

**EFCA Advisory Board Meeting  
Vigo, Wed 23 April 2025 - 9:30 – 13:00h**

**SUMMARY OF LDAC STATEMENTS MADE DURING THE MEETING**

State of play from the ACs – LDAC:

**1. Introduction – opening remarks (Iván López – LDAC Chair)**

- Thanks to EFCA for its continuous efforts in engaging with the LDAC and participating in our meetings when invited, much appreciated.
- Since the last Advisory Board on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 the LDAC held:
  - LDAC Focus Group on External Dimension of the CFP and Executive Committee and a Workshop in Madrid on 7<sup>TH</sup> November. We were pleased to count both with Susan Steele and Pedro Galache who gave an excellent [presentation on the EFCA work priorities for 2025 on the external dimension of CFP](#).
  - LDAC Working Groups 1,2,4,5 and Executive Committee in Brussels on 11-13<sup>th</sup> of March, where aspects related to implementation of Fisheries Control Systems and IUU fishing Regulation were provided by DG MARE Heads of Unit and high-level officials, including the first appearance of the Director B on International Fisheries in an AC unveiling MARE priorities in the field of international ocean governance.
  - On 13 May, we will have for first time in the Port of Vigo our General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings. On 13 and 14 May we will also hold a [high-level workshop on the Evaluation of the CFP focused on the International Dimension](#) with panels on International Ocean governance and fight against IUU fishing. We are grateful to Susan Steele and Neill Ansell for their confirmation of participation as panellists in this event.

**2. What has the LDAC achieved since the last Advisory Board Meeting?**

**(Alexandre Rodríguez, LDAC Executive Committee)**

- Since October 2024, the LDAC has been working on several pieces of advice that have some relevance to the fisheries control system outside EU waters. Most of our recommendations in preparation for RFMOs such as NEAFC, ICCAT or WCPFC contain a dedicated section on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and fight against IUU fishing, as well as other horizontal issues such as measurement of fishing capacity, implementation of a regional observer scheme, development of Management Strategy Evaluation, adoption of a High Seas Boarding Inspection Scheme and full traceability and monitoring of transshipments

at sea, ICCAT and GFCM cooperation on implementation on resolutions related to driftnet ban and usage.

- In terms of Inter-AC work, the LDAC has been working in the last two years with the CC-S, CCRUP and MEDAC on exchanging views and discussing topics of common interest for developing our advice on ICCAT. A cooperation agreement was signed in 2024 and since then, we have endorsed pieces of advice from each other (e.g. LDAC endorsed opinion of CC-S on Albacore Tuna, MEDAC endorsed LDAC advice, a joint letter was sent on stakeholder involvement in developing on MSE based on the experience of BFT...). The ultimate aspiration and goal is to produce a single joint advice, and this year we will start looking together at horizontal issues including MCS and fight against IUU fishing.
- On IOTC, the LDAC produced an advice in preparation of the Annual Meeting which was held from 9 to 13 April in La Réunion. Although progress was achieved in global management frameworks for all tropical tuna stocks (YFT, SKJ and BET), concern remains on the control loopholes and uneven obligations among CPCs. Of particular concern is the decision to exempt Indonesia from the requirement to deploy IOTC-certified independent observers on at-sea transshipments (IOTC Regional Observer Programme). Given the crucial role of observers in verifying compliance and collecting reliable data, such exemptions may create significant loopholes in monitoring and increase the risk of IUU fishing.

More generally, discussions on high seas boarding and inspection and improved monitoring of gillnet fisheries failed to advance, largely due to persistent opposition from a small group of countries. Despite the EU proposal, crew labour standards were also absent from the discussions. Level playing field should be ensured through cooperation and commitment of IOTC coastal States to avoid a two-speed RFMO in terms of application of uniform rules and compliance affecting also transparency and sustainability.

#### References:

- [Recommendations for NAFO 46th Annual Meeting](#) (Sept 2024)
- [LDAC Advice on ICCAT annual meeting 2024](#) (Nov 2024)
- [LDAC advice in preparation for NEAFC 43rd Annual meeting](#) (Nov. 2024)
- [LDAC letter to DG MARE-INTPA - request for meeting on GLOBAL GATEWAY programme and linkages with EU fishing investments in third countries R-07-Ej.18 \(2024-2025\)/WG4-WG5](#) (Dec. 2024)
- LDAC is currently working on provisions related to implementation of level playing field from the perspective of competitiveness and sustainability, in RFMOs, EEZs of third countries and high seas. To level the playing field between EU and non EU fishing operators and control of products entering into the EU market, it is essential that the management of fisheries globally be improved, and that sufficient capacity

and budget are provided for DG MARE in particular maintain the EU's efforts to achieve the IOG agenda, lead sustainability and tackle IUU fishing. The distortive effects of an uneven level playing field negatively affect the EU fisheries sector, whose competitiveness is undermined by players not subject to equivalent high environmental, social, or labour standards.

