

Working Group 3: EU control and sanitary issues, consumer rules

Minutes

Tuesday, 29 March 2022 (09:00 – 12:30 CEST)

Zoom / Radisson Collection Hotel, Grand Place Brussels (Hybrid)

Interpretation in EN, ES, FR

Welcome from the Chair, Benoît Thomassen

Click [here](#) to access the Chair's presentation.

Adoption of draft agenda and of the last meeting minutes (26.01.22): adopted

Action points of the last meeting

- **State-of-play of the decision made during the last meeting – information**

- Animal Welfare:

- Chair and Secretariat to prepare a questionnaire to the members, in order to gather input for future advice, ahead of the next meeting
 - Questionnaire circulated: 24 February – 3 March 2022
 - Draft advice circulated: 15 March 2022

- Food Waste:

- Chair and Secretariat to prepare a questionnaire to the members, in order to gather input for future advice, ahead of the next meeting
 - Questionnaire circulated: 24 February – 3 March 2022
 - Draft advice circulated: 23 March 2022

- Food Information to Consumers:

- Chair and Secretariat to prepare a questionnaire to the members, in order to gather input for future advice, ahead of the next meeting
 - Questionnaire circulated: 1 – 8 March 2022
 - Draft advice circulated: 25 March 2022

- Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules for Marine Fish Products:

- Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, to schedule a consideration of the draft advice prepared by the Focus Group on PEFCR for Marine Fish Products
 - Draft advice circulated: 15 March 2022
 - Agenda item scheduled

- Sanitary & Hygiene Rules:

- Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) to prepare proposal of draft advice on maximum sulphite levels for crustaceans, which will be considered at the next meeting
 - Draft advice circulated: 23 March 2022
 - Agenda item scheduled



- Sustainable Food System Framework:
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for adoption through written procedure
 - Advice adopted: 15 February 2022
- AOB:
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, to schedule an exchange of views with DG SANTE about the testing of cadmium levels in brown crab exported to China
 - Agenda item scheduled under 28 March 2022 WG2 meeting
 - Under the draft agenda of the next meeting, to schedule an exchange of views with DG SANTE about approval of plans submitted to third countries to monitor certain substances and residues in live animals and animal products
 - Technical change to the regulation approved. Exchange of views no longer necessary.

Sanitary & Hygiene Rules

- **Presentation of draft advice on maximum sulphite levels for crustaceans by Pierre Commère, ADEPALE**

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) provided an overview of the draft advice, including background, economic importance of cooked crustaceans, use of sulphites, modes of treatment of crustaceans with sulphites, sulphite's analysis method, maximum levels currently allowed, health risks, problems encountered by cooking establishments, and recommendations.

- **Consideration of draft advice & way forward**

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) expressed support for the draft advice. Mr Guillaumie wondered, if sulphites agglomerate on the shell, what was the impact for consumers, since the shell is not eaten.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) responded that sulphites agglomerate on the shell, but that residues pass to the meat during the treatment.

The Chair wondered if there were any studies available about the contamination from the shell to the meat, which could be mentioned in the advice.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) clarified that the analysis mentioned in the draft advice referred to edible parts of the crustaceans.

Pauline Prent (Visfederatie), in relation to shrimps, wanted to know why 200 mg/kg as suggested as the threshold, instead of a higher level. According to the table provided in the draft, larger shrimp may contain higher amounts of sulphites. Ms Prent commented that, during the cooking process, sulphites seem to disappear, but then reappear. It could be useful to include this in the text.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) explained that exposure to sulphites is a public health matter addressed by DG SANTE and by EFSA. In recent years, the indication from health authorities has been to reduce the amount of sulphites. In his view, from a public health direction, it would not be a positive sign to



