

MINUTES

32nd meeting of LDAC Working Group 5 - HORIZONTAL ISSUES

Wednesday, 18 October 2023, 09:30-17:00h CET

Venue: Martin's Brussels EU Hotel (Bd 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 and representatives of the European Commission (DG MARE, ENV) and of EU Member States' national administrations.

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

2. Approval of the minutes of the last WG5 meeting held in Brussels on 23 March 2023.

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

4.1. Update from DG MARE on latest developments regarding carding process and implementation of IUU Regulation.

The EC representative, Mr. Pawel Swiderek, informs about the latest developments regarding the carding process and the implementation of the IUU Regulation in the following countries:

- TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: they were recently given a red card for different reasons, and several missions have taken place in the country. As for the legislative framework, their Fisheries Act dates back to 1916, without there being any regulation on fisheries management or conservation. With DG MARE's technical assistance, they have committed themselves to passing the new Fisheries Bill this year.

Trinidad and Tobago are considered a flag of convenience country, and although they have decided to adopt the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), they are not able to implement it. He adds that an important fishing player and neighbouring country is Venezuela, who carries out many landings there and where there are many problems regarding IUU fishing.

- ECUADOR: after receiving a yellow card from the EU and due to the fact that presidential elections have just been held, they hope to be able to count on the commitment of the new authorities responsible for fisheries to carry out the necessary reforms needing improvement.



- PANAMA: a change recently took place in the fisheries administration. The new legislation is not fully effective even though many infringements have been detected. The penalty system is not sufficiently discouraging.

- VIETNAM: the EU has conducted a field audit, and five years after the yellow card, the loopholes and implementation problems are still there but with the aggravating circumstance that there is no high-level political commitment. He regrets this situation, since the aim of the carding system and of the IUU Regulation is to foster cooperation with the third country, and the role of the EC is to provide guidance and support to solve deficiencies in the adoption and implementation of the regulation.

- CAMEROON: they still have a red card, since they have not progressed as expected by the EC. It would be advisable for the country authorities to pay more attention in this regard in order to amend their legislation and fisheries policy and thus understand the obligations they need to fulfil.

- GHANA: progress made is not enough. Next year, the EC will send a mission to the country to reassess the situation on the ground. He highlights that the authorities of Ghana are analysing the situation of trawl fishing and saiko, with the possibility of there being closures by area or gear bans.

- SIERRA LEONE: it has problems with the implementation of its fisheries legislation. The EC is waiting to see if with the new minister for fisheries they may complete their regulatory reforms and implement their legislation correctly.

- LIBERIA: the situation here is very similar to that in Sierra Leone, since there are still deficiencies in the implementation of their fisheries legislation and sanctions on infringements are practically non-existent.

- SENEGAL: they have many difficulties in terms of compliance.

Then, Mr. Swiderek, EC, explains the latest developments regarding the review of the Fisheries Control Regulation, informing that it was voted at the European Parliament the day before. The text contains all the items and the legal basis for the implementation and compulsory use of the electronic catch certificate IT CATCH. He summarises the new risk analysis methodology for verification of catch certificates which seeks consistent and harmonised implementation by all EU MS in order to strengthen measures against countries not cooperating in the fight against IUU fishing, such as the closure of European ports to vessels flying the flag of those countries, or measures for the ultimate beneficiaries of European ownership. Another example is the review of articles 19 and 20 on the control over transshipments in third countries' ports and in the high seas.

He highlights that changes regarding the IUU Regulation will be implemented 2 years after its entry into force, planned for December 2023 or January 2024. This Regulation will affect many actors including MS authorities issuing CC, authorities in third countries validating the documentation, importers/exporters to/from the EU, fishing operators and other stakeholders.



In addition, he points out that there are numerous challenges when improving teaching on the use of new digital tools in order to enhance traceability and transparency of fishing activities, with an innovative approach that is different to the existing one regarding risk management to incorporate technological developments that have taken place since the Control Regulation came into force in 2009.

