

**BSAC Executive Committee
Wednesday 11th May 2022
The Danish Agriculture and Food Council
Axelborg, Axeltorv 3, 1609 Copenhagen V
Report**

1. Welcome by the BSAC Chair Esben Sverdrup-Jensen

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, ExCom Chair welcomed all in-person and online participants. He stated that the BSAC is now facing the concept of hybrid meetings and is ready to deal with this challenge.

a. Apologies and adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

The participants list, including the apologies and mandates is on the website¹.

There was a quorum for the meeting.

b. Adoption of the minutes from the last ExCom meeting (17th January 2022)

The minutes of the ExCom meeting of 17th January 2022 were adopted.

c. Two ExCom members to check the minutes

Kim Kerr Hansen (Danish Fishers PO) and Glenn Douglas (EAA) agreed to check the minutes.

d. Selection of a new executive secretary, and to introduce Guillaume Carruel

The ExCom Chair presented the selection process of a new executive secretary. The search began in January 2022. On 7th January 2022, the ExCom members received a letter from the ExCom Chair explaining the process, as well as the job advert, which was also sent to the Baltic Member States, the European Commission, AC Secretariats, EP PECH Committee, HELCOM, EFCA, EU Council, and ICES. A selection team was established within the Management Team. The deadline for applications was set at the beginning of February. The selection team received five applications, 3 of which were selected for interviews. The decision of the selection team to select Guillaume Carruel was unanimous. On 13th March 2022, the selection team recommended the selected candidate to the ExCom. He will begin work in mid-June. The Chair thanked Guillaume Carruel for joining the meeting. He was confident that the ExCom will approve this selection and welcome him to the Baltic family. He thanked the selection team for a comprehensive selection process.

¹ [BSAC - BSAC Executive Committee and General Assembly meeting](#)

A fisheries representative informed that he had asked the Chair to make the CVs of all the applicants available to the ExCom to make the selection process transparent.

The ExCom Chair explained that the selection process had been fully transparent. The CVs of the candidates could not be circulated to the ExCom members due to the Danish GDPR restrictions.

Another fisheries representative gave a warm welcome to Guillaume Carruel and stated that he had full confidence that he is capable of taking on the job of the Executive Secretary.

The ExCom welcomed the new Executive Secretary, Guillaume Carruel, and approved his appointment.

2. From the Secretariat

a. Brief status on expenditure and admin for 2022-2023

The BSAC Secretary presented brief status on expenditures. She stated that since the financial year has only just started, the expenditures are small. She informed that the European Commission had received and approved the grant application from the BSAC. The BSAC will get the money once the internal Commission's procedure is finalised.

The ExCom took note.

b. Presentation of draft annual BSAC report, final report for DG Mare and draft financial statement for 2021-2022 [I/A] Annex 1, Annex 1a, Annex 2

The BSAC Secretary presented the draft annual BSAC report and the final report for DG Mare. She underlined that both reports present a satisfactory explanation of the BSAC work during the year.

The Secretary referred to the financial statement for 2021 – 2022. She explained that COVID-19 had again impacted the expenditures in the categories travel and meetings. The BSAC spent 60% of the eligible funding. The unspent money will be claimed back by the Commission. The expenditures had been approved by the auditor and after adoption by ExCom and General Assembly will be sent to the Commission.

The ExCom Chair stated that the BSAC Management Team will have to find the best approach and make decisions whether to hold BSAC meetings as online, physical or hybrid.

The ExCom adopted both draft reports as well as the draft financial statement. The BSAC draft annual report and the draft financial statement were approved by the ExCom for submission to the General Assembly.

c. Draft work programme and draft estimated operating budget 2022-2023

The BSAC Secretary referred to the work programme and explained that the ExCom had already approved it in January 2022. She stated that the list of planned meetings is indicative. However, the DG Mare requires the ACs to send a list of meetings twice a year. Referring to the draft operating budget for 2022-2023, she stated that the BSAC members had already had a chance to comment on it at previous meeting. The budget is quite flexible and money can be moved around after consulting the Commission. The travel and meeting costs were reduced by 20% as requested by the European Commission, in line with the Green Deal. She reminded the ExCom that the BSAC is moving towards the lumpsum model, which consists of allocating fixed grants to the Advisory Councils.

The ExCom adopted the work programme and draft estimated operating budget.

3. Guest speaker Audun Lem, Deputy Director, FAO Fisheries Division

Audun Lem, Deputy Director of FAO Fisheries Division addressed the impacts of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine on the market. The fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors in Europe are facing a massive challenge. He underlined the severity of the situation for the fish market in Europe.