align the threshold to the highest level of exposure. Presently, operators know how to monitor the level of sulphites much better. In his experience, operators usually do not go above 140 mg/kg. 200 mg/kg would allow some tolerance, in case there are significant levels of sulphites in the water. Mr Commère recognised that the process is rather complex. Shrimps can be treated with sulphites right before freezing. When cooking, there are sulphites that move to the water. Therefore, the first batch of shrimps does not contain a significant level of sulphites, but later batches, if the water is not changed, will have higher levels.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) asked about the difference in the maximum levels according to size. Ms Absil emphasised the consumer perspective and the importance of lowering the levels as much as possible. Besides crustaceans, there are different sources of exposure to sulphites, including other food products. Ms Absil wondered, if sulphites increase in the water along the day, whether it would not be more appropriate for processors to change the water more frequently, in order to reduce the final quantity of sulphites. Processors should be encouraged to continuously improve their processes. Ms Absil was favourable to the use of an average level, but against the use of a high average merely for convenience.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) explained the maximum level of sulphites is per size, meaning number of pieces or Kg. The level is higher for smaller shrimps. According to industry professionals, even for smaller shrimps, the quantity could be reduced. Mr Commère emphasised that the industry professionals aim to continue to improve their methods. As for changes of water, Mr Commère stated that constantly changing the water would have a significant environmental impact, which would go against environmental objectives. It is necessary to have a balance between the acceptable level of sulphites and the water consumption and treatment. The aim should be to establish a dialogue with DG SANTE to improve the framework.

Christine Absil (Good Fish), in order to ensure a consumer perspective, proposed the inclusion of wording in the advice about aiming to reduce the level of exposure to sulphites.

The Chair agreed with the suggestion to include wording about efforts to reduce sulphites.

Pim Visser (VisNed) wondered if the brown shrimp in the North Sea was covered by the regulation. In the case of this product, number of pieces is used as a measure, because of the very small size. Therefore, there could be a significant impact to established practices of brown shrimp processors. Mr Visser wanted to know if the brown shrimp industry was consulted.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) stated that, according to the members of his organisation, the suggested thresholds are feasible with current techniques. Mr Commère was not familiar with the specificities of the brown shrimp industry.

Pim Visser (VisNed) wondered if there would be impacts other additives besides sulphites, since the regulation covers more than sulphites. Mr Visser recognised, that, from a consumer and public health perspective, the aim should be to reduce the level of additives, but added that the industry is working vigorously to reduce the use of additives. Nevertheless, it is important to avoid unwanted impacts to the industry.



Maria Luisa Álvarez (FEDEPESCA) stated that the technical experts of her organisation agreed with the proposal. Ms Álvarez agreed with Ms Absil's suggestion to include a paragraph with a consumer perspective. Fishmongers can also cook crustaceans in their shop at the point-of-sale, but are not able to control the quantity of sulphites in the product. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the products are not above the maximum level of additives.

The Chair proposed that a paragraph about the consumer perspective would be added to the draft advice, which would then be circulated for approval via written procedure.

Food Information to Consumers

- **Presentation of the replies to the Secretariat's questionnaire**

The Chair recalled that a questionnaire was circulated between 1 and 8 March 2022. Replies were submitted by ADEPALE, EMPA, and FEDEPESCA. There was an additional contribution from AIPCE-CEP. The draft advice was circulated on 25 March 2022.

- **Consideration of draft advice & way forward**

The Working Group proceeded with the consideration of the draft advice, paragraph per paragraph.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE), in section 2 "Front-of-pack nutrition labelling and setting nutrition profiling criteria to restrict claims", suggested, in the reference to the intake of essential nutrients, to mention explicitly "long chain unsaturated fatty acids (EPA, DHA)".

Matthias Keller (Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.), in relation to the reference to a microbiological stabilising value, suggest to read "these cannot be reduced without increasing microbiological risks".

Yobana Bermúdez (CONXEMAR) recalled that the issue of microbiological risks was connected to smoked products, but not to canned products. Canned products are stabilised through heat treatment, not through specific ingredients.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) proposed a rewording of the third paragraph on section 3 "date markings ("use by" and "best before" dates on food products)", to make it clearer.