Questions asked by the members and answers given by DG MARE:

- ECUADOR: if everything goes well, the Ecuadorian authorities are expected to commit themselves to strengthening the fight against IUU fishing, but this is a political decision to be taken by the country.

- THAILAND: due to local fishers' pressure and electoral promises, they announced that they would modify the fisheries legislation. The EU will continue the dialogue with them and will keep the fight against IUU fishing as a priority.

- PANAMA: changes have been perceived in the commitment acquired by those responsible for fisheries administration. The implementation of penalties has been improved, but they are still trying to build a compliance culture and there is still much room for improvement.

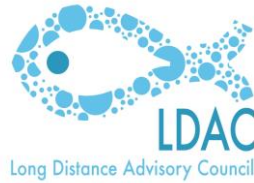
- VIETNAM: as in previous years and despite existing cooperation and preparation regarding the new regulation, implementation is still deficient, whether in terms of port control or updated registry of fishing vessels. There are thousands of vessels with Vietnamese flag that are still being seized or sanctioned in neighbouring coastal countries. One of the reasons for this is that the provinces do not follow the "zero tolerance" policy against IUU fishing established by the central State.

- SIERRA LEONE and LIBERIA: the EU must be realistic regarding progress made due to the level of development of these countries and the scarce availability of technical and qualified human resources on the ground. In Sierra Leone there are problems related to the private registration of vessels fishing in the high seas and there is a proliferation of reefers flagging.

- GHANA: the EU is trying not to intervene in decisions regarding the sanctioning of operators if the country authorities themselves do not do so. They wish to provide them with further legal stability and technical support vis-à-vis management and control of their fisheries resources.

- COMOROS: they have resumed conversations with them, although the EU has to deal not only with the ministry for fisheries but also with others, such as the ministry for transport. The EC tries to help them and remains at the disposal of the different relevant ministries to provide them with assistance and technical guidance, for instance, through the conclusion of memoranda of understanding. In addition, they are signatories to PSMA and UNFSA, so they will try to address compliance of their obligations as flag State, including problems regarding the flags of convenience and the lack of control in the registration of vessels.

- BRAZIL: there is no active dialogue, but they trust cooperation with member States regarding French Guiana in terms of promotion of exchange of fisheries information and further attention by the Brazilian authorities with this country, without forgetting contacts with the French authorities.



As for article 38 and its implementation, he says that they cannot act against third country nationals, but what they can do is focus on effective owners that are EU nationals and that have interests in vessels flying the flag of third countries.

Regarding economic and social aspects, he explains that the EP proposed to reverse the burden of proof in relation to the EC proposal on imports and social standards (forced labour) to operators in all economic areas.

In relation to the EU Directive on money laundering, the Court of Justice of the EU has recently ruled that certain legal limits over the rights of the citizens in a specific context ought to be respected. Once the new provisions in article 39 are adopted, the EC plans to share the information insofar as possible.

4.2. Next steps: actions identified.

After a round of comments and some discussion among the members the following **ACTIONS** are agreed on:

- New EU fisheries control regulation:

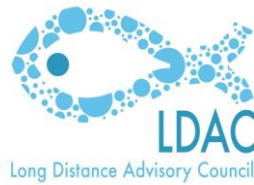
It is agreed that a new item be added to the agenda of the next WG5 meeting to discuss the content of this Regulation and how it affects the external fleet as well as the implementation of electronic certificates by means of the IT-CATCH system.

- EU Fishing Investments in Third Countries (joint ventures):

ACEMIX will share the report published on economic and social benefits of Galician and Spanish fishing investments in third countries so that it is distributed among all LDAC members.

- Proposal by CFFA-CAPE: the LDAC will consider the possibility of preparing a piece of advice requesting the establishment of a public registry of EU capital joint ventures that are present and implemented in third countries.

- Protecting fisheries observers: It is agreed that a letter be drafted on the key role of fisheries observers and the need to ensure their protection by vessels flying the flag of EU MS.



