



MINUTES

24th LDAC Working Group 4 Meeting Bilateral Relations with Third Countries

**Wednesday 27 March 2019, 14:00-18:00
Hotel NH Brussels EU Berlaymont
Boulevard de Charlemagne 11-19 – 1000 Brussels**

1- Welcome and opening of the meeting.

The Chairman, Mr. Julio Morón, welcomes attendees.

The complete list of members and observers is included in Annex I.

2- Approval of the minutes of the last WG4 meeting held in Brussels on 23 October 2018.

The minutes of the last WG4 meeting held on 23 October 2018 are approved with no objections.

3- Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved.

4- Update on negotiations and technical meetings regarding fisheries agreements with third countries by DG MARE. Analysis of the effective implementation of SFPAs.

The representative of the EC, Mr. Emmanuel Berck, informs that new colleagues have joined the DG MARE Agreements Unit, and introduces Ms. Iglia Yakoba, who is in charge of agreement coordination issues relating to stakeholders; Ms. Marta Moren, in charge of agreements with Morocco and Cape Verde; Ms. Catherine Chapoux, in charge of agreements with Gabon, Sao Tome and Côte d'Ivoire; and Ms. Maria Ferrara, in charge of agreements with Guinea Bissau and Seychelles, Comoros, Mauritius.

4.1. Preparing negotiations with Mauritania, Senegal and Gambia.

Mr. Emmanuel Berck, deputy head of the DG MARE Agreements Unit, says that the European Commission has stated the clear mandate and objective to initiate negotiations to renew these agreements which are currently in force. He explains that negotiations for agreements with Morocco, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde were successfully closed since the last LDAC WG4 meeting in 2018. In addition, he declares that they managed to conclude an agreement on tuna with Gambia with a small hake component similar to the case of Senegal.

For the year 2019, priority agreements are those with Mauritania, Senegal and Seychelles, with Madagascar, Kiribati and Gabon also in mind. A country with which less progress has been made is Equatorial Guinea, and the idea is to sign a fisheries agreement to reactivate their presence in the region.

Mr. Berck comments that with the aid for sectoral support many actions have been already carried out, although it is complicated to manage financial and human resources.



As for Mauritania, he informs that they are trying to conclude the independent ex post evaluation report, which shall be sent in a short period of time. With this report, the EC may start with the negotiation mandate, which they hope to have by the end of May. However, having a presidential election in the country in June might delay the negotiation schedule even if the Mauritanian authorities consider it an essential agreement for the development of the country. In the EU they wish to ensure the biological and environmental sustainability of fisheries with a series of provisions on fisheries and ecosystems. In this sense, they rely on the job of the joint commissions held frequently and regularly. Many technical issues shall be borne in mind in order to redefine the fishing areas to ensure not only the biological status of stocks, but also the economic profitability of European fishing operators.

Regarding sectoral support, he reminds that in the past the LDAC requested enhanced transparency in the use of these funds vis-à-vis aspects relating to the sustainable exploitation of fisheries and the protection of marine ecosystems, as well as the development of local economies and capacities. Mr. Berck says that sectoral aid has not been largely used by Mauritanian authorities so far.

As for Senegal and Gambia, he says that these are complementary agreements from a technical and geographical point of view. Gambia has just signed an agreement for tuna and toothfish amounting to EUR 550 000. The ratification process is under way, what is also perceived as a way to help Gambia consolidate its democracy. The only precondition they demanded was to be part of ICCAT, in order to comply with provisions set in the SMEFF Regulation.

Regarding Senegal, he highlights that it is an important country in fishing terms and that it needs to collaborate with the EU. It is an agreement that is mainly based on tuna, but he points out that reference tonnage ought to be reviewed and a toothfish component introduced with limited amounts. Even though the latter is a fully exploited stock, there are not a lot of local fishers interested in this species. A data compilation programme with on board observers is also fostered, as well as a regional approach to manage this stock in line with the conclusions of the ex post evaluation report

- Questions asked by attendees:

Mr. Javier Garat, CEPESCA, stresses that the agreement with Mauritania is of great importance for different fleets and highlights the shellfish fleet in particular. He points out that it is essential for them to start negotiations to avoid a waiting period that would force the fleet to temporarily leave the fishing grounds. Moreover, due to the poor situation of the white shrimp fishing ground, with declining yields, they wish to recover the northern area for this fishery, which does not match up with the space where the inshore fleet operates and they think they can recover it by means of zonal management. Furthermore, he requests more means from the Mauritanian authorities to avoid unnecessary waiting or delays at the Port of Nouadhibou, prioritising the landing of fish to the berthing of merchant vessels such as container ships, and speeding up logistic operations.