Paulien Prent (Visfederatie) agreed that there is a need for significant awareness raising and education. Ms Prent wondered about the relevancy of mentioning, in the draft text, an additional date of production.

The Secretary General responded that the potential addition of a date of production was provided as an example in one of the questions of the Commission's public consultation.

Matthias Keller (Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.) suggested rewording to "consumers may continue to be confused by the two concepts".



Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce), in relation to the reference to an additional date of production, highlighted that the Commission was conducting consumer behaviour research on the date markings. One of the policy options under consideration includes date of production. Ms Valeiras informed that she participated in a workshop in November 2021 about this study. Participating stakeholders agreed that production dates do not bring added value to consumers. She expressed support for maintaining the reference to production dates in the draft advice, so that it would be clear to the Commission that stakeholders do not support production dates in packaging. In relation to Mr Commère's suggestions, Ms Valeiras agreed that consumers may continue to be confused, but expressed preference for the wording "unless there was significant...".

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) suggested changing "continued difficulties" to "increased difficulties".

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) agreed with Ms Valeiras's intervention. Ms Álvarez emphasised that her association is against the introduction of additional dates. The introduction of a production date would increase consumer confusion.

Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce) highlighted that the last paragraph of section 3 did not take a position in relation to the policy options, but that draft recommendation i) calls for the elimination for the "best before" date. Therefore, her association would not support the draft recommendation.

Paulien Prent (Visfederatie), in relation to section 4 "origin labelling", wondered about the meaning of "consumers should be able to better identify the origin of prepacked products".

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) responded that it was about the place of manufacture. The economic relevance of the processing industry in the EU is not sufficiently recognised.

Paulien Prent (Visfederatie) emphasised that the provision of additional information to consumers would require further education and awareness raising.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) clarified that the "inter-professional associations" mentioned in the text were actually meant to refer to "inter-branch organisations" as defined in the CMO Regulation.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) suggested replacing the verb "should" with "could", since inter-branch organisations are not available in all market segments.

Paulien Prent (Visfederatie), in relation to draft recommendation f), expressed opposition to the development of simplified nutrition information in the front of the package.

The Secretary General clarified that the word "if" in draft recommendation f) was used precisely because members were not necessarily in favour of this development. The aim is just to signal the most acceptable option of the development, in case the Commission decides that this development must happen.

The Chair suggested to replace "if" with "in the case".



Matthias Keller (Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.), in relation to draft recommendation d), suggested more overarching wording, instead of limiting the recommendation to packed products.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE), in relation to draft recommendation g), suggested to repeat the reference to long chain fatty acids, as in section 2. In relation to draft recommendation i), Mr Commère suggested the replacement of the wording “elimination” with “improvement”, plus the addition of a recommendation to “undertake robust scientific impact assessments on consumer response on any new wording proposed, including in the different national languages”.

Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce) expressed full agreement with the previous intervention. Ms Valeiras argued that the Commission should only take into account policy options that are feasible in practice. It is unnecessary to test policy options of information that cannot be printed in the packages.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA), in relation to draft recommendation k), recalled that, according to the report of the MAC’s performance review, several past recommendations were too general, which would be difficult for the Commission to implement.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE), in relation to draft recommendation k), suggested the addition of a sentence stating: “clarify that the origin of the primary ingredient must be linked to the fishing area in which the fish was caught, as determined by Article 35 and detailed in Article 38 of the CMO Regulation”.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA), in relation to draft recommendation i), questioned whether consumers actually understood the “best before” date, adding that members should reflect about the added value of this date.

Pierre Commère (ADEPALE) stated that processors were interested in having a date that reflects the maintenance of the organoleptic qualities of the product. It is important for processors to have such a date to commit themselves to.

The Chair recalled that the “use by” date was for food safety purposes, while the “best before” referred to the organoleptic qualities of the products. The Chair agreed with Ms Álvarez that it was questionable whether consumers understood the difference in these dates.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) argued that, for consumers, the display of two dates was confusing. Therefore, the products should only provide one of the date markings.

Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce) drew attention to the complexity of the topic. Taking into account the different views amongst members, Ms Valeiras argued that it was preferable for the draft advice to avoid mentioning an explicit preference for a specific policy option.

The Chair agreed with Ms Valeiras on the way forward.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) agreed with Ms Álvarez about the consumer confusion, but also agreed with Mr Commère about the importance of the “best before” date marking for processors. In case of



live products, such as mussels, consumers can easily tell whether the product is fit for consumption or not. At the same time, for processed products, it was relevant for the processing industry to commit to a quality date. Therefore, the draft recommendation should be clear that it applies to processed products.

Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce) argued that the draft recommendation should be easy to read. Therefore, additional details could be provided in the main text, but not in the recommendation.

The Working Group agreed with the draft text as amended.

Animal Welfare

- **Presentation of the replies to the Secretariat's questionnaire**

The Chair recalled that a questionnaire was circulated between 24 February and 3 March 2022. Replies were submitted by ADEPALE, FEDEPESCA, AIPCE-CEP, EuroCommerce, and FEAP. There was an additional contribution from EMPA. The draft advice was circulated on 15 March 2022. Following the circulation of the draft advice, comments were sent in writing by AIPCE-CEP.

- **Consideration of draft advice & way forward**

The Working Group proceeded with the consideration of the draft advice, paragraph per paragraph.

Paulien Prent (Visfederatie) suggested that, since the policy initiative would only impact aquaculture products, the references in the text to fishery products should be removed.

Katarina Sipic (AIPCE-CEP), in relation to draft recommendation e), suggested replacing “demonstrate” with “analyse” and to explicitly refer to “fish farmers”, plus the deletion of the reference to “higher”.

Garazi Rodríguez (APROMAR) suggested the inclusion, in the background section, of a paragraph highlighting the diversity of vertebrate fish.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) expressed support for the mentioned inclusion. In relation to draft recommendation e), Mr Ojeda suggested rewording it to read “undertake further scientific studies to fill-in the gaps with sound knowledge in understanding fish welfare for assuring best practice at farm level”.

The Working Group agreed with the draft text as amended.

Food Waste

- **Presentation of the replies to the Secretariat's questionnaire**



The Chair recalled that a questionnaire was circulated between 24 February and 3 March 2022. Replies were submitted by FEAP, FEDEPESCA, AIPCE-CEP, and EMPA. The draft advice was circulated on 15 March 2022.

- **Consideration of draft advice & way forward**

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA), in relation to section 3 “policy options”, expressed support for Option E1 (target expressed as % of food waste reduction).

Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce), in relation to section 4 “likely economic impacts”, expressed doubt about the relevance of the sentence “Responsible consumers and retailers will drive their preference towards locally/nationally sourced food, regardless of possible improvements in conservation methods.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) agreed that the sentence was rather ambiguous.

Carla Valeiras Álvarez (EuroCommerce) suggested the deletion of the sentence.

Pim Visser (VisNed), in relation to section 8 “examples of food waste reduction practices”, wondered about the meaning of the reference to small retailers consuming a significant amount of product in their own homes.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) responded that small retailers are able to adjust daily their supply to the demand. When there are unsold products, these are usually donate to vulnerable families or is consumed at home by the retailers. In practice, there is almost no food waste.

Pim Visser (VisNed) emphasised that supermarkets and households were the two main sources of food waste. Therefore, Mr Visser wondered about the relevance of the example.

The Chair explained that it was merely one example of an existing food waste reduction practice. It was not meant as a recommendation for fishmongers to consume all their unsold product.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) highlighted that, in Spain, a national strategy to reduce food waste has been in place for several years. According to the strategy, fish products are the food products less wasted by households. Fish products are generally consumed right away and are valued by consumers.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) suggested to add “in some cases” to the sentence.

Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco (FEDEPESCA) agreed with the suggestion.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) suggested a rearrangement of draft recommendation b), in order to provide a more realistic description of the varying contributions of food waste generation.