5. China's role in world fisheries and aquaculture

5.1. Update from DG MARE on bilateral dialogues with China: cooperation on fight against IUU fishing and international ocean governance.

The EC representative, Mr. Pawel Swiderek, explains that in 2015 a working group against IUU fishing was set up that shaped the framework initiative called "Ocean Partnership". He explains that they have annual meetings of this working group and meetings at high level. This year's meeting was held in China in September, with the attendance of DG MARE staff and of the Commissioner for Fisheries, Mr. Sinkevicius.

The working group against IUU fishing aims to establish a mutual trust relationship for the exchange of information and improvement of transparency of the activities of the Chinese external fishing fleet. The Chinese delegation was in favour of this collaboration and open to dialogue, considering the EU an ally in this regard. However, they request reciprocity from the EU, so that it also shows transparency with regard to the EU regulations affecting them.

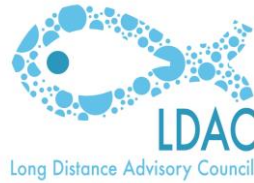
One of the priorities of this Working Group for the EU is to get China to adhere to and ratify FAO PSMA. In turn, Chinese authorities have shown their initial agreement to preparatory work, without acquiring specific commitments. Nevertheless, the EC is confident that it will become a reality. There are positive signs and indications, such as the increase of rigorous validity verifications of catch certificates by China, not accepting the entry of vessels that are suspicious of illegal fishing into their ports in the event of fraud detection. Moreover, China has adopted the WTO agreement on harmful fisheries subsidies. In addition, they have referred to potential infringements by their distant water fleet.

Besides, he points out that the issue of transparency is more complicated, since due to it not being completely enshrined in international law, they do not see it as a clear obligation. The EC made a proposal to prepare a "white or positive list" to be made public and kept updated, preferably in line with the FAO world registry of fishing fleets, although the final decision is up to sovereign flag States.

As for fishing vessels flying a foreign flag but owned by Chinese operators, he highlights that this is not under his responsibility, since it is the flag State who has to make public the information on these vessels and exercise control over the latter by means of its registry of fishing vessels and licences (e.g.: vessels from Ghana). He stresses China's fear that there is a desire to expel their fleet from countries like Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone for fishing grounds to be used by the EU.

As for the catch certification system, they have admitted that with the amendment to their control regulation, they will be able to sanction Chinese national operators regardless of the vessel flag. Furthermore, the new regulation will provide increased resources to sanction operators using fraudulent catch certificates to export to the EU market.

As for the WTO fisheries subsidies policy and the implementation of the FAO PSMA regulation, the EU will pressure for it to be implemented effectively. He adds that there is a rapid



development of the blue economy in China, and this may influence future country positions within multilateral organisations.

At the negotiations of the UN Treaty for Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), they showed their support to the EU regarding the conclusion and implementation of the agreement, but they do not want to talk about any marine protected area (MPA) in CCAMLR under the pretext of requiring further scientific evidence. He points out the position of China in favour of underwater mining exploitation activities in the high seas. In brief, significant developments have taken place in collaboration with the EU, but there is still ample room for improvement especially regarding coordination within RFMOs, which in many cases have conflicting interests to those of the EU in terms of conservation and fisheries management.

5.2. Follow up of EC reply to LDAC-MAC Advice on Addressing China's global distant water fleet activities implications for fisheries governance.

WG5 Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu, recalls that in December 2022 the LDAC sent the EC a piece of advice together with the MAC on Addressing China's global distant water fleet activities implications for fisheries governance. This piece of advice is available on the following link: https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC-MAC_Joint_Advice_China_Distant_Water_Fleets_13Dic2022.pdf

However, no reply has yet been received from the EC to the latter. Mr. Swiderek, EC representative, regrets the delay, and informs that it is now in the internal approval phase and that he hopes a reply will be sent soon.