Regarding Mauritania, Ms. Béatrice Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, says that local fisheries have evolved a lot. However, she adds that transparency of all fishing activities (small-scale and industrial) shall be enhanced by all the fleets operating in its EEZ. She voices her concern about the lack of scientific studies of biological assessments of small pelagic stocks, and the need to invest more in research for these species.

Regarding Senegal, Mr. Javier Garat, CEPESCA, informs that pole and line fleets need to know whether the date and place for preparatory meetings have already been set, and highlights that in the event that the Senegal fishing ground were lost they would lose their life bait catches.

Regarding Senegalese toothfish, he says that there is a generalised problem concerning the management of this stock and reports on by-catches of this species in terms of transparency. With regard to this last aspect, he believes that the way to include an article on compliance with transparency criteria in the agreements ought to be analysed.

- Responses from the DG MARE:

Mr. Emmanuel Berck replies that, for the agreement with Mauritania, it is very important to include the need for enhanced transparency as an internal negotiation mechanism.

He adds that meetings focusing on technical issues will be held at the beginning of May in Mauritania. Special attention should be drawn to small pelagics and zonal management and control, being cautious in terms of catches and bearing in mind native fish stocks and ecosystems (including crustaceans).

Regarding the issue of toothfish, he says that the status of the stock has already been discussed and the reports have been examined, and the problem is the lack of data. To carry out a correct assessment, toothfish biomass shall be considered at a regional level. In the event of a closure, Mauritania and Senegal would be affected, since this fishery has reached very high levels of catches. He informs that in Senegal, toothfish was not used much the first years, but now they are waiting to maintain the status quo.

4.2. Renewal of agreements with Morocco, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

Regarding Morocco, he says that they are satisfied with the agreement reached after the negotiation phase. The agreement has been improved in technical terms, with a series of legal guarantees enabling each party to have a clear position and to legitimately exploit the Canary-Saharan bank. Ratification by the King of Morocco is now pending.

In addition, a report was submitted including consultations to stakeholders and the benefits that the fishing activity generates at ports and in local communities, indicating that 80% of the sectoral support will be allocated to the Sahara area and the south of Morocco. Besides, he declares that technical and legal officers held a meeting and are now awaiting a reply from Morocco, although they expect them to ratify the agreement. On the European side, it was adopted at a Council meeting held on 4 March, and the European Parliament has also given



green light to it. Therefore, as soon as Morocco responds, this will be notified and will become the starting point for the agreement to come into force.

Concerning Cape Verde, he informs that a port logistic centre or hub is under development in Mindelo, allowing for an important increase in the reference tonnage for catches from 5 000 to 12 000 tonnes. He thinks that it is a good agreement and that collaboration with this country will continue to grow. The new agreement is expected to be made public and to come into force by the month of May, as it is the case with Gambia.

As for Guinea Bissau, he explains that it is a satisfactory mixed agreement. It is a guarantee of income for the country, since it is an agreement that ranges from EUR 9 to 15 million. A new category of small pelagics has been introduced with a total of 10 000 tonnes that might be an interesting complement. As far as management is concerned, they have moved from an effort management system (power in GT, TRB) to one based on quotas, in a gradual way and with a transitional period. This was a request put forward by the authorities of Guinea Bissau with the support of the EC to enhance transparency. The provisional implementation of the agreement is expected for the end of May or beginning of June.

The WG4 Chair thanks Mr. Berck for his presentation and opens up the round of questions:

Regarding the agreement with Guinea Bissau, it is requested to come into force as soon as possible, as in the case of Cape Verde.

Ms. Juana Parada asks whether purse seine fisheries are considered in other regions. Concerning Guinea Conakry, she highlights that it is very important for the fleet to know what the situation is regarding the presence of national inspectors on board the Sea Shepherd vessels for control and surveillance at sea, as in many cases inspection protocols set in the agreement are alleged to have been violated. She reports that this issue is determining for the surface longline fleet she represents to decide whether to go to this country or not.

