

**The BSAC General Assembly**  
**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022**  
**The Danish Agriculture and Food Council**  
**Axelborg, Axeltorv 3, 1609 Copenhagen V**  
**Report**

**1. Welcome by the Honorary Chair of the General Assembly Ingemar Berglund**

Ingemar Berglund, BSAC Honorary Chair welcomed all participants.<sup>1</sup> Chairing a General Assembly meeting for the first time as BSAC Honorary Chair, he underlined good working atmosphere in the BSAC.

**2. Apologies and adoption of the agenda**

The apologies are included in the participants' list<sup>2</sup>. The agenda was adopted. Under AOB was noted a point by Krzysztof Stanuch (National Chamber of Fish Producers) related to the work of the BSAC Management Team.

**3. Presentation of Annual BSAC report (by the BSAC ExCom chair) and financial statement for 2021-2022 (by the Secretary) [A] Annex 1 and Annex 2**

**The ExCom Chair** presented the Annual BSAC report. He underlined that despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, 2021-22 had been a very busy year for the BSAC. He pointed out that the report describes all activities of the past year. The work done by the BSAC in the past year is impressive. He underlined that the first in-person meeting of the ExCom and General Assembly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in September 2021, had generated a lot of good energy. The meeting thanked the outgoing Honorary Chair for his work and commitment and elected a new Honorary Chair, as well as the ExCom Chair and the Working Group Chairs. In the past year, the BSAC continued to deal with selectivity and technical measures. The BSAC recommendations for the fishery for 2022 were sent to the Commission in due time. He stated that unfortunately, most of the Baltic fish stocks are in dire straits. Baltic cod and western Baltic herring continue to be of great concern to the BSAC. The BSAC White Paper was finalised. Following the recommendations received from the external evaluation carried out by an external consultancy, the BSAC adopted a Code of Conduct to strengthen transparency and serve as a guidance to new members. The BSAC worked closely with BALTFISH, among other things on the Joint Recommendation on measures to increase the selectivity of flatfish trawls for cod avoidance and the Joint Recommendation on harbour porpoise, as well as the Joint Recommendation on the derogation from landing obligation for plaice. The BSAC maintained good collaboration with the Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> List of participants is on the website: [BSAC - BSAC Executive Committee and General Assembly meeting](#)

<sup>2</sup> Apologies and mandates included in the list of participants: [BSAC - BSAC Executive Committee and General Assembly meeting](#)

The BSAC continued to draw attention to specific issues related to technical measures in the Regulation 2019/1241 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, in the context of the Commission's draft Implementing Act to the Regulation. The BSAC had developed guidelines for a trial fishery for stickleback and received updates on the trials conducted in respective Member States. The BSAC invited EFCA and ICES to its Executive Committee meeting in May 2021 in order to strengthen collaboration and interaction with and understanding of the work of the EFCA and ICES. The Joint BALTFISH-EFCA-BSAC Workshop on the Landing Obligation in March 2022 gave an update and state of play with implementation on the landing obligation in the Baltic. The BSAC members and in particular, the BSAC Secretariat participated in a multitude of different meetings. He praised the good standard of communication with members set by the BSAC Secretariat. BSAC members received regular newsletters from the BSAC Secretariat. The BSAC Management Team met 9 times during the year, including a meeting with BALTFISH Presidency and with EFCA. The BSAC started the year 2021-2022 with 37 General Assembly members. A new member from fisheries joined during the year: the Polish Fish Producers Association. No one left during the year.

**A fisheries representative** stated that despite the intensive work of the BSAC, its recommendations were low on effectiveness. He underlined that the BSAC must make its advice heard. Several important issues raised by the BSAC had been left with no answer from the European Commission and EFCA. In his view, the BSAC should insist on having its advice taken into account by the Commission and by the national administrations in order to increase its effectiveness.

**The General Assembly** approved the BSAC Annual Report 2021-22 and the Financial Statement for 2021-2022.

#### **4. Presentation of the White Paper by the BSAC ExCom Chair<sup>3</sup>**

**The ExCom Chair** presented the printed version of the White Paper. He asked the BSAC members to share the White Paper with national administrations. He underlined that the BSAC White Paper is a comprehensive and consensus-based piece of advice. He reminded that the BSAC had started to work on the new CFP in 2019, at the initiative of the Chair of the EBM Working Group, in order for the BSAC to be ahead of time in initiating this discussion. He thanked the BSAC members for good attendance at the theme-based meetings during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 and for providing constructive input to reshaping the CFP from a Baltic perspective. He referred to the fact that the White Paper highlights the importance of the ecosystem based approach, adapting to climate change and making best use of scientific advice. It also underlines the special role of recreational fisheries. He expressed the hope that the decision-makers will take this BSAC advice into account.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/cbf2de84-7646-4d8e-bd48-3dea5777f06/ChairletterandWhitePaperFINAL21\\_22\\_38.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB](http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/cbf2de84-7646-4d8e-bd48-3dea5777f06/ChairletterandWhitePaperFINAL21_22_38.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB)