Matthias Keller (Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.) suggested the deletion of the reference to “positive” in draft recommendation j). In his view, there are very few possibilities for further reductions of food waste later in the value chain.

The Chair suggested to add “as described in section 8”.

Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules for Marine Fish Products

- **Update on the work of the Focus Group on PEFCR for Marine Fish Products by Pedro Reis Santos, Secretary General**

The Secretary General recalled that, on 8 November 2021, Working Group 3 agreed on Terms of Reference to establish a Focus Group on PEFCR for Marine Fish Products, aiming to produce a draft on PEFCR. DG ENV is preparing an initiative on substantiating green claims. Operators that include environmental claims in their advertising and packaging would likely have to prove the claims. A Technical Secretariat, composed of experts and stakeholders, was established to prepare technical rules under the PEF method, which calculates the carbon footprint of products. These are based on 16 product category rules, which are the same for all products. PEFCR have already been developed for other products, for example dairy, pasta, and leather. The Technical Secretariat organised a First Public Open Consultation, including the publication of a draft report, welcoming comments from all stakeholders. DG MARE encouraged the MAC to comment on the draft report. In terms of next steps, in the next months, the Technical Secretariat will be undertaking pilot studies, which will be followed by a second consultation to finalise the report.

According to the Terms of Reference, the purpose of the Focus Group was to analyse the draft documents of the First Public Open Consultation and to prepare a contribution for the next consultation. The Secretary General provided an overview of the membership of the Focus Group, which included members from the catching, aquaculture, and processing sector, plus other interest groups. There was also an observer from the Aquaculture Stewardship Council. The Focus Group analysed the entire draft report of the Technical Secretariat. Comments were prepared for each section. There were exchanges with the Technical Secretariat and with DG MARE in meetings and in writing. At the request of the Focus Group, DG ENV organised a training session, which took place on 15 February 2022. The draft advice, as agreed by the Focus Group, was circulated on 18 March 2022.

- **Consideration of draft advice & way forward**

Jean-Marie Robert (Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne) emphasised the particularity of the exercise, which differed from the usual collaboration with DG MARE. It involved several exchanges with the Technical Secretariat and with DG MARE. In this context, the different members of the Focus Group posed questions and expressed their preferences. Mr Robert encouraged members, when considering the draft advice, to take into account that the advice was drafted from the perspective of the first version of the Technical Secretariat’s draft report. Results in figures to demonstrate environmental performance of EU fishing activities are still missing, for example to understand the difference between fishing areas, multi-specific fisheries, transport, among others.



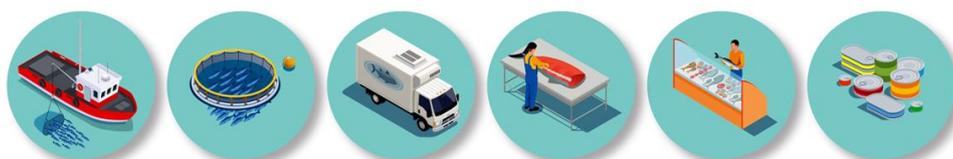
Mr Robert recalled that the PEFCR for Marine Fish products are included in the context of a wider framework, as defined by DG ENV. Mr Robert stated that the content of the draft advice perfectly reflected the discussions of the five meetings held by the Focus Group, covering both issues for DG MARE and the Technical Secretariat. The draft advice is somewhat hybrid covering political recommendations as well as technical aspects. Taking into account the lack of figures and the duality of the document, he expressed doubts about the usefulness of adopting the advice. It could be more appropriate to divide the draft advice into two documents.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) thanked Mr Robert for the clarifications provided. Mr O'Donoghue congratulated the Focus Group for the excellent work in analysing the Technical Secretariat's draft report, completing the first task foreseen in the Terms of Reference. There are important political messages in the draft advice, reflecting the previous advice concerning the initiative on substantiating green claims. It could be relevant to develop a document based on these. Mr O'Donoghue expressed concern with the adoption of the proposed draft advice, because the MAC could be seen as agreeing with a system, which, in his view, has significant problems. Therefore, he supported Mr Robert's suggestion to divide the draft advice into two documents. The political recommendations could be used for advice, while the technical comments could serve for a continuation of dialogue between the Focus Group and the Technical Secretariat. There is a lack of figures to know how the system works in practice, including its feasibility.