5.3. Next steps: actions to take

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

- International trade with China and problems regarding exports of EU fisheries products: it is agreed that **a document or letter to DG TRADE, DG SANTE, DG MARE be prepared explaining the problem of licence renewal and sanitary registration of establishments for export to China due to new bureaucratic and administrative requirements including the submission of confidential and sensitive private data by European fishing companies.**

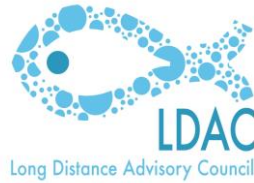
- IUU fishing and labour abuses related to the Chinese distant water fleets: it is agreed that, **once the EC reply to the latter is received, it will be carefully analysed and the aim will be to update the advice sent in December 2022 with the newly compiled information.**

6. Update by LDAC Secretariat on work plan and draft advice on:

6.1. Morocco

The advice coordinator, Mr. Raúl García, WWF, explains the processing status and content of the document after having carried out successive consultations via email and having received many comments.

Then, the General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, clarifies the process for an eventual approval of the advice that is expected to take place at the Executive Committee meeting to be held in November in Madrid.



After a round of comments among the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed on:

- **To distribute the updated draft advice with the comments received in the recent months among WG5 and WG4 members to submit it later on to the ExCom for approval.**

6.2. Impact of Climate Change on International Fisheries

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, summarises the workshop organised by the LDAC and held in Stockholm in May, the main topic of which was the impact of climate change on international fisheries.

After a round of comments by the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed on:

- **A draft piece of advice will be prepared that is based on the recommendations and results gathered at the workshop held in Stockholm.**

6.3. Deep-sea mining in the high seas: potential risks for fisheries.

The Secretary General, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, explains that the Secretariat is compiling information and scientific and technical evidence from multidisciplinary experts in this topic in order to update the elements to be included in the future LDAC advice.

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

- **To update the LDAC recommendations on deep-water mining and to invite those Advisory Councils that may be interested in drafting a joint piece of advice on this matter.**

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

7.1. Presentation by PEW on fisher mortality.

Mr. Peter Horn, PEW, makes a presentation on this matter that is available on this link: https://ldac.eu/images/PowerPoint_Fisher_Safety_Peter_Horn_LDAC_Oct_2023.pdf

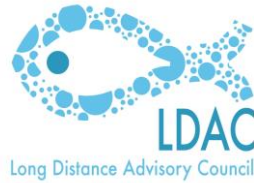
In addition, the research report prepared by FISH and the executive summary are available on these links:

https://ldac.eu/images/White_Paper_-_Triggering_Death_-_November_2022.pdf and
<https://ldac.eu/images/Fisher-Mortality-Brief-v3.pdf>

7.2. Update on European Social Partners Dialogue Committee work (Europêche/ETF)

Mr. Juan Manuel Trujillo, ETF, informs that European social partners have prepared several resolutions indicating social priorities for the future CFP and highlighting the importance of including aspects on crew safety and fisheries professional training.

He also explains the importance of topical issues in regulatory terms, such as decarbonisation of the fisheries sector, modernisation of the fisheries fleet or gross tonnage together with work and training conditions, recalling projects like “[Pillars of the Sea](#)” jointly carried out by Europêche and ETF. Moreover, he mentions the joint letter in response to the EC consultation on the safety directive for fishing vessels that is available on this link: <http://europeche.chil.me/download-doc/433854>



Finally, he recalls the [STECF report](#) presented on European Maritime Day, held in Brest, on improving CFP social and economic data.

The following **ACTION** is agreed: **to continue following up on the work carried out by the European Social Dialogue Committee and to receive reports in successive WG5 meetings.**

7.3. Presentation: A "carding system" to address the causes of systemic forced labour (EJF)

Mr. Ryan Corless, EJF, makes the presentation proposing the use of a carding or similar system to solve the systemic problem of forced labour in fisheries and that would complement the proposal for a Regulation of the Commission on prohibiting products made with forced labour 2022/0269 (COD).