He stated that the FAO is deeply concerned about the food security situation in Ukraine. The war has already significantly disrupted livelihoods in the agricultural growing season, through physical access constraints and damage to homes, productive assets, agricultural land, roads, and other civilian infrastructure. The impact of the war is expected to be much higher than the impact of the pandemic. On 7th March 2022, FAO launched a Rapid Response Plan for Ukraine, seeking USD 50 million to assist 240 000 vulnerable rural people affected by the war.

COVID-19 has resulted in a global crisis and it is not over yet. It has set back progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals enshrined in the UN's Agenda 2030.

He underlined that one of the reasons behind the resilience of the sector is its dynamism, and its ability to respond to market dynamics. The fishing and processing industry have shown the ability to adapt to the rising energy and raw material costs. But the health of the fishing sector is critically linked to other sectors, such as energy etc. It is difficult to get acceptance for higher prices, so the margins will have to be reduced. The overall picture is far from being positive. Reduced economic growth can be foreseen.

The ExCom Chair thanked Audun Lem for interesting and very concerning overview of the industry and market developments.

An observer asked whether decentralisation in the form of smaller companies would help in handling the crisis.

The representative of FAO stated that despite the tendency towards concentration, the fishing industry is still very fragmented compared to other industries. In response to the crisis, the fishing industry continues to create new companies and new solutions for distribution and market. The sector is able to adapt to the new situation. He also underlined that national governments must be ready to support all industries during the crisis.

An observer referred to the contribution of fisheries to food security in the Baltic region in the context of the crisis caused by the pandemic and the war, as well as the poor state of most of the fish stocks in the Baltic. He asked whether the FAO representative considered it a good policy to reduce 90% of the fish biomass captured to meal and oil, rather than prioritising direct human consumption.

The representative of FAO said he could not comment on fisheries policies in the Baltic Sea, but noted that several of the largest fisheries – essentially pelagic - in the world were destined for fishmeal and oil. He underlined that small scale fisheries contribute significantly to food security by providing fish for direct human consumption. He stated that reduction fisheries, which use fish for fish oil and fishmeal, also play an important role by providing alternative feeds for aquaculture and therefore play an important and legitimate role in the production chain. He stated that the economic value of fisheries can grow by increasing the direct human consumption of fish.

A fisheries representative referred to the fact that ship brokers from Africa are interested in buying fishing cutters from Europe due to the current problems in food supply in Africa. He asked about the resilience of the fisheries management system in the current situation.

The representative of FAO stated that the implementation of effective fisheries management systems needs stable institutions. COVID-19 had already weakened these institutions, and had an impact on economic planning and tax revenue. He underlined that it is the task of the international community to improve this situation of acute food insecurity. FAO is carrying out a number of activities in Africa. However, he stressed that the situation is serious.

The ExCom Chair thanked Audun Lem for his presentation. He invited the BSAC members to contact Audun Lem directly in FAO, in order to communicate and ask questions on any relevant issues.

4. Election of Vice Chair for the Executive Committee

The ExCom Chair informed the ExCom that the former Vice Chair had stepped down from his position in 2020. He informed that Glenn Douglas from European Anglers Alliance had been nominated to this position by Coalition Clean Baltic.

An observer asked the Chair to explain the procedure in force for electing the Vice Chair.

The ExCom Chair explained that according to the amended Delegated Regulation on the functioning of Advisory Councils² the Vice Chair of an Advisory Council must be elected by consensus. He underlined that the BSAC Rules of Procedure will need to be revised in order to make sure they are in alignment with the latest amendments of the Regulation.

Several fisheries representatives supported the nomination of Glenn Douglas to the post of the BSAC Vice Chair, underlining his experience in the Baltic and his ability to find compromise solutions.

Representatives of the OIG also supported the nomination.

A representative of one fisheries organisation stated that they cannot support the nomination of a representative of an organisation whose member organisations campaign actively against commercial fisheries. In their view, this would undermine any future collaboration. She informed that they will abstain from voting.

Glenn Douglas underlined his long and unique experience in the BSAC. He had always represented the EAA and not the individual member organisations. He stated that he had accepted the nomination because he believes in the European project which is the BSAC and is ready to take on the post as Vice Chair for the benefit of the BSAC.

The ExCom decided to elect **Glenn Douglas as Vice Chair of the BSAC**. The Swedish Pelagic Federation PO abstained.

5. Report on BSAC cooperation with BALTFISH:

- a) Fisheries management measures for mobile bottom contacting fishing gears in the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) of the German EEZ in the Baltic Sea - take note and information on future procedures (at request of Union of German Cutter Fishery)³**

The ExCom Chair informed the participants that the information on the fisheries management measures for mobile bottom contacting fishing gears in Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the German EEZ will be presented at request of the Union of German Cutter Fishery.

² COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) 2022/204 of 8 December 2021 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/242 laying down detailed rules on the functioning of the Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy, Article 4 (2): The Advisory Council shall designate, by consensus, a chairperson and at least one vice-chairperson.

³ Presentations made are here: [http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-General-Assembly-meeting-\(1\)](http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-General-Assembly-meeting-(1))

Leonie Renwrantz from the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Miriam Müller from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation presented an overview of the draft proposal for fisheries management measures for mobile bottom-contacting fishing gears in the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) of the German EEZ in the Baltic Sea. A proposal for a draft joint recommendation and the relevant information on the measures required, including their rationale, scientific evidence in support and details on their practical implementation and enforcement was subject to a national stakeholder consultation in February 2019.

The draft was subsequently submitted to the Member States having a direct fisheries management interest in the protected areas, to the BSAC and the European Commission. The proposal was discussed in three pre-consultation meetings with representatives of the Member States concerned.

The document will now be submitted to BALTFISH, and once adopted, will go to the European Commission.

The draft joint recommendation contains fisheries management measures in the following SACs: Fehmarn Belt, Kadet Trench, Western Rønne Bank, Adler Ground and Pomeranian Bay with Odra Bank. This document proposes fisheries management measures to protect the habitats in sandbanks and reefs. The measures include year-round exclusion of fisheries with mobile bottom-contacting gears in certain areas of respective SACs (Fehmarn Belt, Kadet Trench, Pomeranian Bay with Odra Bank) or rather the whole SAC (Western Rønne Bank, Adler Ground). The measures contribute to the obligation to ensure the maintenance or restoration of favourable conservation status of these habitat types and species in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to an effective implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the achievement of good environmental status in the German EEZ.

Dr. Christian von Dorrien from the Thünen Institute of Baltic Sea Fisheries presented international fishing activities (2015-2020) in German waters of the Baltic Sea in relation to the designated Natura 2000 areas and proposed management measures for mobile bottom contacting gears. He presented the effort and the revenues for vessels > 12m, fishing with mobile bottom contacting gears in the reference areas on the basis of data from Denmark, Germany and Poland. Data was assessed against the fishing effort. Only fishing activities in the past affected by the proposed future measures were considered. He concluded that the total fishing effort and the revenues by vessels using bottom contacting gears in the reference areas were quite low.

The ExCom Chair thanked the representatives of the German administration and science for comprehensive presentations.

A fisheries representative stated that a similar scheme showing low fishing activity and substantial ecological damages had been presented during planning for wind farms. He asked whether the species abundance and population size had been assessed before the introduction of closures for bottom contacting gears and what will be the impact of closures on species abundance. He referred to the fact that the upcoming EU Action Plan to

conserve fisheries resources and conserve marine ecosystems is expected to have a blanket approach to a ban on bottom trawling in Europe.

Another fisheries representative drew attention to the fact that the calculations of revenue per area are often misleading and may lead to different assumptions. He referred to the maps of fishing activities presented by the German scientist and stated that there are no fishing activities in large areas in the Danish and German EEZs, so there is no reason to close them for bottom trawling while the fishery in the Baltic is already under severe pressure.

Another fisheries representative asked what is the added value of the proposed ban for bottom trawling in Germany.

The representative of the German administration stated that she is not in a position to say what the EU Action Plan will contain in terms of bottom trawling bans. The German administration would like to implement the proposal for fisheries management measures for mobile bottom-contacting fishing gears in the German protected areas as soon as possible. She underlined that fishing is not the only activity which has an impact on the ecosystems. Management plans finalised early this year and protected areas ordinances include also other measures than bottom trawling bans. In order to support the recovery of habitats it is also planned to test active reef restoration measures. She stated that monitoring programmes will be developed to assess the effectiveness of the fisheries management measures.

A representative of the OIG expressed the opinion that the measures proposed in the German SACs are justified. Mobile bottom gears should not be allowed in MPAs because they damage the sea bottom habitats.

A representative of DG Mare informed that the work on the EU Action Plan to conserve fisheries resources and conserve marine ecosystems is still ongoing. As regards the measures proposed in the Plan, she stated that they have to be ambitious enough to be positively evaluated by STECF. In setting any fisheries measures, the Commission always tries to keep the balance between the interests of the fishing industry and environmental needs. Areas closed for fishing are needed in order to protect valuable habitats. The Member States are obliged to establish them in accordance with the EU environmental legislation to fulfil the objectives. If they fail to do so, the Commission may refer such cases to the European Court of Justice.