The Secretary General highlighted that, in line with the Terms of Reference, and as encouraged by DG MARE, the purpose of the Focus Group was to analyse the technical parts of the Technical Secretariat's draft report. The policy considerations in the first two pages of the draft advice were already addressed in the previous advice on substantiating green claims. In the draft advice, these were included as a summary and a recapitulation. The policy considerations were outside the purpose of the Focus Group. The Secretary General wondered about the relevancy of adoption a second piece of advice which would essentially repeat the positions expressed in the advice on substantiating green claims. DG MARE is aware of the MAC's views on that matter. The Commission is looking for comments on the technical parts of the Technical Secretariat's draft report, because a second version of the report is under preparation. The aim should be to influence the content of this second version.

The Secretary General emphasised that it was possible to disagree with the PEF method, but that the Commission would likely move ahead with the initiative anyway. The Commission agreed with the development of PEFCR and is financing the Technical Secretariat. Therefore, it is a matter of the MAC choosing to influence the process or not. Merely expressing disagreement with the process is unlikely to have much practical impact. The adoption of the draft advice could provide DG MARE with sound arguments when discussing internally with DG ENV. Nevertheless, if the members preferred to adopt advice only on policy, avoiding technical comments, then the Secretariat would act accordingly.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) stated that, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, the purpose was for the Focus Group to analyse the draft report and to prepare a contribution to the Second Open Public Consultation. Mr O'Donoghue expressed concerns about some of the assumptions made in the draft advice, particularly the evidence to support these. The theme seems to be that biodiversity elements should be addressed in other legislation, but then considerations are provided about how to include these biodiversity elements. The position of the MAC should be clearer. Mr O'Donoghue expressed



support for the sending of a document on the overall principles, so that the overarching problems are not forgotten.

The Secretary General responded that, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, the purpose was to analyse the draft report of the Technical Secretariat. The draft report only covers technical aspects. The comments on policy are outside of the Terms of Reference. In relation to the contribution to the Second Open Public Consultation, in accordance with the Commission's timeline, the consultation should have taken place in March 2022, but there was a delay with the funding for the pilot projects. When discussing this with the members of the Focus Group and with DG MARE representatives, there was encouragement to proceed, since the MAC would have increased influence on the second version of the draft report.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) underscored the relevancy of adopting the draft advice, so that DG MARE and DG ENV are aware of the discrepancy between policy lines. Even if there is disagreement about potential use of the work, the work remains relevant. The Focus Group was unanimous in the development of the advice.

Jennifer Reeves (MSC) highlighted that the Commission was focused on the policy elements, while the technical aspects are being outsourced to technical groups. The draft advice is essentially directed at the Technical Secretariat, focusing on the technical aspects. Ms Reeves agreed that it was possible to discuss the division of the draft advice into two documents, but added that the background information reinforcing the policy messages was useful for the Technical Secretariat. Ms Reeves underscored the importance of providing input, since DG ENV invested significantly on this initiative and seems quite determined to move ahead.

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA) stated that, even though the PEF CR do not cover shellfish products, he read the draft advice with great interest. Mr Guillaumie expressed agreement with Mr Robert's intervention. The draft advice does not provide recommendations, but a critical analysis. Once the Second Open Public Consultation takes place, the critical comments could be submitted as a contribution. In his view, the MAC should not engage in this initiative. There are no figures or data. There is only a methodology. The method should not be imposed on everyone. It would be extremely complex for operators to gather the necessary data to perform PEF studies.

