
Meeting Report

This report covers the background and the content of the 7th Annual Meeting of EATiP in Brussels, held on 27-29 April 2015, setting out the different topics that were presented and discussed, giving their background and the requirements for EATiP positions.

Chairman's Welcome

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to Brussels for the 7th Annual Meeting of the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform. Seven is an interesting number – there are seven seas, seven continents, seven days in the week, seven colours in the rainbow....and it also shows how far EATiP has come in the last 7 years.

When we agreed to create EATiP in 2007, it was because many of us here today had a common view that to be able to progress European aquaculture, we – professionals, scientists and policy-makers - needed to work more closely together and have better research and innovation activities to support and promote its development.

Our first actions were to develop the Vision and Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, through the Aquainnova project. More than 3000 copies of this flagship document of the EATiP have been distributed.

By 2013, EATiP was recognised as an official European Technology Platform, giving it a privileged consultation position with the European Commission – and new contacts with other ETPs that are also looking to develop their economic sectors.

At the same time, European aquaculture received policy support in the shape of Strategic Guidelines for its sustainable development and new, improved provisions in the Common Fisheries Policy and in its related Market and Funding mechanisms.

Since that time, EATiP has participated in debates on the “Future of European Aquaculture” with the Commission, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – we have presented and argued for the realization of our common Vision through implementation of its Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda.

I am very proud that our Vision, our positions and recommendations are widely accounted for and respected. Once again, I thank you for your support and inputs that make this possible.

For the Board of Directors, our key issue has been how best to follow up on these initial achievements of EATiP.

We started to take this further this last year, following the publication of a new European Strategy for ETPs which represents direct encouragement from the Commission to progress and go further – by contributing to strategy, mobilization and dissemination functions. Focus is also given to cross-sectoral influences, where an ETP may give indications as to how to solve the issues faced by another ETP.

As in previous years, we will have presentations and discussion on potential areas of common interest from ETP representatives.

One of our hopes is to progress the work and influence of both existing and future Mirror Platforms and related cluster groups. We see this approach as the best means of mobilizing SME interest - not only in research and innovation for their benefit but also to raise their involvement in European-level issues.

Dialogue and cooperation is needed at all levels to be able to achieve the progress we desire. This is the main reason for the organization of a special meeting yesterday – looking to create new impetus for the Mirror Platforms and how to make best use of the Research Infrastructure network that has been created within the Aquaexcel project. A report will be made on this meeting later today.

We have also been asked as to what EATiP can bring to the table on

- International Cooperation
- Strategic Policy proposals

With support from the European Commission, which I have to recognize and thank for their interest in our organisation, EATiP has been represented in dialogue on different aspects of International Cooperation on aquaculture – relating to how best to work with Asia and also the USA and Canada.

These discussions go wider than just European aquaculture development, since secure, safe and sustainable food supplies are a global concern. EATiP's position and support for actions will be discussed in detail on Wednesday afternoon in its Working Group on International Cooperation, chaired by Professor Patrick Sorgeloos.

Closer to home, I was very happy to learn of the new BlueMed Strategy, promoted by the Mediterranean States of the EU. Although this is not yet fully mature, I believe that we can anticipate a new era in marine and maritime research actions in the Mediterranean - where my company operates – and, within which, aquaculture will have an important place. EATiP has participated in several discussions on this topic as well as the special conference on aquaculture that was held in Italy in December last year.

These actions on Mirror Platforms, Research Infrastructures, the BlueMed Strategy and International Cooperation all reflect different aspects of moving towards the implementation of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda of the EATiP. The European Commission will provide an update on future actions foreseen within the Horizon 2020 work programme.

Today's meeting will also provide a learning experience for many of us.

Sometimes we may forget the potential of algae within the scope of aquaculture. We will be hearing from a new EATiP Member – the Centre for the Valorisation of Algae in France – on its interests, scope and progress. Also – as a demonstration of cross-sectoral interest – we have a presentation on the use of special textiles as a support for macro-algae production.

We will also have presentations on progress achieved in different areas of European aquaculture:

1. Feeds and feed ingredients, where the results of the European project ARRAINA and the newly-formed Insect Proteins Federation will be presented
2. Selective breeding is of great interest to European aquaculture and we will be hearing from the FISHBOOST project on progress in this new project
3. New species for fish farming will be covered by the DIVERSIFY project
4. Developments for science-based recommendations for organic aquaculture will be presented for the ORAQUA project.

