

## REPORT *Summary*

Meeting: **EFCA Advisory Board**  
Parties: **EFCA, ACs representatives**  
Date: **4 April 2022**  
Location: **Vigo/online**  
Chair: **Susan Steele, EFCA**  
Rapporteur: **Tamara Talevska**

**\*\*\* Full report to be circulated by EFCA**

EFCA'S new executive director Susan Steele welcomed participants in sunny Vigo and those joining online. The meeting started with **state of play from Advisory Councils** in relation to **control matters and implementation of the LO**.

### **State of play: NSAC**

Tamara Talevska, on behalf of the NSAC, thanked Ms Steele and EFCA for organising the meeting. EFCA was briefed about the NSAC work related to control. Talevska highlighted regular cooperation with the Scheveningen Group, currently focused on the Discard Plan for 2023, saying that advice was in preparation and will feed into draft JR.

She informed about the ongoing work on the CFP report, resulting in a draft advice for approval to feed into Commission's stakeholder consultations in May.

Together with NWWAC the NSAC is working on social dimension of the CFP and increased cooperation with NWWAC on several other issues was emphasized.

Work on MPAs high on the NSAC agenda.

Talevska informed EFCA that the NSAC had asked the Scheveningen Group to be involved in their projects on CCTV, but that so far it has not succeeded in getting involved.

The NSAC is awaiting the reform of Control Regulation and the expected compromise by the legislators. Simultaneously, the NSAC is drafting advice on the use of AIS as an alternative to VMS – this is in the pipeline for adoption. NSAC members felt that there were many good reasons for this proposal, but one major argument is that the costs of using electronic transmission are increasing and becoming burdensome for fisheries.

Another major issue highlighted was the increasing cost of fuel, which is creating serious problems for the fishing sector. The NSAC expressed its concerns regarding the situation in Ukraine and its effects on fisheries and sent their sympathy to colleagues in the Black sea and Ukraine.

Finally, the NSAC informed of its intention to hold the annual General Assembly and ExCom in Vigo in September and asked for EFCA's assistance with organisation. The idea is to hold, on the margins of these meetings or as part of ExCom's agenda, a section on control issues in the North Sea.<sup>1</sup>

EFCA thanked NSAC and granted its support to NSAC meetings in Vigo. Bilateral coordination will take place ahead of the meeting. EFCA informed that further information on REM pilot projects will be provided later on.

Susan Steele presented **EFCA's 2021 Annual Report**.

- 98,6% of the annual work programme implemented despite Covid, in the framework of Single programming doc (SPD).
- Implementation was aligned with coherent budget execution of 99,1%
- Additional resources were granted by the COM for assistance in operational capacity, 14 new staff were employed.
- Work programme has been amended to include three new projects in the framework of EMFAF.
- Study on weighing process of fish products has been carried out.
- Virtual regional training academy in western Mediterranean for fisheries control and inspection was executed.
- Maintenance of The Handbook on European Cooperation on coast guard functions has been performed.

EFCA carried out **6 JDPs** with 96% implementation rate and involvement of all MS.

Cost evaluation: 71mio EUR, 32 specific actions in BS, NS and WW and 8 campaigns in MED and BLS. JDPs in place to enhance standardization. There was significant increase of inspections:

Inspections with at least one suspected infringement for NS: 111 → 145.

Total inspections: 6912 → 2271<sup>2</sup>.

In the NS infringements mostly included misreporting, conservation measures, very few on LO. The question regarding low infringements of LO remains - is there a full compliance or are suspected infringements not being picked up accordingly.

### **Implementation of TCA with UK:**

In NS and NWW establishment of a virtual coordination network (VCN) – providing situational awareness and risk assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> If members have particular proposal on the topic, they are welcome to inform the Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> The significant decrease in the North Sea JDP is mainly driven by the absence of inspections that previously were conducted by UK, in particular land inspections conducted on markets, which constituted 70% of the 2020 inspections conducted in the North Sea. (EFCA Annual report 2021, page 13).

VCN important to assess the impacts of control in EU waters due to divergences in regulation between UK and EU.

### **REM pilot projects:**

REM pilot projects operational plans endorsed by HLG in NS, NWW and Baltic MS Group. MS currently working on selection of 2 fishing vessels to participate in project. Agreed timeline is to identify fishing vessels by end of March and to start implementation of pilot projects in October 2022. EFCA REM working Group to follow up and support MS REM implementation and promote exchange of experiences. Participation is open to all MS and the COM, including those not currently involved in REM projects. Kick off meeting on 15 Dec 2021.

### **External dimension CFP:**

- Work with COM with third countries and international RFMOs.
- Fight against IUU
- PESCAO project – EFCA provides technical assistance to SRFC (Sub-regional fisheries committee)

### **Horizontal tasks:**

- 2021 year of consolidations, improved existing procedures, telework, paperless administration
- EFCA Communication strategy, EFCA promotes culture of compliance with CFP
- Comm Strategy had to be adapted to a flexible hybrid mode.

### **LO Compliance evaluation planning in cooperation with MS regional groups:**

Control Expert Groups until now reported with executive summaries, future report will be published. EFCA to organise joint workshops to present the results, expected end of year or beginning of 2023. For NS: executed by EFCA in cooperation with Scheveningen Control expert group (CEG), 2018-2020 period was the last one. Stocks included: cod, sole, plaice, prawns, mackerel (same as before but includes prawns).

Note: Data used were from 2020 due to STECF data only being available one year later.

### **Rotation of the Admin Board:**

Request submitted by MAC to move to the LDAC as representative with MAC as alternate due to unavailability to attend the meetings. LDAC agreed to take this role and represent ACs to the Administrative Board until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

**AOB:**

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, BSAC, intervened on REM trials saying it was important to think about the stakeholders of those involved and integrate experiences. He suggested EFCA to get direct link to companies involved, perhaps through ACs. Idea was to skip MS and establish a direct link. He believed that ACs are well suited for this.

Miguel Nueva, EFCA, responded that there are two levels: Control Expert Groups are briefed on the state of play of projects, other could be a specific workshop with participation of ACs on regional level. However he added that first projects need to be up and running, exchange of views could take place in some form afterwards. He added that cooperation and exchange of views with industry is in the workplan of the Control Expert Groups and EFCA has been trying to remind them of this.

NWWAC invited EFCA to let ACs know how they could help with involvements in REM projects.

Miguel Nueva responded that EFCA cannot interfere in relations between MS and ACs. Progress in each area regarding REM to be seen, including which areas have more problems. Belgian Presidency to NWW to organise CEG in May. It is possible for the presidency to update NWWAC at July meeting.

Next EFCA Advisory Board meeting in October, further information on workshops to follow.

**Received VIA e-mail from EFCA:****Five-Year Independent External Evaluation of EFCA for the period 2017-2021**

The evaluation aims to review **EFCA's progress and achievements during 2017-2021**. In particular, the evaluation will consider EFCA's contribution towards a high level of **compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy**, and it will review EFCA's **working practices, performance, and flexibility**. This evaluation is being conducted by an independent external evaluator (Ipsos).

As part of the evaluation, **we would like to invite you to fill in a survey** to understand your views on EFCA's performance during 2017-2021. As you have been involved in EFCA's activities in this period, we would really value your contribution, which will contribute to a **complete and balanced assessment of EFCA**.

All responses will be treated **confidentially** by Ipsos and will only be reported on in aggregate form.

**To fill in the survey, please use the link below.** The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete and it will be open until the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.

**Link:** <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/EFCA-Evaluation-2017-2021>