### 3. A brief look at issues of interest to the LDAC in the coming months

- On **evaluation of CFP**, the LDAC has contributed to the public consultation on the CFP with a summary report on recent advice produced in the External Dimension of the CFP and is now deliberating to formulate recommendations on how to improve the International Dimension of CFP setting also linkages with the External Fisheries Action Strategy that was recently launched by the EU, with a Communication planned to be published sometime in 2026.
- We will continue to follow **developments in RFMOs** very closely – we have submitted in February the advice on IOTC whose annual meeting has just been concluded last week and will soon start preparations for ICCAT.
- On **SFPAs**, the LDAC is working at Focus Group level to develop some advice with recommendations on the new generation of SFPAs including aspects such as regional approach to shared stocks, harmonization of conditions for access of stocks, share of payment of fees by industry, improvement of accountability and transparency, inclusion and implementation of transparency, non-discrimination and social clauses, effective use of sectoral support, etc.
- On the **new Fisheries Control System**, an Inter-AC workshop was hosted on 5 February by MARE unit C5 in Brussels. After a general part with horizontal questions, there were thematic sessions for different ACs, with a separate one for the LDAC related to state of play, timing and implementation of new provisions related to the EU external fishing fleet. The session lasted one hour and was moderated by our WG5 Chair and EFCA representative, Julien Daudu. The questions posed there were compiled in a [dedicated letter which was sent on 10 April to DG MARE](#) asking for written reply. Some topics posed in the were definition of EU fishing vessels other than catching vessels; prior notification of landings in third country ports and publication of list of designated ports for such purposes; control of transshipments and list of authorised ports in non-EU countries; inspection of forced labour linked to fishing activities; definition and implementation of risk assessment for REM/CCTV; amongst others.

(Vanya Vulperhorst – LDAC First Vice Chair)

- On **fight against IUU fishing**, we continue following IUU developments and will increasingly be looking into the implementation of electronic catch certificate via IT-CATCH. The LDAC is also currently under a consultation to approve jointly with the MAC an advice titled “urgent need for effective implementation of EU import control rules across EU Member States” . This draft advice is based on a proposal

from the member EJP relying on the findings published in a Report from the EU NGOs IUU Fishing Coalition.

- To adhere to the zero tolerance policy to IUU fishing, the EU should take action to limit the use of **flags of convenience** for EU citizens by requiring Member States to collect information on nationals that own vessels flagged to non-compliant flag of convenience countries, as flagged in the 2021 LDAC – MAC advice to fully adopt and/or implement existing measures designed to close the loopholes offered by non-compliant flags of convenience in fisheries.

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#### **Background information on the LDAC:**

- The LDAC's mandate includes all "non-EU waters", i.e. not subject to the jurisdiction/EEZ of the European Union.
- Its main objectives are to prepare evidence-based advice and provide recommendations to the European Commission and Member States aiming to contribute to an effective implementation of the external dimension of the CFP.
- As such the LDAC is working on a wide range of issues such as SFPAs, RFMOs, International Ocean Governance, or Labour and Social aspects of external fishing fleets, competitiveness and level playing field, amongst others.
- We also deal with horizontal matters including reinforcing Monitoring, Control and Surveillance systems.
- The LDAC has been actively engaged since its creation in 2005 in promoting an enhanced role and mandate of the European Fisheries Control Agency in assisting the Commission to implement the international dimension of the CFP.
- The LDAC has been a long-time supporter of EFCA's expansion of its work in the international arena.
- In our meetings we regularly discuss with DG MARE about the state of play of the implementation of the Fisheries Control Systems (incl. Control Reg, IUU Reg and SMEFF Reg) as well as measures to increase transparency and reporting of fishing activities.
- We also have been quite prolific in producing advice on different trade, health, labour and development of cooperation policy issues, including control of imports and traceability of fisheries value chains.
- We are committed to continue actively engaging with EFCA.