He invited the members of the BSAC to take part in the CFP stakeholder event, organised by the European Commission on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to give an update on the revision of the CFP.<sup>4</sup>

## **5. Reports from the working groups for the year 2021 -2022 (by the Working Group Chairs)**

**Teija Aho, the Chair of the Demersal Working Group** referred to the fact that she had taken over the chairmanship of the Group in September 2021. She underlined the very serious state of the Baltic cod stocks. The Demersal Working Group discussed the technical gear improvements and development to avoid the capture of cod in flatfish fishery. She underlined that new gears with selective entities should be approved, adopted and implemented as soon as possible. The technical measures were dealt with in the context of the Commission's draft Implementing Act. The BSAC asked the Commission to be consulted to avoid any misinterpretations of the technical rules. The Working Group also discussed the fishing opportunities for 2023 in the context of the ICES advice in the meetings in June and September. The Demersal Working Group Chair also chaired the technical meeting on the draft Joint Recommendation on selective gears, held in October 2021. The Demersal WG meeting held in March 2022 dealt with the impact of growing population of seals on fish and fisheries, which is a real challenge to the Baltic fisheries, especially given the very limited fishing opportunities. Member States gave updates on seal management.

**Michael Andersen, the former Chair of the Demersal Working Group** referred to the importance of work on the development of new selective gears. He expressed deep frustration with the fact that the gears aimed at avoiding the capture of cod have not yet been implemented in the Baltic fisheries. He recalled that the BSAC had discussed this issue on several occasions in the past two years and gave substantial input to the BALTFISH Joint Recommendation. He underlined that taking into account the current fishing opportunities in the Baltic, the new selective gears are the only solution to make full use of the existing abundant resources of flatfish. The matter is of utmost urgency for Baltic fishermen, who are at present prevented from using the existing resources. He made an appeal to the European Commission to speed up the decision-making process in the implementation of new selective gears.

**A fisheries representative** regretted that the results of research conducted in Poland on innovative selective solutions to avoid cod bycatch had not been taken into account by BALTFISH in the solutions proposed in the Joint Recommendation. He underlined that the legislative procedure to introduce the new gears in the fisheries is much too slow.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/Stakeholder-event-on-the-CFP>

**Nils Höglund, the Chair of the Working Group on Ecosystem Based Management** referred to the substantial work done in the two meetings of the Working Group held in the last BSAC year. He underlined that his ambition as Chair was to have wide stakeholder participation to discuss the matters related to ecosystem based management of fisheries, among others the revision of the HELCOM Action Plan and the management of eel. He expressed satisfaction that some of the meetings of the Group had gathered a record high attendance. The Group discussed eel management and managed to produce recommendations as a response to a request from the Commission for input. He underlined that the Working Group had managed to reach agreement on the efforts needed to improve upstream and downstream migration of eel. He stated that there is a lot of work ahead of the Group, in particular related to the actions in the Baltic Action Plan and new European legislation on nature restoration. He proposed to consider meeting in smaller focus group, as recommended in the BSAC external evaluation carried out by Oxford Research. He referred to the need to push the European Commission not to impose too short deadlines for consultations.

**Jarek Zieliński, the Chair of the Pelagic Working Group** stated that the Working Group met several times during the BSAC year 2021-22, first to discuss the fishing opportunities for 2022 and produce the BSAC recommendations in the framework of the Joint Working Group and then to deal with more specific issues related to pelagic fisheries in January and March 2022. He referred to the fact that not much progress had been made on the western Baltic herring in 2021-22 due to the lack of input on the recovery plan from ICES. The BSAC will again ask ICES during the MIAC and MIACO meetings in June 2022 to advise on the rebuilding plan for western herring. The BSAC will continue to work on the management plan after receiving input from ICES. At the meeting of the WG in January 2022 updates on the stickleback trial fishery were given by experts from Denmark, Sweden and Estonia. Fisheries associations from Denmark, Lithuania and Poland informed of their intention to contribute to the development of the stickleback trial fishery. The meeting dealt with fishmeal and fish oil production and the importance of Baltic fisheries and raw material supplies. The meeting of the Pelagic WG held in March 2022 dealt with the pelagic quotas for 2022 and 2023, the technical measures in the pelagic and demersal fisheries, and follow-up to the BALTFISH/ BSAC/EFCA joint Workshop on monitoring, control, and enforcement of the Landing Obligation held in March 2022. He referred the information given by EFCA on an overall good level of compliance with the landing obligation in the herring and sprat fisheries in the Baltic. He conveyed this message to other international fora, because it may have a positive impact on the decisions related to fishing opportunities. The meeting also took note of the information on the work of the Danish Pelagic Producer Organisation (DPPO) to develop fully documented fisheries, and of the impact of the war in Ukraine on food security in Europe. He informed the General Assembly that he had conveyed the BSAC letter on technical measures and the draft Implementing Act to Regulation 2019/1241 directly to the bureau of the Commissioner, asking him to help in making the draft Implementing Act available to the BSAC for consultation, in order to avoid any misinterpretation of the technical rules in the future.

