

## WORKGROUP ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE FINAL DOCUMENT



*Durres, 12 May 2015.*

Before presenting the conclusions from the Workgroup on fisheries, I would like to say how pleased I am regarding the coordination of the Secretariat for fisheries and aquaculture by the Montenegro Chamber of Commerce third year in a row, especially having in mind that Montenegro, together with Greece, is the coordinator of the first pillar “Blue growth” within the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region. I would especially like to express my satisfaction regarding the fact that we are an important factor in the process of implementation of the Strategy Action Plan through the Forum.

As you are well aware, one of the activities within the first pillar of the Strategy, “Blue growth”, which regards fisheries and aquaculture, is the improvement of the work done in setting up clusters, within the regions as well as within various activities (for example: fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, recreational fishing), also the connection between other economic sectors, especially tourism.

The most important aspect for fisheries and aquaculture are: institutional skill improvement, strengthening of research potential, innovations, clustering and branding.

This year's theme of the Workgroup on fisheries and aquaculture is selected in accordance with the Forum plenary session theme, i.e. with the possibility of doing business in the Adriatic and Ionian region with a special reference to the policy of clusters.

Conclusions:

- Due to the diversity of clusters and regarding the particularity of each individual country, the policy of forming clusters varies from country to country raising the question of optimal policy of cluster formation, especially the possibility of setting up a cluster on a regional level. Initially, the hardest thing in forming a cluster, especially in transitioning countries, has proven to be the way how to determine the mutual interest of the companies. One of the possible solutions is to make the procedure start as a public initiative bringing together different partners. Also the cluster members could feel the benefits of associating through consultant services of specialists from non-related fields, especially important is the role of scientific and research institutions. Chambers of Commerce need to recognize their role as institutions promoting the importance of clusters, improvement of business environment, as well as improvement of the institutional dialogue between the private and public sector.
- When it comes to the development of cluster excellence, one of the most important ingredients of success is a quality cluster management. In the fisheries and aquaculture sector the existing clusters need to work on strengthening of management which plays an important role in providing professional services to companies within the cluster as well as enhancing their innovative capacities.
- Taking into consideration that some countries of the Adriatic and Ionian region (especially Albania and Montenegro) don't have appropriate fishing harbours as well as adequate infrastructure on the coast (the starting point of sale of fish, the starting point of disembarkation and so on), it is necessary to begin with a cluster initiative on a regional level and preparation of appropriate project proposals which could be financed from various EU financing schemes.
- Although some countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Region are still not eligible for funding by the EU fund for fisheries, it is still necessary for the interested parties as decision makers to be aware of the part of the EU policy concerning the establishment and operation of the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) which manages the funds of the fourth pillar of this fund. It is necessary, in accordance with the above mentioned, to prepare appropriate project proposals with one aim – getting to know the “best practices” of the FLAG operation in the countries of the AI region that have established these groups (Italy, Greece).
- In all the countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Region, important part in the total value of the fisheries sector is the aquaculture sector including shellfish farming. Health safety of these products as well as



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safety in the sense of their sufficient production, present challenges for all the countries of the region. In this segment we are all at a different level of development, therefore we could all benefit from simple project proposals aiming at establishing a “unique sea” with mapped zones for medically safe farming of various aquatic organisms.