exercise that the EU must do every year to transpose RFMO resolutions into EU law. This year for first time there will be an omnibus transposition regulation aimed to fast track this process.

4. Old and new generation of SFPAs. The LDAC is invited to contribute to shape the content of the new generation of SFPAs by providing feedback and replies to questions posed by the EC. It is important to engage in dialogues with like-minded countries that can be key players to support EU proposals on the International Ocean Governance arena. He mentions current negotiations with Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Sao Tomé and Cook Islands in 2025. Also, negotiations will start soon with Seychelles, Mauritania and Mauritius.
5. Fight against IUU fishing. He reminds the European Commission's zero-tolerance approach to IUU fishing and the effectiveness of the carding system. He mentions that the last months the efforts have concentrated on implementing the new electronic catch certificate through the IT-CATCH system which will contribute to an increased level playing field. Mr. Andresen encourages fishing industry members to use IT-CATCH and pass info to governments and third countries to use it as much as possible and move to digital software.

Questions from the floor – LDAC members and observers

The Chair, Iván López, thanks Mr Andersen Guimaraes for his succinct and complete summary of MARE work priorities for 2025 and 2026 and opens the floor for questions from members. Mr Lopez praises the DG MARE work at human power level given the limited human resources available and offers the help of the LDAC to ask for increased funding and resources to support their invaluable work.

Javier Garat, CEPESCA managing director, congratulates Mr Andersen for his recent appointment and supports increasing staff resources for Directorate B of MARE. The EU must be actively involved and present in all relevant international fora to defend the interest of the EU distant water fleet. Mr Garat regrets the bad press and image of EU fishers despite making efforts and be committed to sustainability of fish stocks. He offers his organisation to support and be present in side events in UNOC3 in Nice.

Regarding BBNJ, they support its adoption and implementation but are concerned with the only focus on achieving 30% of MPAs in 2030 by limiting or prohibiting fishing activities without further evidence. He reminds that non-undermining principle on the work of RFMOs should prevail and other maritime economic activities should be better regulated.

Regarding environmental and trade fora such as CITES or CBD, Mr Garat request a more active presence of DG MARE, as currently the EU positions are made and led by DG ENV and TRADE. Mr Garat asks for further collaboration and coordination among DGs. On IUU fishing, we have a very powerful tool in the Regulation but need to better control China and consider showing them the yellow card .

Mr. Andresen thanks the offer of collaboration in UNOC and the support to ask for additional resources for MARE B. On RFMOs, he agrees that they should be important on BBNJ and have a say, and we need to focus on sensible implementation.

Béatrice Gorez (CFFA-CAPE), states that SFPAs are very important tools of good governance both on the access and sectoral support axes. SFPAs serve to enhance dialogue with third countries, and allocate financing for research, science, capacity building, or gender equity, amongst others. Ms. Gorez also reminds the need for the creation of an RFMO for the conservation and management of small pelagic stocks in West Africa. She affirms that these resources are essential for food security of the coastal countries, and there is a need to monitor more strictly supply and value chains that use these species for fishmeal / fish oil.

Mr Andresen agrees that SFPAs are an extraordinary tool in potential but quite challenging in implementation. He clarifies that SFPAs cannot be a substitute for development assistance funds and an adequate balance must be strike between financing access to fishing and sectoral support aimed to develop sustainable fishing. MARE B is currently in the middle of the process of reflection on how the new generation of SFPAs will look like and feedback from the LDAC is highly welcome at this stage.

Dr Iris Ziegler (Seas at Risk) stated that to achieve the goals of sustainable fisheries and a healthy ocean status we must look not only at target species but also at by-catch and overall impact of fishing activities in the marine ecosystem. She noted that the EU Ocean Pact contains an “Ocean Deal” similar to the “Green Deal”. She agreed with the importance achieving economic growth and income and fostering EU competitiveness, but also plead to not forget the recovery of species and habitats and the environmental sustainability.

At UNOC3 in Nice, the EU must foster the prompt ratification of BBNJ and clarify interactions and role of RFMOs. On LPF, the EU must lead by example, with sustainable management for all species and preserving ecosystems in the RFMOs where they are contracting party.