A representative of the German administration informed that the last technical consultation meeting of the proposed measures will take place in May 2022. The draft Joint Recommendation could then be adopted on 30th June 2022, during the last meeting of the BALTFISH HLG under the Latvian Presidency.

The ExCom took note.

b) Information on processes concerning Swedish proposals for fisheries conservation measures in MPAs under Articles 11 and 18 Common Fisheries Policy – (fisheries regulations necessary for compliance with obligations under Union environmental legislation)⁴

Malin Wilhelmsson from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) presented the first information on the Swedish draft proposals for fisheries conservation measures in marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea and Øresund. She informed that work on the proposal is still on-going and the BSAC will be consulted in due time. She referred to Article 11 of the CFP which empowers the Member States to introduce fisheries conservation measures in MPAs in order to comply with obligations under Union environmental legislation. Earlier initiatives in Sweden had covered the areas in Skagerrak, Kattegat. The proposed measures consist of no-take zones and zones with restricted fishery.

Lena Tingström from SwAM introduced the areas concerned in the Baltic and Øresund. The fisheries measures will be introduced in several Natura 2000 sites and some overlapping nature reserves. Some of the areas are important for seabirds as well as herring and sprat, and harbour porpoise. Some shallow areas are also important nursery areas for fish species. There is already a ban on bottom trawling in Øresund.

SwAM needs to report back to the Swedish Government on progress on the assignment for introducing fisheries conservation measures in MPAs by 30th May 2022. The BSAC will be consulted on the draft Joint Recommendation.

A fisheries representative asked whether the ban on bottom trawling covers all kinds of bottom structures. **A fisheries representative** referred to the need to balance fishermen's needs with conservation needs and asked whether there will be permits for the very few fishermen left to fish with static gears in the protected areas, and how such a procedure with permits will work. **Another fisheries representative** asked whether there is scientific evidence for the existence of important nursery areas in the protected areas.

The representatives of the Swedish administration replied that the areas consist of a mosaic of sandy areas and reef structures. It is difficult to prohibit bottom trawling in only small and scattered areas with a more fragile bottom structure, also in terms of fisheries control. Measures should cover larger areas. More details on specific measures will be given in the draft recommendation. All measures will have a well-documented scientific background. When it comes to permits, commercial fisheries for which no negative impact on the habitats had been identified will be allowed in Havet kring Ven and in Falsterbohalvöns havsområde in Öresund. The proposal suggests that the county administrative board of Skåne will take decisions on fishing permits for individual vessels. The proposal will be based on adaptive management with possible seasonal and geographical restrictions and the permits are proposed to be associated with specific

⁴ Presentation on BSAC website: [http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-General-Assembly-meeting-\(1\)](http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-General-Assembly-meeting-(1))

requirements such as seasonal and/or geographical restrictions, and the use of ADDs to increase the knowledge of bycatch in the fishery.

The ExCom Chair thanked the representatives of the Swedish administration for their presentation and asked them to keep the BSAC informed.

The ExCom took note.

6. Date and venue of next meeting

The ExCom decided to confirm the date of the next meeting, provisionally set for 30th June 2022, in due time after the meeting.

7. AOB

The ExCom Chair thanked the outgoing Latvian BALTFISH Presidency for good cooperation. He expressed hope that the BSAC will be able to organise a **joint meeting** with BALTFISH to discuss the ICES advice for 2023 in June 2022. He stated that the BSAC Secretariat and BALTFISH Presidency are working on a date for such a meeting.

The previously planned date of the BSAC Joint Working Group (9th – 10th June 2022) overlaps with the **CFP stakeholder event**⁵, organised by the European Commission as a hybrid event. He encouraged BSAC members to register. The agenda of will be communicated at a later stage.

The ExCom Chair referred to the coming ICES meetings with the Advisory Councils and with all other stakeholders MIAC and MIACO (22nd and 23rd June 2022). He asked the BSAC members to inform the Secretariat by 27th May 2022 if they want to add anything to the agenda or participate.

The ExCom Chair also informed that the European Commission has intensified the frequency of InterAC meetings. There are more and more political issues on the agenda of these meetings. The BSAC Secretariat does not have the mandate to enter into political discussions. The issue of the BSAC representation at Inter-ACs needs to be discussed by the ExCom in the nearest future.

The ExCom Chair informed that he attended the EFCA Advisory Board meeting in April. CCTV was high on the agenda. EFCA invited the BSAC to come to Vigo and see how the agency operates. The previously planned meeting of the BSAC – EFCA in Vigo did not take place because of COVID-19.

The ExCom Chair thanked all participants for the good discussions and atmosphere.

⁵ <http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/Stakeholder-event-on-the-CFP>