**The meeting** took note of the reports from the WG chairs.

## **6. Presentation of Work Programme 2022 – 2023 (BSAC ExCom Chair) Presentation of draft estimated operating budget 2022 - 2023 Annex 4 and appointment of certified auditor to audit BSAC annual accounts (Secretary)**

**The ExCom Chair** referred to the work programme which had been endorsed by the ExCom. He pointed out that the work programme contains the guidelines for the work of the BSAC.

**The General Assembly** approved the Work Programme 2022-2023 and the estimated operating budget 2022 – 2023.

**The General Assembly** confirmed that the BSAC would continue with the auditor Albjerg Statsautoriseret Revisionspartnerselskab.

## **7. Election of BSAC Executive Committee chair**

**The Honorary Chair** informed that according to the BSAC Rules of Procedure, the ExCom Chair is appointed by consensus for a term of three years by members of the General Assembly amongst the membership of the General Assembly and plays an impartial role. He also informed that Jarek Zieliński was the only candidate nominated to this post. He referred to the amended Delegated Regulation<sup>5</sup> on the functioning of the Advisory Councils, which states that the Chair and the Vice Chair shall be elected by consensus and represent different categories of stakeholders.

**A representative of the Danish Fishers PO** said that Jarek Zieliński had been nominated for his qualifications and experience in working with Advisory Councils. He underlined that he is a strong candidate to take over the chairmanship of the BSAC.

**A representative of the OIG** supported the nomination of Jarek Zieliński.

**Jarek Zieliński** introduced himself to the General Assembly. He stated that if elected, he will closely follow the recommendations of the external evaluation of the BSAC, as well as the Rules of Procedure. He stated that he had accepted the nomination because he sees values in the BSAC and will put all his efforts into the work to further improve cooperation amongst the BSAC members.

**The General Assembly** elected Jarek Zieliński BSAC Chair by consensus.

**Jarek Zieliński, newly elected ExCom Chair** thanked all the BSAC members for their confidence.

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<sup>5</sup> 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:** The Advisory Council shall designate, by consensus, a chairperson and at least one vice-chairperson.

**The BSAC Secretary** stated that the BSAC is losing a fantastic Chair who had led impressive activities. She thanked the outgoing Chair on behalf of the BSAC Secretariat.

**The Honorary Chair** thanked Esben Sverdrup-Jensen for his efficient chairmanship.

**The BSAC members** also thanked the outgoing Chair for his contribution to the BSAC and wished him all the best for the future.

**Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, the outgoing ExCom Chair** congratulated the new ExCom Chair on his appointment and stated that he is leaving the BSAC in very competent hands. He thanked all the BSAC members for their excellent work and collaboration. He stated that in his view, the BSAC has improved its working atmosphere.

**The representative of DG Mare** thanked the outgoing ExCom Chair for his work. She congratulated the new Chair and looked forward to future cooperation.

## **8. Proposed protocol for new and existing members**

**The Executive Secretary** presented the draft protocol for new and existing members to ensure broader and greater engagement within the BSAC. She explained that at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the BSAC ExCom took note of and approved the results the external evaluation of the BSAC. A Working Group was established to propose actions for the BSAC to implement. One action was to draft a Code of Conduct for all members of the BSAC and for observers. A Code of Conduct was adopted by the BSAC on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021. At its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the BSAC Management Team discussed ways to ensure broader and greater engagement within the BSAC. It asked the Secretariat to go through existing BSAC rules and procedures and compile a document containing what is expected of existing and new members. The Secretariat had included the comment by one member the draft protocol which is to presented to the General Assembly.

