



## WORKGROUP ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

### FINAL DOCUMENT

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#### *Preliminary introduction*

Alexander Joksimović, who represents the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor, Montenegro, is the coordinator of the proceedings of the Workgroup on fisheries, which have been characterized by the exchange of experiences of the various participating countries, as well as by the willingness to collaborate on projects targeted to the common development of fisheries and mariculture in the Adriatic.

The new fisheries policy currently being examined by the European Commission has defined further measures, aimed at limiting fishing effort. Hence the need to pay more attention to fishing enterprises and their activity, so as to guarantee their management in a way that is economically and biologically sustainable for the state of fish resources.

Fishing activities play a major economic and social role in the Adriatic-Ionian area; therefore fisheries policy must be able to indicate the solutions for the necessary restructuring of the fishing sector. The main problems include the loss of jobs for fishermen, who therefore need the support of both the state and the European Community to be guaranteed new jobs also in other sectors of the fisheries chain, i.e.: organic mariculture, tourist fisheries and fish tourism, social security measures, training and professional requalification, etc.

The Workgroup has addressed the topics, which were largely discussed on the occasion of the Forum previous editions, like the need to rationalize and standardize fishing units and equipping them with small installations for gas oil saving, and were also authoritatively dealt with by EC Reg. no. 744/08 in two structural measures:

- Adaptation of the fishing fleet – FFA;
- EFF funds to pilot projects and consultancy to reduce fuel consumption on board of fishing vessels and to reduce gas emissions leading to sea pollution and warming.

#### *Strategic guidelines – proposals*

The meeting opens with the contribution by the Workgroup president, who illustrates the recommendations emerged from the 32nd session of the *General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean* (GFCM) held in Tunisia in March 2009. The congress was attended by the delegates of the major Mediterranean fisheries institutions, who presented their research activities and illustrated the problems of the sector. All speakers highlighted the need to reduce fishing efforts in the Mediterranean by at least 10% of catch and specifically to reduce the fishing of juveniles, which could jeopardise the reproduction of fish species. It is therefore fundamental to constantly monitor the fishing activities in the entire Mediterranean. As stated by the President, these aspects should be even more monitored in the Adriatic, given the morphological, biological and physical-chemical features of the Adriatic basin.

Other participants in the Workgroup then take the floor. They illustrate the state of the art in the sector in their respective countries and put forward some collaboration proposals.

A representative of the Greek Mariculture Federation shows data on aquaculture in the Mediterranean, and specifically in Greece, as the country was the largest producer of fish farming products of the whole Mediterranean in 2007. To date, it has 106 aquaculture enterprises, 10,000 employees, € 516,000,000.00 of sold fish, € 415,000,000.00 exported fish, with Italy being the most important importer of said products. Fish farms cover an area of 7.8 km<sup>2</sup>, with a total number of issued fishing licences so far of 318. This data clearly shows that Greece plays a leading role in mariculture today. All mariculture federation activities are supported by a research centre, as the ultimate goal is to implement a sustainable management of the plants in full respect for the territory and the biological resources concerned. Unlike aquaculture, fishing enterprises have registered a decrease in the number of employees by about 5% every year since 1997, as well as an



## WORKGROUP ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

increase in the average age and the large prevalence of part-time or seasonal working activities. This further testifies to the fact that aquaculture in Greece is overriding fisheries.

A representative of the Croatian Chamber of the Economy then takes the floor and expresses his worries for the fisheries sector in Croatia. He claims that aquaculture risks compromising traditional fisheries, as the feed used in the fishing farms is mainly composed of fish meal, the production of which requires from 10 to 20 Kg of fish depending on the species.

Several studies have been carried out on the best feed to use in fishing farms, in the words of a biologist and fish nutrition and pathology expert at the HCMR research institute in Athens. Today tests are being performed on new types of vegetable feed, in line with the world trend to reduce the quantity of fish flours.

The issue is largely debated between Croatian, Greek and Italian representatives, who then come to the conclusions that common intervention guidelines are strongly needed, which enable an exchange of experiences and *know how* between the various countries, in order to favour the development of both aquaculture and traditional fishing. The representative of PromAdria Ancona points out that in Italy, the number of fishing vessels, fish production and the number of jobs are currently decreasing and in spite of this the European Union continues to ask for a reduction of the fishing effort. Aquaculture cannot replace fisheries and much work must be done to make sure that the two activities are not in conflict, but that they rather go on in parallel to meet the need for fish on all European and extra-European markets and to absorb the jobs lost in the fishing sector.