Tim Heddema (Dutch Pelagic Freezer Trawlers Association) asks about the role of ocean science in UNOC3, and if the role that industry plays to gather and analyse data is going to be discussed there.

Juan Manuel Trujillo (ETF) mentions the letter signed jointly between ETF and EUROPECHE asking the EU to champion and defend minimum labour and social standards stemming from UN, ILO, IMO, and FAO.

Mr Andresen mentions that the goal of the EU Ocean Pact is to bring together marine and fisheries issues. At UNOC, the International Platform for Ocean Science will be launched. This is an UN-funded programme which will bring together all elements of Ocean Science. Regarding the possibility of the fishing industry participation in such a platform, he will check with colleagues and revert back to the LDAC. Regarding labour standards and conditions, we have the shared goal of elevating labour conditions on all (EU and non-EU) fleets and ensure that those who would benefit from lower labour conditions are not allowed to do that. He believes that initiatives at RFMOs are the way to do that, with the forthcoming IOTC Annual Meeting as an opportunity to put forward an EU proposal on this subject (currently in work with MS).

Francisco Mari (Bread for the World) asks that DG MARE is more visible and vocal on discussions out of the box regarding linkages between oceans and fisheries.

Anne France Mattlet (EUROPECHE tuna group) made an intervention on the lack of level playing field between EU and non-EU fleet and the negative impact on the competitiveness. She says that rules must allow all fleets to operate under the same conditions, reminding that EU fleets have to comply with strict rules on MCS but others do not have the same standards.

Raúl García (WWF Spain), says that Advisory Councils are an example of dialogue, tolerance and respect, which is needed in these troubled times. He reminds that we mainly operate by consensus in decision making and share common values on sustainability and ecological and fair transition schemes. On level playing field, he supports raising the standards both at internal (between EU MS within the EU) and external (EU vis a vis non-EU operators and companies)

Mr Andresen reassured that LPF is an important objective for the Commission and they will take efforts to make it operational. On Autonomous Tariff Quotas (ATQs), the EC has commissioned a study on impact assessment of these measures.

In the coming weeks, the EC will launch a public consultation on sustainability criteria for ATQs to gather as much info as possible, strike an adequate balance for our fleets between access to resource and fishery products and achieving sustainability of fish resources.

ACTION – The LDAC will keep in contact with Mr Andresen and his team on the ongoing consultations and invite them to participate regularly on future LDAC meetings, time and availability permitting.

5. LDAC Work plan, meetings and logistics for first half of 2025

5.1- Secretariat's report on state of play on draft LDAC advice/recommendations for Annual Work Programme 2024/2025.

The Executive Secretary, Alexandre Rodríguez, made an update on these topics. The presentation can be found [here](#).

ACTION – The ExCom noted the progress made and approved the way forward.

5.2- LDAC work calendar of meetings

Alexandre Rodríguez presented the updated work meetings calendar (including Focus Groups) until May 2025.

DECISION - The members agreed to the meetings calendar as presented.

5.3- Update on Vigo meetings of 13-14 May - GA, EXCOM and Seminar on evaluation of the CFP

The Chair, Iván López, gave an update on these meetings, indicating that on Tuesday 13th May in the morning there will be two sessions, one for the Executive Committee and the other for the Annual General Assembly. After a lunch break it will be the turn for the high-level seminar on the evaluation of the CFP hosted by the Port of Vigo which will be structured as follows:

- On Tuesday 13th May in the afternoon there will be the opening with a keynote speaker from the Spanish Secretariat of Fisheries and sessions I on international ocean governance + BBNJ and II on towards a new generation of SFPAs;
- On Wednesday 14th May there will be a full day session opened by a keynote speaker from DG MARE and three thematic panels on fight against IUU fishing, social dimension of CFP, and how to leverage the power of the EU market. The format of the panels will be made up of 3-5 invited panelists that will address questions posed by the moderator (LDAC Chair or Vice Chairs) and then open the floor for attendees for at least 30-45 minutes.
- On Thursday 15th of May there will be optional activities and trips to the Auction of Vigo and port facilities (TBC). The final draft programme will be soon circulated among all members and interested observers.