Finally, I am particularly proud of the cooperation established between EATiP and the European Aquaculture Society. In organizing a common event within Aquaculture Europe, the idea was to give focus to a recognised issue in professional aquaculture. The specific case was 'Improving technical performance in Mediterranean Aquaculture'.

This allowed informed presentation of the issues, excellent debate, challenging conclusions and a high impact at all levels. In enabling such an event, EATiP and EAS broke new ground and I am very happy to announce that we will repeat this on an annual basis.

With these words, I again wish you welcome to what I hope will be an informative, stimulating but also enjoyable annual meeting of the EATiP

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument that implements the [Innovation Union](#), a [Europe 2020](#) flagship initiative that targets securing Europe's global competitiveness. Initiated at the start of 2014 and, with €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (until 2020), H2020 aims to provide more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts. The focus is to move great ideas from the lab to success in the market.

By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 should help to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation will be complemented by further measures to complete and further develop the [European Research Area](#). These measures will aim at breaking down barriers to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation.

- **Mr. Jacques Fuchs of the Marine Resources Unit made a short presentation on progress, funding opportunities and guidelines.**

For aquaculture, the direction outlined is as follows

Competitive and environmentally-friendly European aquaculture

Aquaculture has a large potential for the development of healthy, safe and competitive food products, as well as for environmental services and energy production.

Research efforts are particularly needed for the domestication of some species (established and new species), on interactions with the environment, on health and nutrition of farmed aquatic organisms and on reproduction and breeding, which are among the main obstacles to the sustainable development of European aquaculture.

In addition, research should address the social aspects of the seafood sector, which is essential for the cohesion of the social fabric in the European coastal areas.

Presentations were made in the meeting on projects that started in 2014 and before (under FP7) that incorporate these topics, notably

1. **'DIVERSIFY'** (new species: presented by Constantinos (Dinos) Mylonas of HCMR (Greece))
2. **'FISHBOOST'** (selective breeding: presented by Anna Sonesson of Nofima (Norway))
3. **'ARRAINA'** (novel feed ingredients: presented by Sachi Kaushik (Project Coordinator – INRA))
4. **'ORAQUA'** (organic aquaculture: presented by Jean-Paul Blancheton (Ifremer))

The Commission noted disappointment with the use of the SME programme in aquaculture.

Role of European Technology Platforms

EATiP is an official European Technology Platform, one of the 7 Bioeconomy ETPs, noting that ETP details are now published at - http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=etp#etps . Following the European strategies for **Europe 2020** and for an **Innovation Union**, Horizon 2020 recognises the role of ETPs as part of its engagement with society that is needed for their successful implementation. The European Commission is committed to maintaining dialogue and obtaining external advice on both research policy and priorities with ETPs, achieved through regular meetings and information dialogues.

The role of ETPs is reviewed regularly and their scope is the following:

ETPs must have a combination of **strategy, mobilisation and dissemination functions**.

In order to fulfil their roles, their main activities should encompass:

1. developing industry-focused **strategic research and innovation agendas** including technology roadmaps and implementation plans;
2. encouraging **industry participation in Horizon 2020**, the EU's framework programme for research and innovation, and cooperating with networks in Member States;
3. fostering **networking opportunities** with other ETPs and other partners along the value chain to address cross-sectoral challenges and promote the move towards more open models of innovation;
4. identifying **opportunities for international cooperation**;
5. acting as one of the channels of external **advice** for the programming and implementation of Horizon 2020; notably, ETPs have been a key driving force behind the launch of **high profile public-private partnerships** under the programme.

“Achieving this Mission requires the industry-led and focused ETPs to be inclusive and representative of businesses, research organisations and universities in their respective fields and to be open to new members. They will have to work in close partnership with Member States and Member State-based networks as well as with countries associated with the framework programme, where appropriate.”

The initial roles and scope relative to EATiP's actions have been largely achieved, namely by providing the Vision, the SRIA, the first Action Plans –official recognition of EATiP as an ETP followed.