These problems have been felt by Montenegro and Albania too. The countries complain about a significant reduction of catch and yield by fishing boat, as well as about a general lack of concern by the state. Both countries have for some time participated in crossborder cooperation community projects to find the necessary resources to support their fisheries activities. They ask participants in the Workgroup to collaborate in a project for development of sturgeon breeding in Lake Skutari in Albania, as well as for the awareness-raising of Albanian and Community authorities to authorize the export of mussels in European Union countries.

The problems emerged could be turned into community projects through the use of IPA or MED funds, as stated by a representative of the Marche Region and expert in community and crossborder planning. In order to support sea culture in Adriatic, the Marche Region also proposes to develop projects on tourist fisheries and/or fish tourism. The Marche Region has already implemented similar initiatives in the past and could support the development of the same activities in other Adriatic countries with the use of community funds. Furthermore, the EFF, i.e. the new fisheries planning tool within the 2007 – 2013 European financial programming period, has introduced new measures to promote the financing of strategic plans for coastal areas local development, which focus on an “integrated” approach for the planning, management and implementation of these action. Specifically, axis IV - “Sustainable development of fishing areas” of the EC Regulation no. 1198/2006 of 27th July 2006 refers to geographically limited areas and areas characterized by geographical, economic and social homogeneous features. This axis aims at implementing the local development measures mentioned above by “local bodies” or “groups” representing public and private partners of the various socio-economic sectors concerned. The creation of Coastal Action Groups - CAG – would namely make it possible to

- maintain the economic and social prosperity of fishing areas;
- preserve and support employment in fishing areas through the diversification of activities and targeted actions, aimed at their economic and social restructuring;
- sustain the quality of the coastal environment;
- promote national and transnational cooperation between fishing areas.

To this end, participants have deemed it necessary to promote training days in all Eastern Adriatic countries on the correct management of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and on European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3 of the Structural Funds), in order to disseminate information on available opportunities for the fisheries sector in the Adriatic-Mediterranean Area, with special reference to the IPA Programme. This initiative took place in Ancona on 28th February 2009 and enjoyed great success among local players of the sector, yet it was not attended by foreign players.



## WORGROUP ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

A further initiative to support fisheries and tourism was promoted by the trade association Confesercenti, Fano branch (Italy). The project under the title "International Festival of *brodetto* and fish soups" aims at promoting the Adriatic Sea food excellencies through the involvement of renowned international chefs and experts in the field, who can illustrate and promote the products of their territory. This year the 7th edition of the initiative will be organized, following the success enjoyed in previous years. Hence the will to extend it to all Adriatic countries in order to promote common resources.

### ***Conclusions (concerted actions)***

Workgroup participants have all positively welcomed the various collaboration proposals made and agreed on the need to plan another meeting for the definition of at least one of the proposals made.

**The following list shows the areas of interest identified and the objectives:**

Measure:	Objectives:
Tourist fishing and fish tourism	Promote sea culture through the development of projects in favour of tourist fishing and fish tourism
CAG – Coastal Action Groups	Setting up of Coastal Action Groups promoted by the European Union in 2007 with the use of EFF money. GACs are a valid opportunity to establish links between players working in the sector and local institutions, in order to solve fisheries problems
Project on the reproduction and breeding of sturgeons in Albanian-Montenegrin lake waters and on the export of mussels, lamellibranchiate and gasteropodes in Europe.	Promotion of the development of a sturgeon breeding farm in Lake Skutari in Albania. Awareness-raising of Albanian and community authorities to authorize the export of mussels, lamellibranchia and gasteropodes to European Union countries
Integration of the aquaculture and fisheries related problems	Rationalization of production activities of sea fishing, aquaculture and fish product distribution in European markets, with special attention to training.
Promotion of Adriatic fish products through the initiative under the title "International festival of brodetto and fish soups" in Fano (Italy)	Promotion of Adriatic Sea food and wine excellencies through the involvement of renowned international chefs and experts in the field, who can illustrate local products.
Promotion of a training day on incentives and contributions for fishing enterprises and cooperatives	Organization of training initiatives in the various AIC Forum countries to promote the use of community financial tools supporting the fisheries sector.