**A representative of the OIG** fully supported the proposed protocol.

**The General Assembly** adopted the protocol for new and existing members<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> [\[Modtagerfelt\] \(bsac.dk\)](https://modtagerfelt.bsac.dk)

## 9. The new General Assembly member: Baltic Waters 2030

**A representative of Baltic Waters 2030** gave a presentation of their work and activities<sup>7</sup>. They focus on large, communicative demonstration projects as well as political advocacy and dissemination of information for a healthy Baltic Sea. The main projects include circular manure management, restoration of the bays around Stockholm, Re-cod project to help the cod pass the vulnerable egg stage and to release larva as a measure to strengthen the stock as well as small research projects. One major focus area continues to be the Baltic Sea commercial fisheries. A representative of Baltic Waters 2030 underlined that they had joined the BSAC in order to hear the views and hopefully provide knowledge from their projects.

**Some fisheries representatives** expressed their critical opinions on the application of Baltic Waters 2030 and pointed out that they could not support the application because one of problematic issues underlined in the Baltic Waters 2030 advocacy plans is to ban trawling in the Baltic.

**The representative of Baltic Waters 2030** underlined that one of their main objectives is to have a healthy sea with an active fishery.

**The Honorary Chair** noted that the BSAC will revert to the discussions raised on bottom trawling.

**The Honorary Chair** referred to the application for membership by LIFE.

**A representative of Low Impact Fisheries of Europe (LIFE)** introduced the organisation. LIFE was launched to gather small scale fishermen in Europe to work out common positions and be part of the decision-making process by closely cooperating with the European Commission and the Advisory Councils. He stated that member organisations of LIFE are already members of the BSAC. The Baltic and North Sea Coordinator has been participating in the BSAC as observer. LIFE coordinates the positions between members.

**Some fisheries representatives** could not see the need for an umbrella organisation to join the BSAC if several of their member organisations are already members of the BSAC. One representative questioned LIFE's legitimacy to speak on behalf of all small-scale fishers, many of whom were represented by other organisations.

**A representative of LIFE** explained that LIFE only spoke on behalf of its member associations – 35 across 15 EU Member States - and not on behalf of the entire small-scale sector.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-General-Assembly-meeting-\(1\)/20220511-BW2030-EN-short.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB](http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-General-Assembly-meeting-(1)/20220511-BW2030-EN-short.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB)

**A fisheries representatives** asked for clarification on the procedure to elect new GA members.

**The Honorary Chair and the BSAC Secretary** stated that the final decision on membership is decided by the EU Baltic Member States, in accordance with Annex III of the Basic Regulation<sup>8</sup>. Four Member States had approved the application by LIFE.

**The General Assembly** took note of the applications by Baltic Waters 2030 and LIFE to become members of the BSAC General Assembly.<sup>9</sup>

## 10.AOB

**The Honorary Chair** referred to the fact that the current Rules of Procedure of the BSAC need to be updated to make sure they are in alignment with the latest amendments of the Delegated Regulation on the functioning of Advisory Councils<sup>10</sup>. He stated that the BSAC Management Team will in the nearest future give the Rules of Procedure a going through to make sure they are in compliance with the Regulation.

**A fisheries representative** drew attention to the Terms of Reference of the Management Team<sup>11</sup>, which state that if consensus decisions are not possible, the chair takes the final decision. He underlined that leaving the final decision in the hands of one person could be potentially problematic in the case of existence of different interests. In his view, the BSAC Management Team should only advise the ExCom and should not be empowered to take decisions.

**The outgoing ExCom Chair** explained that the powers and the composition of the Management Team are well defined in its Terms of Reference. The Management Team follows the Rules of Procedure and only deals with administrative and organisational matters and does not take political decisions.

**Another fisheries representative** stated that he has full confidence that the Management team acts according to the rules and its terms of reference.

**The Honorary Chair** stated that the Management Team will discuss at its next meeting how to make its work even more transparent.

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<sup>8</sup> **Annex III Regulation 1380/2013** (Basic Regulation): European and national organisations representing the fisheries sector and other interest groups may propose members to the Member States concerned. Those Member States shall agree on the members of the general assembly.

<sup>9</sup> **A representative of small-scale fisheries** has written by e mail and stated that the fact that his organisation is a member of LIFE has no impact on the decisions and positions presented during the BSAC meetings. During the BSAC meeting he speaks on behalf of his fisheries organisation.

<sup>10</sup> 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 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017R1575&from=EN>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC/About-the-BSAC/TofRManagementTeamBSAC.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

## **11. Closing remarks by the Honorary Chair of the BSAC**

**The Honorary Chair** thanked all the participants for the good cooperation and thanked the BSAC members for electing the new Chair of the ExCom. He informed that the new Chair will step down from his position of the Chair of Pelagic Working Group. Therefore, the next ExCom will elect the new Chair of Pelagic Working Group.