The Chair opened the floor for questions from members:

Francisco Mari (Bread for the World) asked to include a debate on implementation of WTO agreement on harmful fisheries subsidies, which is close to be ratified. He would like to have a visit to EFCA premises, particularly to show to those colleagues coming from Africa.

Raúl García (WWF Spain) suggested to organize on 15 May a visit to the fish auction as well as a shark processing plant so NGOs have a better understanding on how Fins naturally attached policy is implemented and how traceability works along the value chain.

Janne Posti (CONXEMAR) nominates its Managing Director, Yobana Bermudez, to be invited as panelist to the market and trade imports panel. He added that she could also bring some perspectives of the Market Advisory Council if needed given her role as Chair there.

ACTION- The LDAC Secretariat will circulate the final draft programme of the Vigo Seminar on the External Dimension of the CFP as well as an invitation including logistics and a link to register to this meeting to all LDAC members and target observers in the coming weeks.

6. Administrative and financial issues:

6.1- Update on LDAC second performance review 2021-2025 (Alexandre Rodriguez - Benoit Guerin)

The Executive Secretary, Alexandre Rodríguez, reminded that the idea of carrying out a comprehensive independent and external performance review came from the LDAC and was presented at an Inter-AC coordination with DG MARE in 2018. The Commission encouraged the LDAC to take the lead on a voluntary basis and as a result the LDAC commissioned its first one in the years 2018 and 2019 covering the period from 2015 to 2020. The recommendations stemming from this exercise were presented at another Inter-AC and, as a result, the EC included on a Delegated Act amending certain provisions to improve the functioning of the AC a legal obligation for each AC to carry out an independent and external performance review every 5 years. As a result, the LDAC is entering this financial year into its second round. Following internal deliberations, the Secretariat fulfilled its task agreed at the last ExCom in November to develop terms of reference for this work. In terms of content, it was agreed that it would be more cost-effective to go through the recommendations of the first performance review and see what has been done and what has not been done since the last (pre-pandemic) time.

The tender was awarded to the same contractor, BG Consulting, following the best value for money criteria. The contractor also proposed to add a roadmap setting work priorities for the next 5-year period, i.e. 2026-2030.

Alexandre then gave the floor to the appointed consultant, Benoit Guerin, who provided an update on its work initiated in February and the methodology, time plan and next steps.

The Chair, Iván López, thanked Alexandre and Benoit for the context provided and asked Benoit to include Inter-AC work on ICCAT and the leadership of the LDAC in certain horizontal topics as part of this evaluation. He also suggested to look at the Mission letter to Commissioner Kadis for inspiration to inform LDAC work priorities in the roadmap for the next 5 years.

ACTION – Benoit Guerin will continue with the work on the performance review (in person and online interviews, sending an online questionnaire, attending meetings, and drafting recommendations and a report) and provide an updated presentation including its preliminary findings during the next LDAC Executive Committee that will be held in Vigo on 13 May.

6.2- Information on procedure for elections of LDAC Ex. Com members, Chair + Vice Chairs (01/06/2025-31/05/2028)

Manuela Iglesias, LDAC Secretariat, updated on this point and explained the rules that can be found here: https://www.ldac.eu/images/EN_Electoral_Procedure_Excom_may25_.pdf

ACTION – The Secretariat will launch the election procedure for both the positions of Chairs and Vice Chairs and the members of the Executive Committee in a period which will go from 2 April to 5 May. During that period, the Secretariat will gather expressions of interests to identify the candidates for the seats. The candidates will be announced prior to the meeting and the election procedure will take place at the next General Assembly meeting in Vigo on 13 May in accordance with the LDAC rules of procedure.

7. Report on Inter AC work and EC priorities for first quarter 2025:

7.1- Preparation of the Inter-AC meeting with the EC (Brussels, 8-9 April 2025)

Alexandre Rodríguez explained that the LDAC Bureau/Management Team is currently preparing the statement and ideas to be conveyed at this forum. There is an invitation for a maximum of 7 representatives who will be mainly composed of LDAC Chairs, Vice Chairs and Secretary, with a link also to participants to follow the meeting online which will be facilitated to all LDAC members.