Mr. Michael Earl, CFFA-CAPE, asks about the use made by Mauritians of pelagic species for fishmeal and fish oil.

Responses from the representative of the DG MARE

Guinea Bissau will also participate in the round table on landings at the port of Nouadhibou. In Senegal there is a problem in terms of scientific capacity which is already being addressed at a sectoral level.

Guinea Conakry is a country where they are now fishing with private licences (there was a fisheries agreement in the past). There must be a strong political interest from both sides to reactivate it; it is a similar case to that of Angola.

4.3. Follow-up on the implementation of the agreement with Côte d'Ivoire.

The representative of the EC, Ms. Catherine Chapoux, informs that the agreement with Côte d'Ivoire is satisfactory (with a slight decrease of reported catches under the reference tonnage) and that there will be a new protocol for six years. Nevertheless, there is a specific topic they wish to raise awareness about, which are initiatives to improve working conditions



and the job of women's cooperatives. They are willing to pay taxes generating added value to transformation. Although there is no binding commitment in the drafting of the agreement, they believe it would be beneficial to help them in the supply (access to raw materials) of tuna to reduce local poverty. She adds that all administrative and technical obstacles have been overcome to authorise the representatives of the cooperative to access the port of Abidjan. She requests present operators to help identify specific obstacles or to explain the reasons why they cannot access a regular tuna supply.

Moreover, she informs that the EC will carry out an audit on health and hygiene controls through DG SANTE.

Mr. Michel Goujon, ORTHONGEL, explains that his company is in contact with the representative of the women's cooperative, Ms. Micheline Dion. However, he says that currently by-catches are landed and traded with at the port of Abidjan under a regulatory framework and system involving specific authorisations. Therefore, we might have to consider how to sell the product to this cooperative at a set price on a regular basis. Nevertheless, there is usually a single buyer at the port, and in this case it is complicated, since intermediaries that are in charge of buying in batches keep part of the value added by sell prices and resell them to retailers, including women's cooperatives. He finds it complex, but he thinks that a solution would be for cooperatives to organise themselves in order to group orders together so that they are able to have greater purchasing power.

Ms. Béatrice Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, stresses the importance of strengthening this aspect of the agreement. Implementing a stable supply system would be very helpful for coastal communities. The problem is the high purchasing prices of raw materials. She thinks that there ought to be a support management protocol to organise these purchases so that they can reach the local communities, even if there is no specific obligation for European fisheries operators.

Mr. Michel Goujon, ORTHONGEL, declares that the problem is also how the cold chain is distributed and maintained for this fish in local markets.

Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC-AGAC, says that it is positive to include this issue in the fisheries agreement. However, he adds that some of the vessels he represents have been trying to do so for 2 years, but the system in place at the port of Abidjan with logistic operations based on permits and intermediaries does not allow them to make the fish available for women's cooperatives on an ongoing basis. The problem is not really that fish do not reach the local population. Fish do reach them but through authorised intermediaries, so it is not easy to operate in a direct way, where the product would go straight to the numerous canoes supplying women's cooperatives.

Ms Béatrice Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, clarifies that the price issue is essential, and she thinks that the EU, NGOs and European ship-owners should make an effort and agree on a common protocol to channel this aid by means of sectoral support.

The representative of the EC, Ms. Catherine Chapoux, thanks participants for their comments and clarifies that the implementation of the fisheries agreement is not meant to finance the direct purchase of raw materials, but they plan to allocate sectoral base funds to carry out studies and evaluations.



Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, LDAC General Secretary, points out that he had the opportunity to visit the women's cooperative facilities in Abidjan and to see how they work. In his opinion, the problem is not only the access to fish, but also that they have deficient infrastructures: ovens to smoke fish, fridges with rusty shelves, no insulated doors and melted ice, etc. That is why he suggests that part of the sectoral support could be used for the purchase or supply of capital goods and electrical installations to improve and modify these aspects that put them at competitive disadvantage.

Ms. Béatrice Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, says that in the minutes of the Sectoral Joint Commission a guarantee fund is mentioned, so they are waiting to receive this aid.

Mr. Michel Goujon, ORTHONGEL, highlights that there is enhanced control over sales, but that they are not transparent.