The presentation is available on this link:

https://ldac.eu/images/EJF_Presentation-Carding_System_7.3.pdf

7.4. Items to be included in a potential future piece of advice on the social dimension by the LDAC.

After a round of comments and some discussion among the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed on:

- The LDAC will reflect upon the possibility of preparing a potential future piece of advice taking into account the proposal of EJF, but without necessarily following all recommendations.

8. Analysis of DG MARE Fisheries policy package (adopted on 21 February 2023):

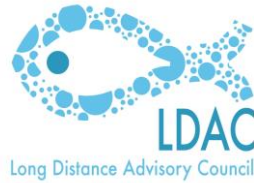
8.1. Communication on the functioning of the CFP: External Dimension.

The General Secretary, Mr. Rodríguez, summarises and gives some context regarding the Communication on the functioning of the CFP in terms of its impact on and references to its external dimension. He points out that the consultation general framework focuses on 3 aspects:

- 1) Enhancing selectivity of fishing gear and implementing the landing obligation
- 2) Improving governance
- 3) Harnessing the potential of innovation and sustainable investment

Then, Ms. Isabelle Garzon, EC representative, replies to the questions asked by the members, highlighting that the EU has implemented many actions related to international ocean governance, including the external dimension in it.

Ms. Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, enquires whether there will be a specific Communication on SFPAs. Ms. Garzon replies that a study on the retrospective assessment of SFPAs has been finalised and that they plan to use it to reflect upon how to have a consistent view optimising the use of all the tools they have in the most efficient and organised way. They are also analysing how to integrate everything in a long term strategy within the CFP external dimension.



Mr. Iván López, AGARBA, highlights the importance of having clear guidelines as to what the EC wants the LDAC to do in this regard, as well as to identify those specific topics where the LDAC may help them.

Ms. Vanya Vulperhorst, OCEANA, suggests that the EU promote joint discussion between MS and stakeholders and stresses the importance of improving transparency and the compilation, analysis and exchange of data related to the activity of the EU external fleet.

Ms. Garzon, EC, explains that they are working cross-sectionally at inter-AC level since it is a horizontal issue. Therefore, she invites the LDAC to make specific suggestions regarding their areas of interest or concern.

As for transparency, she says that the database of the EU external fleet is public and is regularly updated in accordance with provisions set out in the SMEFF Regulation. This is an important development and they will study the way to continue improving transparency and publication of fisheries data without violating the regulation on data protection and confidentiality of sensitive economic data.

Concerning the possibility of the LDAC presenting a piece of advice on the review of the CFP, more precisely on its external dimension, she says that it is a positive initiative and urges the LDAC to get on with it as soon as possible.

Regarding the CFP social dimension, she points out that the ILO conventions involve long procedures, but that the EU is at the avant-garde both in promoting its adoption and ratification by Member States and in articulating them in the EU regulations. She invites the LDAC to be proactive and to assist insofar as possible in the work that the European Social Dialogue Committee is carrying out in these areas.

Lastly, concerning the EU energy transition plan, she informs that a first European Partnership workshop on financing will be held in the weeks to come to achieve the appropriate financial package with sufficient funds to promote investments in energy efficiency for fishing vessels. In addition, as part of the EU Energy Transition Plan, they are committing themselves to studying the problems and practical hurdles that complicate operations for fleet segments, including the EU external fleet. She requests that the LDAC participate in this discussion and reflection and issue suggestions or recommendations for the EC to take into account. In this regard, there are two participation channels:

1. Through the "Energy Transition Partnerships", starting with the aforementioned first workshop on financing (including public-private co-funding);
2. By identifying practical aspects or technological and logistic bottlenecks to try and solve them with practical proposals.