In line with EC expectations, EATiP was then requested to:

- **Develop a strategy to expand the engagement of smaller players**, SMEs in particular, to as to improve representation
 - o *Engagement with the Mirror Platforms was recognised as being a requisite for this approach in the 2014 AGM and is to be examined further in this meeting*
- **Explore ways that EATiP's work can incentivise further investments in aquaculture research** – by both the private sector and Member States – so as to implement EATiP's SRIA.
 - o *Promoting the follow-up to Aquaexcel and supporting ERANETs (such as COFASP) and the JPI Oceans Initiative have been integral to this position*

In order to take these aspects further, EATiP has examined during 2014-2015 how to respond and adapt to several of the action points identified for ETPs:

EATiP and European Strategies

- **The Blue Growth Strategy** – where aquaculture is a specific target – has been designed to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole, recognising that seas and oceans are drivers for the European economy with great potential for innovation and growth. It is the Integrated Maritime Policy's contribution to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. **There is a special strategy being developed for the Mediterranean (Blue Med).**
- The Common Fisheries Policy covers aquaculture and has related instruments (notably the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund – EMFF) that supports innovation and skill/knowledge transfer actions, in line with the expectations of Europe 2020 – and which also foresees
 - o The creation of a new European Aquaculture Advisory Council in 2015 so as to provide recommendations to policy-makers and to help them adopt evidence-based decisions;
 - *Following discussion with the EC, Technology Platforms are not allowed to be members of such Councils given their existing consultation privileges; nonetheless, EATiP may be called upon to give expert advice.*
- The Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of European aquaculture specifically recognised the need to implement the EATiP's SRIA in enhancing competitiveness
- Aquaculture representation is also assured in the [Bioeconomy Panel of DG R&I \(2014\)](#), a platform for informed debate on the Bioeconomy and its components. Its key role is to suggest and foster joint European actions and measures in the domain of the Bioeconomy (taking into account inputs from the Bioeconomy Observatory and other related initiatives).

EATiP and Mobilisation

- EATiP has a common problem with nearly all ETPs, which is the difficulty in mobilising SMEs to be active at the European level; all ETPs recognise that this is a serious and difficult challenge to address. EATiP sees that **recognising synergies** and the **promotion of SME mobilisation** in R&I needs to be achieved with efficient networking with other ETPs, Mirror Platforms and Networks.
 - o **A joint proposal was made in 2014 with several Bioeconomy ETPs for a dissemination/promotion action but this, unfortunately, was not approved.**
- **Identifying and developing synergies** has been examined with other ETPs & International Organisations– including ETP FABRE (Farm Animal Breeding), ETP Plants for the Future, ETP FTC Textiles, ETP Food for Life, ETP Organics, JPI Oceans, FEFAC (EUFETEC), IPIFF (Insect Proteins)
 - o **New uses for and products obtained from marine algae** have been a focal point of attention in recent years. The ETP FTC looks at the future of textiles and clothing in many different applications and the [At-Sea](#) European project has examined the use of technical textiles as a support for large-scale seaweed growth.
 - **A presentation was made on this project by Sioen Industries**
 - **In June 2015, it was announced that a spin-off company “AT-SEA Technologies” has been created by consortium members that will sell turnkey seaweed farms**
 - The **CEVA** ([Centre for Study and Valorisation of Algae](#)) joined the EATiP in 2014 and Dr. Marc Danjon made a presentation on the work of this centre and its views on the production of algae through aquaculture in the future. The presentation highlighted efforts to create an installation dedicated to Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture alongside wind energy installations.
 - o **The use of fishmeal, fish oil and new ingredients in fish feeds remains a key point of both research and professional interest;**
 - The latest results of the ‘ARRAINA’ project were presented and discussed in the light of
 - Provision of insect proteins (by a representative of the [International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed](#))
 - Progress on the [PEF¹ Pilot Phases](#) for FEED and for SEAFOOD (operated under the [Single Market for Green Products Initiative](#) of DG Environment)
 - These presentations highlighted both the challenges and progress achieved in the preparation of feeds, the nutrient challenge and the breadth of data needed to measure environmental impacts of feed production and use.

¹ Product Environment Footprint

- **Selective fish breeding** was identified as a key issue in the EATiP-EAS Day within Aquaculture Europe 2014, and has been covered by the FABRE ETP ; discussions have been held between EATiP and FABRE as to how to best move this activity forward.
 - **Following the AGM, the EATiP was invited to participate in the International Symposium on Genetics in Aquaculture XI so as to participate in a round table session on “Technology transfer” was held with the objective of providing an insight on how best to improve both technology uptake and market impact of genetic research applied to aquaculture, considering the available capacities and knowledge progress in this field.**
 - See www.isga.com for details
 - With input from representatives of industry, FABRE ETP and EATIP (including also FISHBOOST representation), the conclusions and recommendations of this session will be published shortly, covering:
 - Technical issues
 - Technology readiness level in aquaculture
 - Scope for collective planning and collaboration
 - General understanding of genetics, capacity building and other relevant enabling conditions

EATiP participation in partnerships with other stakeholders

EATiP-EAS Day

The success of the EATiP-EAS day on [‘The Performance of the sea bass and sea bream sector in the Mediterranean’](#), held within the Aquaculture Europe 2014 Conference (Donostia-San Sebastian) has been evident.