4.4. Summary of the rest of agreements in the Atlantic Ocean.

The representative of the EC, Mr. Emmanuel Berck, informs that the people in charge of negotiations in Angola have changed as a result of the new election.

4.5. State of play of fisheries agreements in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Mr. Emmanuel Berck, EC, informs that the agreement with Seychelles is the broadest at IOTC level. It is a reciprocal agreement of great importance in terms of revenue and for canning and processing industries/factories of tuna products there. The agreement finishes at the end of June. Taking into account the objective set at 30% of marine protected areas as a result of the commitment with The Nature Conservancy for blue bonds, he says that this political strategy could have an impact on the geographical scope of the fisheries agreement, so it is an important issue to be borne in mind if closures are ordered, e.g. for industrial purse seine fisheries of the tuna freezer fleet.

Regarding Madagascar, he says that there is a great deal of delays making the situation less than promising. There is a new Minister and Director General and they do not fish much there. However, this is an essential fishing ground for the tuna fleet and the Reunion fleet.

Concerning the agreement with Mauritius, he highlights that it is progressing very well.

He then declares that the agreement with Comoros is dead.

As for Kiribati, he informs that they are open to discuss about negotiations at a preliminary stage where they need to determine a financing strategy involving sharing costs between European ship owners and the EU. In addition, they are waiting to carry out a field mission to assess the country's Administration actions to fight against IUU fishing. These two parallel processes are developed separately.

Moreover, the representative of BirdLife International, Justine Guiny, informs that for the West African fleet, there is a framework directive on marine birds with measures to mitigate by-catches of this kind of birds. In addition, EU bilateral fisheries agreements address the



obligation to control fisheries activities by reliably reporting both targeted and accidental catches.

Finally, as a horizontal issue that affects all agreements, the LDAC request regarding the use of the sectoral subsidy fund is considered, making this information public and more visible.

5- Presentation of LDAC input in case studies of the H2020 FarFish project: Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde and Seychelles.

The project coordinator, Ms. Sonia Doblado, makes a presentation on the work carried out in each of the 4 case studies which are relevant to the group, explaining the management aims set for each one, based on the analysis of the implementation of fisheries agreements in force. The first version of the Management Recommendations (MRs) for all of the six Case Studies of the H2020 FarFish project have been completed. Results and changes on the obligatory Outcome Targets will be presented for those Case Studies involving SFPAs (Cape Verde, Seychelles, Mauritania and Senegal). The aim is to obtain input from stakeholders on how to improve the second and definitive version of the MRs.

The presentation is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/FARFISH_Presentation_WG4_Brussels.pdf

6- Initiatives to promote dialogue in international fisheries governance

6.1. Possible LDAC international conferences focusing on EU conversations with third countries to improve the implementation of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs)

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, explains that the idea is to hold a series of conferences at regional level focusing on EU conversations with third countries, first in the Atlantic and then in the Indian Ocean using part of the budget of the new LDAC period starting on 1 June 2019 to this end. He also suggests proposing the co-organisation of these conferences together with African regional authorities such as COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO or IOCT.

WG4 Chair, Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC, supports this initiative and recalls that it was launched by the EC in order to enhance the visibility of fisheries agreements, as a continuation of the International Conference organised by the LDAC in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in September 2015. In his opinion, this conference should be organised after the appointment of the new DG MARE Director General for Fisheries, scheduled for September/October.

6.2. Discussion on the role of fisheries investments in third countries and public-private initiatives: questionnaire about activities and socio-economic benefits for improved knowledge about the fisheries value chain.

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, LDAC General Secretary, explains that this issue is a WG3 initiative, where it was agreed to carry out a specific study. The LDAC Secretariat drafted a concept note and will proceed to prepare a form requesting socio-economic data in order to have a clearer snapshot of these companies activity and to be able to conduct a potential impact assessment.



The representative of the EC, Ms. Catherine Chapoux, says that there is a framework where this type of public-private initiatives and fisheries investments are to be included in SFPAs and she thinks it is very interesting that the LDAC carries out this initiative to provide this section with content. In fact, she invites de AC to present the conclusions of this potential impact assessment before the European Parliament in order to make this type of investments more visible and enhance knowledge about them. In addition, she suggests getting in touch with DG MARE Unit B1, in charge of the European Investment Fund.