The Secretary General responded that, as is established practice, the MAC adopts advice to the European Commission, specifically to DG MARE. In that line, the draft advice is recommending to DG MARE to influence the Technical Secretariat to implement specific changes. The Secretary General recognised that it was possible to wait for the Second Open Public Consultation, but added that DG MARE encouraged the Focus Group to move ahead, in order to have more influence on the second version of the draft report. As for the voluntary use of the PEF method, the Secretary General highlighted that would depend on the policy option of DG ENV, which will be made at a later stage. It will not depend on the technical specifications of the report of the Technical Secretariat. In any case, substantiating would likely only be required for operators that choose to make environmental claims. Therefore, it would always be voluntary, since operators are not obliged to make environmental claims in their advertising or packaging.



Jennifer Reeves (MSC) highlighted, that, even if the use of the PEF method remains voluntary, there is significant pressure from consumers to provide information on carbon footprint. The method can potentially be taken up by the market. Retailers will look for a practical method. Ms Reeves argued that it was important to proceed with advice as soon as possible, so that it becomes official. There will be other opportunities to complement the draft advice. As stated in the introduction of the draft advice, it is only a first step.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) agreed with Ms Reeves's intervention. It is important to move ahead soon. The adoption of the draft advice would make it publicly known that the MAC is critical of the draft report. If the MAC withdraws from the initiative, then there is no possibility to influence the direction.

Jean-Marie Robert (Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne) stated that the Technical Secretariat and DG MARE are aware of the majority of the technical comments. There is a lack of figures to compare different products. Therefore, the reliability of the method is unclear and Mr Robert was not comfortable commenting on certain methodological choices. Mr Robert expressed availability to agree on the political messages, but not on the technical aspects.

The Chair asked whether there was a timeframe to receive the necessary data from the Commission and the Technical Secretariat, in order to allow a better understanding of the practical implications.

The Secretary General responded that several exchanges with the Technical Secretariat took place. The Technical Secretariat was available for an additional meeting to show examples. In order to develop these examples, the Technical Secretariat requires data from EAPO. Therefore, it depends on how quickly EAPO provides data to the Technical Secretariat.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) recalled recommendation h) of the advice on "DG ENV's public consultation on a potential legislative proposal on substantiating green claims", according to which the Commission should seriously assess other possible options, beyond the PEF method, to substantiate green claims, before reaching a decision. In his view, the adoption of the draft advice would undermine the MAC's previous position. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to adopt an advice recalling the political messages. If technical advice were to be developed, it should continuously reference the previous position. He suggested moving ahead with a written procedure to adopt advice on the political messages.

Christine Absil (Good Fish) recalled that, in the text of the draft advice, it is already stated that the MAC takes into account that the initiative is under development, plus that the positions in the advice do not preclude the adoption, at a later stage, of different positions, once new information becomes publicly known.

The Chair suggested, as a way forward, to divide the draft advice into two documents. The first document, reflecting the political messages, could be promptly adopted via written procedure. The second document on technical aspects could wait for the additional meeting with the Technical Secretariat, in order to have more data. The second document could be discussed at the May meeting.



The Secretary General added that, if EAPO provides the necessary data to the Technical Secretariat, then another meeting could be arranged with the Technical Secretariat and with DG MARE, in order to discuss practical examples of the PEF method.

Jennifer Reeves (MSC), in relation to Mr O'Donoghue's intervention, stated that there was likely not sufficient expertise in the MAC to assess other methodologies. The Circular Economy Action Plan refers to the PEF method as the appropriate methodology to calculate the environmental footprint of products. Therefore, there is limited scope to analyse other methodologies.

Sean O'Donoghue (KFO) responded that the recommendation was not for the MAC to propose other methodologies, but that the Commission should consider other methodologies before reaching a decision. Mr O'Donoghue agreed that the MAC would not have sufficient expertise. Mr O'Donoghue agreed with the way forward suggested by the Chair.

AOB

None.