8.2. Energy transition in the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector: Outcomes of the conference "Joining Forces for the Energy Transition in EU Fisheries and Aquaculture" (16 June 2023):



Mr. Francisco Fernández, Deputy Assistant Director of the General Sub-Directorate on Economic Sustainability and Social Affairs of the General Secretariat for Fisheries of Spain, makes a comprehensive presentation, which is available on this link:

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

8.3. Identification of items to develop future LDAC pieces of advice.

WG5 Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu, based on the discussions that have taken place, identifies two areas to work on:

1. Energy transition and decarbonisation.
2. External dimension of the CFP – he recommends drawing valuable and critical information from recently issued LDAC pieces of advice in order to prepare a draft to be discussed in future WG5 meetings.

With regard to energy transition and decarbonisation, Mr. Javier Garat, CEPESCA, stresses that it is essential to evaluate the dimension of the problem, since according to UNCTAD world fisheries fleet emissions for an estimated total of 4.1 million fishing vessels are around 0.1 and 0.5% of global CO₂ emissions, while the impact of the European fleet is 3% of these emissions, accounting for 0.01% in absolute terms. He suggests implementing realistic approaches and insists on the fact that the European fleet has already reduced its CO₂ emissions by 50% from the 1990s to the present day. He adds that to achieve this energy transition it is necessary to have attained at the same time technological, regulatory and logistic development to go hand in hand with it and not cause any unnecessary harm to the continuity of the fisheries activity in the EU.

Lastly, he informs that the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has presented a piece of advice on "the decarbonisation of the fishing fleet", where Mr. Garat himself has acted as rapporteur. He invites interested members to read it on the following link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023AE1572>

9. International Ocean Governance – Report/update by DG MARE on:

9.1 UN Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) (New York, June 2023)

EC representative, Mr. Marc Richir, DG MARE, informs that the [BBNJ Treaty](#) was adopted by consensus in May 2023, and he points out as the main achievement the fact that China finally joined in approving the latter after having received assurances of non-interference in the rules or regulation of their marine protected areas in the China Sea.

The agreement was open for signature on 20 September 2023 and was immediately signed by 82 countries and contracting parties, including the EU. The Treaty will come into force when at least 60 countries have ratified it and 180 days after the 60th ratification.

The aim of the EU is to actively work to promote the ratification of this Treaty by a number of countries that is sufficient for it to come into force prior to the next UN Ocean Conference planned for June 2025, co-organised by France and Costa Rica. He explains that technical discussions are already taking place in MS about how to make it legally fit in with national and EU legislations, as well as about the distribution of effective competences for its



implementation. The European Parliament will also issue its opinion on this regard, with the need to reach an agreement before the legislative elections to be held in June, since otherwise its adoption will be delayed for at least six months.

As for the following stages, the first COP meeting will get started, and they are now absorbed in informal discussions to launch the organisation committee.

9.2 16th UN Convention on Biodiversity (COP16, December 2023)

Ms. Nadja Steinfort, DG ENV, makes a presentation, which is available on the following link:

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

Mr. Marc Richir, DG MARE, explains that in terms of ocean and marine priorities, there are different areas such as biodiversity, IUU fishing or the blue economy, but gradually more attention is paid to marine biodiversity, to great extent due to the work carried out with FAO.

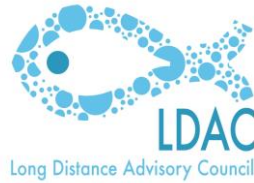
Ms. Steinfort, DG ENV, states that at EU level some measures or action plans will be mentioned in their contributions, but their implementation will have to wait until 2026.

As for the relationship between biodiversity and food security, she points out that it is a very important matter in the FAO context, but it was a pity that the Food Summit did not make sufficient reference to fisheries. Nevertheless, awareness has been raised about fisheries and aquaculture. There is great economic momentum and growth in China in terms of aquaculture activity, and this complicates the adoption of FAO global guidelines on aquaculture. Another very important issue is OECMs (other effective conservation measures). After the last CBD COP, awareness was raised regarding this concept and the need to promote it in the field of the renewal of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and the annual declaration of sustainable fisheries, and to frame it in the global biodiversity framework (GBF) together with Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in order to reach an appropriate balance between conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.