ACTION – The Secretariat will share with all members participating at this meeting the content of the statement to be made by the LDAC delegates at the Inter-AC meeting on 8-9 April.

7.2-MARE workshop with Advisory Councils on the Implementation of new EU Control Regulation (5 Feb)

Alexandre Rodríguez updated this point mentioning that this is an initiative from MARE to regularly brief the Advisory Councils on where they are regarding state of play and law making (i.e. Delegated and Implementing Acts) necessary for the full implementation of the new Fisheries Control System. In terms of format of the meeting, there was a general part of horizontal topics followed by a Q&A session dedicated to the North Western Waters, North Sea, Pelagic Stocks and Baltic Sea ACs in relation to stocks within EU waters. At the end of the meeting, the LDAC had its own dedicated session of 1 hour moderated by Julien Daudu to make questions to the DG MARE staff on the provisions related to the external fleet of the EU. Those questions will be compiled and submitted in the form of a written letter that will be circulated for fast-track adoption in the coming weeks.

ACTION – A LDAC letter compiling some of the questions made by the LDAC representatives to DG MARE related to provisions on the EU external fishing fleet will be submitted in the coming weeks for fast-track consultation and, if agreed, submitted to DG MARE services for reply.

7.3-Energy Transition Partnership (ETP) for EU fisheries and Aquaculture

Alexandre Rodriguez explained that there is a dedicated ETP working group on distant water fleet chaired by Mati Sarevet which meets regularly. The LDAC cannot be a member of this working group as it is for fishing sector members only but will follow with interest the work and reports produced and recommendations made by the group and try to participate, when possible, to public workshops (there is one in April) and side-events (e.g. EMD 2025 in Cork). Also, the LDAC might consider providing its expertise or feedback in the form of advice if requested and endorsed by the LDAC ExCom.

ACTION: The Secretary and relevant members that are involved in this group agreed to provide ongoing information on the development and work progress made by the ETP working Group on distant water fleet in 2025.

7.4-Fisheries and Oceans dialogue roundtable on European Oceans Pact (February)

Iván López, LDAC Chair, shared his impressions on how this meeting went and explained the content of the LDAC Statement which is available here:

AOB (only information points admitted)

The LDAC Chair, Mr. Iván López, recalls that the next Executive Committee meeting will be held in Vigo on 13 May.



With no other issues to address, the session is adjourned by the LDAC Chair 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 assistance and excellent work, respectively.

The meeting is closed.

ANNEX I: List of attendees
Long Distance Advisory Council
Executive Committee
Brussels, 13 March 2025, from 14:00 to 16:30

EXCOM MEMBERS

1. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA – LDAC Chair
2. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA – LDAC First Vice Chair
3. Marc Ghiglia. UAPF/CNPMEM – LDAC Third Vice Chair
4. Emil Remisz. High Seas Fish Producers Organization – Chair WG2
5. Tim Heddemma. Pelagic Freezer trawler Association – Vice Chair WG2
6. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE – Chair WG4
7. Julien Daudu. EJF – Chair WG5
8. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
9. Raúl García. WWF Spain
10. Edelmiro Ulloa. OPNAPA
11. Iris Ziegler. Seas at Risk
12. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
13. Despina Symons. EBCD
14. Francisco Mari. BFW
15. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL

EXCOM OBSERVERS

16. Anne-France Mattlet. Européche tuna group – Chair WG1
17. Daniel Voces. EUROPÊCHE – Vice-Chair WG5
18. Fernando Andresen Guimaraes. Director B - DG MARE
19. Inés Leiva. MAPA, SGP, Spain
20. Rosalie Tukker. EUROPECHE
21. Janne Posti. Conxemar
22. Joelle Philippe. CFFA-CAPE
23. Margarita Mancebo. MAPA Secretaría General de Pesca (Zoom)
24. Benoit Guerin. BG Sea Consulting

LDAC SECRETARIAT

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