As a response to a Resolution of the Mediterranean Aquaculture Commission of the FEAP, this event was attended by some 220 people from the profession and scientific communities. The presentations and debates provided a series of conclusions and recommendations – covering a wide range of issues that included fish health, selective breeding, nutrition and governance.

The Minutes have been widely circulated and it is understood that the proposals for action are being considered within the ‘BlueMed’ Strategy, looking for Blue Growth in the Mediterranean.

It has been agreed by the Boards of both EATiP and EAS that this event should be repeated regularly, within Aquaculture Europe, focusing on topics that affect European aquaculture or specific sector components.

- **The topic for 2015 has been decided by common agreement between the EATiP and EAS Boards and will cover**
 - **Fish welfare and, possibly, unidentified losses and stock control**
 - **Defining issues and identifying research needs**

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

In 2014-2015, EATiP cooperated – at different levels of engagement - with several European projects that have been completed.

Many of the consortium members of these projects are member organisations of EATiP and debates have been made as to how to make best use of the results and to provide continuity to the networks established.

The following list provides a short description of the projects and actions achieved in the last year.

- 1) **Euroshell** – shellfish development strategy and SRIA
 - a) **For Euroshell, the interest groups have been incorporated within EATiP – principally through EMPA.**
- 2) **AquaExcel** - aquaculture infrastructures for excellence in European fish research
 - a) Agreement to create an EATiP Research Infrastructures Working Group so as to promote SME interventions
 - b) **AquaExcel2020, the follow-up to AquaExcel – where EATiP is a partner – was recently approved for financing and will start in October 2015**
 - c) **EATiP will be responsible for providing ‘industrial’ advice, using a panel of EATiP experts, on AquaExcel projects and results for best implementation**
- 3) **AquaMed** – Mediterranean Research
 - a) Completed in late 2013, one of the conclusions was to promote the creation of a Multi-stakeholder platform for the development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, housed by the General Fisheries Council of the Mediterranean.
 - b) **EATiP has since agreed with FAO/GFCM a Memorandum of Understanding for joint actions which will be signed shortly**
- 4) **AqAsem** – cooperation with Asia
 - a) Completed in late 2013, efforts have been made to identify solutions that are appropriate to both the EC and EATiP’s ambitions on international cooperation
 - b) **Agreement to create a Working Group on International Cooperation was made in 2014, where Professor Patrick Sorgeloos was nominated as the Chairperson**
 - i) Prof. Sorgeloos and Dr. Patrick Lavens (Chair: Thematic Area 3: Biological Lifecycle) participated in a Workshop in Djakarta with ASEAN representatives in 2014, dedicated to examining common points of interest
 - (1) It is believed that a special action on EU-SE ASIA cooperation on aquaculture will be included in the H2020 Work Programme 2016-2017
 - ii) **This Working Group will also be charged with following EATiP interests within the EU-US-CANADA cooperation strategy that follows the Galway Statement.**
 - (1) **Additional International Cooperation prospection is anticipated for Brazil and China in the coming year.**
 - iii) **Minutes of the 1st Meeting of this Working Group, held on the 29th April 2015, are attached separately**

5) **AquaTnet** – education and teaching platform

- a) *The future of this network remains uncertain, but Univ. Ghent and Stirling University are maintaining the function of the AquaTnet secretariat.*

Dissemination function

Examples of EATiP dissemination actions in 2014-2015 include

- Participation in workshops, conferences and seminars – presenting EATiP ambitions and actions
- EATiP's Vision document - >500 copies distributed in 2014-2015
- Use of EATiP Website/Newsletter to circulate project and policy updates
- Use of EATiP Website/Newsletter to promote workshops/seminars/conferences

This aspect of EATiP's function needs regular review, including overlap and use of 'parallel' organisations and networks (ETPs, EAS, AquaTT). Nonetheless, actions are also dependent on input from membership and related organisations.

For EATiP to progress and develop, it is important that EATiP membership reflect on how EATiP should and can best address these issues, covering strategy, direction and structure/operations.

In summary, the Annual Meeting provided a clear update on many developments and projects that are looking to provide innovative responses to European aquaculture's needs and potential. These are supporting the identification of positions that concern both the role and function of EATiP in representing its stakeholders and moving innovation forward in European aquaculture.

EATiP Secretariat

August 2015