6.3. Update on EU-funded projects (DG MARE/DG DEVCO): Pacific-EU Marine Partnership / ECOFISH / FISHGOV2 / PESCAO

WG4 Chair, Julio Morón, OPAGAC, apologises for the absence of the representative of DG DEVCO, Ms. Isabelle Viallon. He then informs that the ECOFISH programme is the continuation of SMARTFISH, and that it will start very soon. Regarding the FISHGOV2 project, he points out that it is being coordinated by the African Union. Finally, he says that a budget of EUR 45 million will be allocated.

Then the representative of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), Mr. Sergio Amorim, makes a presentation on the PESCAO project, highlighting the fact that they have a budget of more than EUR 2.5 million, where SFRC countries and Mauritania are involved. Its general aim is to improve the contribution of fisheries resources to sustainable development, food security and poverty in West Africa.

The presentation is available for consultation on the following link:

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

7- Collaboration and Partnership between LDAC and COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO for Atlantic Africa

7.1. Conclusions of the annual meeting between LDAC and COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO (Bilbao, 12 February 2019)

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, summarises the annual coordination meeting between the LDAC and COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO. Both parties made a presentation about the work carried out in 2018, the strategic plan and work priorities for 2019 were defined and then two presentations were made: one by the Vigo IEO representative, Dr. Ana Ramos, explaining the ECO-AFRIK project and a presentation about the PESCAO project by the EFCA representative, Mr. Sergio Amorim.

All presentations and documents used at the meeting are available on the following link:

<https://ldac.eu/en/meetings/annual-coordination-meeting-ldac-atlafco-comhafat>

7.2. Joint initiatives and actions for the second semester of 2019.

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, informs that the DG MARE is going to meet up with a COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO delegation in the next few weeks to consider forms of collaboration within RFMOs and the fight against IUU fishing. The LDAC and COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO Secretariats will continue in touch to follow up in terms of collaboration with the EU.



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ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LDAC Working Group 4 Meeting
Brussels, 27 March 2019

MEMBERS OF WORKING GROUP 4

1. Julio Morón. OPAGAC
2. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL
3. Caroline Mangalo. CNPMEM
4. Erik Olsen. Danish Society for a Living Sea
5. Orestis Kargotis. EBCD
6. Marc Ghiglia. UAPF
7. Edelmiro Ulloa. Anapa / Anamer / Acemix / Agarba
8. Sergio López. OPP-Lugo
9. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
10. Juan Manuel Liria. CEPESCA
11. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
12. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
13. Anertz Muniategi. ANABAC
14. Luis Vicente. ADAPI
15. Raúl García. WWF
16. Antonia Leroy. WWF
17. Caroline Mangalo. CNPMEM
18. Ian Gatt. SPFA
19. Frédéric Le Manach. BLOOM
20. María José Cornax. OCEANA
21. Katarina Sipic. CONXEMAR
22. Haydeé Fernández. CONXEMAR
23. Daniel Voces. Europêche
24. Rosalie Tukker. Europêche
25. Juan Manuel Trujillo. ETF
26. Ricardo Valeiras. ETF
27. Juana Parada. ORPAGU
28. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
29. Sophie Nodzenski. EJF
30. Emil Remisz. NAPO
31. Katrin Vilhelm. WWF



OBSERVERS

1. Iván Vázquez. EC DG MARE B3
 2. Catherine Chapoux. EC DG MARE B3
 3. Emmanuel Berck. EC DG MARE B3
 4. Iglia Yakova. EC DG MARE B3
 5. Maria Ferrara. EC DG MARE B3
 6. William Davies. NEF Consulting
 7. Justine Guiny. Birdlife International
 8. Irene Kingma. NSAC Vice Chair
 9. Tamara Talevska. NSAC Executive Secretary
 10. Yaiza Dronkers. International Pole & Line Foundation
 11. Michael Earl. CFFA-CAPE
 12. Justyna Szumlicz. Ministry Maritime Economy, Poland
 13. Barbara Lewkowska. Ministry Maritime Economy, Poland
 14. Joana Diaz. EC DG MARE
 15. Alberto Martín. MSC
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16. Sonia Doblado. FARFISH Coordinator for the LDAC
 17. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC Executive Secretary
 18. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC Policy and Communication Officer
 19. Marta de Lucas. LDAC Executive Assistant – Administration and Finances