

**Minutes  
InterACs meeting  
18 January 2021**

**1 Opening remarks- Charlina Vitcheva.**

She thanked all the ACs for the work done during the last year. She underlined that ACs represent an essential governance tool: the right place to have effective consultation, as they have expertise and knowledge to develop and implement better DG MARE policy. She reminded that with the regionalisation process ACs have a stronger role, the work of ACs is essential, to have transparency and impartiality in the opinions that have to reflect all the points of views. She pointed out that the letter of criticism sent by some OIGs did not put a shadow to all ACs and that we have to tackle it with positive aspects. She expressed her deepest regret that some NGOs departed by some ACs. She pointed out that this decision of some NGOs is very unfortunate, she hopes that they step back, because of the risk of credibility of the ACs, so she invites back to re-join and remain at the table of the dialogue. She underlined that it is fundamental that NGOs remain on board too in the ACs, also because she declared that if some stakeholders leave the ACs platform does not mean that they will have a privileged way to work with DG MARE. So, she insisted on the fact that the NGOs leaving the ACs are losing an important tool, the ACs have the privilege in providing advices related to CFP, thanks to the regionalisation too that supported their role. The main message was that we have to work together in order to make the ACs even better. She continued the intervention anticipating the participants to the ongoing consultations of the Commission, such as on technical measures, Farm to Fork strategy for the development of aquaculture. Referring to the legislative file for 2021, she reminded that this year there should be political agreement of the new modern control system, underlining that a credible control system builds credibility. Referring to SSF and recreational fisheries, she declared that it is time to have a monitoring tool to enforce the LO, including CCTVs. Also, a traceability system is another objective behind the control reform. Before finishing her opening speech, Vitcheva informed about the results of the Council negotiations held in December on fishing opportunities, managing to keep the MSY advice into the TACs, and adopting additional measures to protect the stocks, via the precautionary approach too. Moreover, Vitcheva reminded that during the December Council there has been a part dedicated to the Mediterranean and Black sea fishing opportunities, she thanked MEDAC for the cooperation on the Western Mediterranean. She underlined that it has been the first time that it has been found an agreement on the reduction of fishing effort in the Mediterranean Sea.

**2- How to improve the ACs performance and functioning?**

Valerie Tankink, Head of unit D3: before giving the floor to the presentations of 6 ACs in terms of good practices, resumed the 7 areas of improvement based on ACs contributions:

- Evaluating the functioning and performance of the ACs
- Making sure all opinions are heard and respected
- Reinforcing the impartiality of chairs and secretariats
- Addressing the uncertainty associated to the classification of stakeholders
- Easing the engagement of OIGs in ACs activities

- Enhancing the relation between the Commission and the SAC and between ACs
- Promoting and valuing the work of the ACs

#### ACs Presentations

##### PELAC:

- Intends to undertake the 3rd performance review;
- Chairs are impartial

##### Baltic Sea AC

- Honorary chair since 2006 very active role and in some cases decisive role
- Management team created in 2019 by the ExCom
- Theme sessions, invite speakers on specific theme
- External evaluation started in autumn last year by an external consultant, at the end of January the evaluation will be available.

##### North Sea AC

- Performance review
- Promoting chairmanship positions to OIGs

##### MAC

- 58 members very diverse group (7 NGOs)
- 13 MSs
- Better to contact specific people, instead of general email

MEDAC Presentation made by the vice president Alessandro Buzzi (attached).

After the presentations the Directorate General opened the floor to the interventions:

Black sea AC: Chair informs that representatives of DG MARE always participate at the meetings. He hopes that DG MARE will organise more meetings like this each year. Finally, he suggested to improve the work between ACs.

MEDAC: Giampaolo Buonfiglio underlined that the CFP regulation did not give a same tool for all ACs, without defining some aspects related to the composition and functioning of the Presidency, for example, and today we know each AC adopted different tools and solutions. He reminded that in the MEDAC we tried to respect the % between 60 and 40 in the ExCom and in the Presidency Bureau too, but not in the GA where there is the principle of the open door. Referring to the opinions, he underlined that the minority statements reflect all the points of views of all the members, when the consensus is not reached. Moreover, he reminded that the President has not right to vote to guarantee the impartiality of his role, he has to guarantee the good functioning of the procedures. Moreover, the Chair cannot be re-elected more than twice. He underlined that the presentation has been made by one of the vice chairs of 40%. Moreover, the Secretariat has been elected with a public system with the participation of DG MARE in every step of the selection procedure. Referring to the performance review, he underlined the support of the MEDAC members for an external performance review launched by DG MARE to all ACs with the same framework to evaluate all ACs with the same lowest common denominator.

Buonfiglio concluded its intervention underlining that the work of ACs should be promoted and valorized better if they are involved and if they receive on time the draft decisions so to have enough time to send their contributions.

Lena Andersson Pench DG MARE: she thanked for all the interventions and informed that the next InterAC meeting will be organised most probably in April.

### **3.Key developments on important files**

Referring to the second part of the meeting, due to the lack of time, there has not been a debate, but a fast presentation by each representative of DG MARE involved in:

- New strategic guidelines for aquaculture, Farm to Fork Strategy, New algae initiative (Lorella de la Cruz Iglesias): she informed that the EU strategic guidelines on aquaculture should be adopted in spring.
- Consultation on sustainable blue economy (Isabelle Viallon): she informed that the EC launched this new initiative that it is not so focused on CFP, because the objective will go across the different sectors.
- EU Multi-annual Programme for data collection and report on the Data Collection Framework implementation and functioning (Annette Hurrelmann): She informed that the EU MAP will be revised at the end of this year, the process started in 2018. She underlined the emphasis on regional coordination in the different sea basins, to further improve data collection in the different areas. Moreover, pilot studies that can test new approach and methods will be added in the EU data collection. The link is available on the presentation.
- State of play of the implementation and revision of the Control Regulation (Francesca Arena): she informed us on the state of play of the negotiations. The rapporteur and some MEPs submitted several amendments (100 more or less) to the draft Regulation. Arena told us that the plan of the rapporteur is to vote on the compromised amended text in the coming weeks, so DG MARE is expecting that soon the EP will arrive at a final text. The trilogue negotiation will start in the first semester of 2021. Moreover, she informed that the finalisation of the 2nd report 2015-2019, related to the implementation of the Control Regulation, supported by an external study, will be published at the beginning of April, and DG MARE will organise a webinar.