9.3 UNGA Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries (New York, 7-14 November 2023)

EC representative, Mr. Marc Richir, informs that the consultation will take place face-to-face from 7 to 14 November in New York in order to review and update the previous Resolution.

The head coordinator has presented 50 amendments contributed by the contracting parties and FAO, including several on the review of existing measures for the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and on the impact of trawl fishing. Mr. Richir thanks the LDAC members for their contributions on some text proposals put forward at the bilateral meeting held online some weeks ago, particularly regarding the interaction of BBNJ with CBD and the strengthening of the role of RFMOs in marine biodiversity, or the impacts of the blue economy and aquaculture in artisanal fisheries, among other issues.



9.4 ISA General Assembly and Council (Kingston, July 2023)

The EC representative, Mr. Marc Richir, welcomes the outcome of the Council and AG meetings held in July 2023, especially the decision according to which no commercial exploitation can be conducted before concluding the Mining Code.

There is now a new roadmap seeking to conclude the Mining Code in July 2025. They wish to get the ISA assembly involved, even in terms of the marine environment conservation policy, and he regrets that an agreement was not reached in the Council on this matter.

Mr. Rodríguez, General Secretary, asks the following questions:

- Is there going to be a formal assessment including stakeholder consultation on the impact of trawl fishing for VMEs?
- What is the role or mandate of the European Commission at ISA on the part of the Council and what relationship does it have with EU MS that are contracting parties?
- Could you provide further information about the FAO subcommittees and COFI meeting schedule for 2024?

Mr. Richir replies that the Commission is indeed compiling information to conduct an assessment on the Regulation adopted in 2008 on adverse impacts of trawl fishing on VMEs. To this end, a public enquiry process will be opened and individual and structured interviews will be carried out with experts and organisations, including the LDAC.

As for ISA, he replies that despite the Commission's desire for further coordination, the situation has not changed and the EU still has a mere observer role at ISA, without interfering in the decision by MS who have different views related to this field, with some of them supporting a moratorium or precautionary pause (France, Spain...) and others not supporting it (Belgium, Italy...).

As for the future meeting schedule for FAO, he replies that in the last COFI meeting the proposal related to the new Sub-Committee on fisheries management was approved, and it will be meeting from 11 to 14 January online only. This meeting will be funded by the EU and is open to observers, prior registration with FAO. In addition, he points out that FAO is going to organise a specific workshop on transshipments, to be held in Madrid from 11 to 13 December, after having held regional workshops in other continents.

The joint FAO-ILO-IMO meeting on IUU fishing and related issues will be held at the beginning of next year, probably in Geneva.

On the FAO sub-committee on fisheries, he stresses that it is open to attendance by observers, indicating that it will be held online.

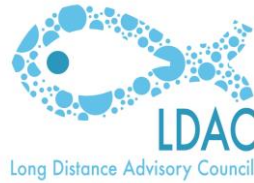
10. Conclusions and Closure

The Chair, Mr. Daudu, informs that a summary of the agreed actions will be sent in writing by the Secretariat and he notes that the next WG5 meeting will be held in March 2024 in Brussels.



To wrap up, he thanks participants for their contributions, the interpreters for the quality of their work and the Secretariat for their great coordination work.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING



**Annex I: List of LDAC WG5 attendees
Brussels, 18 October 2023**

WG5 MEMBERS (onsite)

1. Julien Daudu. EJF
2. Daniel Voces. EUROPÊCHE
3. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
4. Raúl García.WWF
5. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
6. Julio Morón. OPAGAC
7. Edelmiro Ulloa. Opnapa / OPP3/ Acemix / Agarba
8. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
9. José Beltrán. OPP-Burela
10. Juana Parada. ORPAGU
11. Anertz Muniategi. ANABAC
12. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
13. Emil Remisz. High Seas Fish Producers Organization
14. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
15. Despina Symons. EBCD
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