Summary of action points

- Sanitary & Hygiene Rules:
 - Following the addition of a paragraph about the consumer perspective, draft advice to be circulated for approval through written procedure
- Food Information to Consumers:
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for adoption
- Animal Welfare:
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for adoption
- Food Waste:
 - Agreed draft advice to be put forward to the Executive Committee for adoption
- Product Environmental Footprint Category Rule for Marine Fish Products:
 - Draft advice, based on the agreed political messages, to be circulated to the Working Group through written procedure
 - Following the provision of data by EAPO, additional meeting between the Focus Group and the Technical Secretariat to take place, in order to discuss practical examples of the PEF method
 - Following the additional meeting, draft advice on the technical aspects to be prepared



Attendance List

Representative	Organisation	Role
Aitana López Albaquero	Spain	Observer
Alexandra Philippe	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Alexandra Rodríguez	Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)	Observer
Annelie Rosell	Swedish Pelagic Federation Producer Organisation (SPFPO)	Member
Antonia Leroy	WWF	Member
Benoît Guerin	BG Sea Consulting	Observer
Benoît Thomassen	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Chair
Bruno Guillaumie	European Molluscs' Producers Association (EMPA)	Member
Carla Valeiras Álvarez	EuroCommerce	Member
Catherine Pons	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Charlotte Musquar	Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC)	Observer
Christine Absil	Good Fish	Member
Daniel Voces	Europêche	Member
Daniel Weber	European Fishmeal	Member
Emiel Brouckaert	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Frangiscos Nikolian	European Commission	Expert
Garazi Rodríguez	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Georg Werner	Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)	Member
Jaroslawn Zieliński	Polskie Stowarzyszenie Przetworcow Ryb (PSPR)	Member
Javier Ojeda	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne	Member
Jennifer Reeves	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	Member
Jens Mathiesen	Danish Seafood Association	Member
Jérôme Dorgelo	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	Member



Representative	Organisation	Role
Joash Mathew	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE) / European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)	Member
José Basilio Otero Rodríguez	Federación Nacional de Cofradías de Pescadores (FNCP)	Member
José Carlos Escalera	Federación de Cofradías de Pescadores de Cádiz (FECOPESCA)	Member
Juana María Parada Guinaldo	Organización de Palangreros Guardeses (OR.PA.GU.)	Member
Louis Lambrechts	WWF	Member
Katarina Sipic	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE) / European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)	Member
Maria Luisa Álvarez Blanco	Federación de Asociaciones Provinciales de Empresarios Detallistas de Pescados y Productos Congelados (FEDEPESCA)	Member
Martina Zurli	FRUCOM	Member
Massimo Bellavista	Copa Cogeca	Member
Matthias Keller	Bundesverband der deutschen Fischindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels e.V.	Member
Miguel Lizaso	European Commission	Expert
Mike Turenhout	Visfederatie	Member
Nicolás Fernández Muñoz	Organización Productores Pesqueros Artesanales Lonja de Conil (OPP72)	Member
Noémie Jegou	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Member
Paolo Giuseppe	EuroCommerce	Member
Patrick Murphy	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO)	Member
Paulien Prent	Visfederatie	Member
Pedro Luis Casado López	Asociación de Armadores Punta del Moral (OPP80)	Member
Pierre Commère	Association Des Entreprises de Produits Alimentaires Élaborés (ADEPALE)	Member
Pim Visser	VisNed	Member
Poul Melgaard Jensen	Danish Seafood Association	Member



Representative	Organisation	Role
Roberto Carlos Alonso de Sousa	ANFACO-CECOPECA	Member
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche	Member
Sean O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Member
Sergio López García	Organización de Productores Pesqueros de Lugo (OPP-07-LUGO)	Member
Thomas Kruse	Danish Fishermen P.O.	Member
Yannis Pelekanakis	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Yobana Bermúdez	Asociación Española de Mayoristas, Importadores, Transformadores y Exportadores de Productos de la Pesca y Acuicultura (CONXEMAR)	Member

