

## **WORKGROUP ON FISHERIES/AQUACULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT FINAL DOCUMENT**



Medugorje, 15th May 2013

Dr Jakov Dulčić from the Split Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries pronounced an introductory address on “Coastal fisheries with special focus on coastal fisheries in Croatia”. Mr. Dulčić provided an overview of the new invasive species in the Adriatic Sea and their potential socio-economic impact on the Adriatic fauna.

A keynote remark on environmental protection was presented by the president of the coastal mountain county Gerhard Lempl, who illustrated the two recently launched IPA Adriatic projects HAZARD and ECOSEA.

The Workgroup proposed the following:

- bearing in mind that a definition of coastal fisheries varies from country to country, it is necessary to agree on a unified and simplified definition aimed at creating a common strategy;
- in order to provide a better and more comprehensive assessment of coastal fishing resources, it is necessary to improve the fisheries data monitoring and collection system;
- At the moment, we do not pay enough attention to research on coastal fisheries resources, unlike what happens with the trawler and pelagic resources. Considering that 50% of the overall fishing activity in the Mediterranean refers to this type of fisheries, it is necessary that coastal fisheries are attached greater national importance and the countries allocate more funds for research activities on these resources. As the loss of this type of fisheries also implies the loss of skills, tradition, knowledge and culture, which make up the social fabric of communities, countries must conduct a more comprehensive socio-economic analysis of this type of fisheries;
- the important issue of coastal fisheries and the support to the research activities based on the above definition of management measures should be more represented by the commissions and scientific committees of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean;
- Given the positive experience of the Adriatic region with regard to the AdriaMed project when it comes to research on trawler and pelagic resources and the sporadic surveys of coastal resources, the activities of the project should be carried on with the support of more detailed research work. Within the framework of the Adriatic-Ionian Forum, it was also proposed to implement a new project to assist the countries in this region in the development and analysis of coastal fisheries activities;
- An overview of new invasive species of fish in the Adriatic Sea was provided in the framework of the presentation. Most of the species shown are present in the eastern

part of the Adriatic coast and their increase can be explained as a result of climate change, the tropicalisation of the sea and the flows that are typical of this area, which stimulate the entry of said species in the sea. Catching a lot of these species may become economically beneficial, yet this requires adequate fishing gear and equipment and specific fishing methodology. Furthermore, some of these species may find themselves in an environment, which is not their autochthonous one, and they can therefore represent a socio-economic problem, as catching them might lead to the destruction of other more economically important species. For the above reasons, it is necessary to be very cautious and monitor the impact that these invasive species have on biodiversity and the environment in the waters of the Adriatic Sea, as well as their impact on human health;

- a major problem in the Adriatic Sea are ballast waters, thus the proposal was to declare the Adriatic area as a particularly sensitive sea area;
- the HAZARD and ECOSEA projects, which were presented during the works, are very good examples of institutional cooperation in the region and the correlation between different policies (ecology and fisheries) in order to preserve the environment and ensure sustainable development;
- Given the positive and fruitful experience made with this year and last year's Workgroup, it is suggested that the Workgroup on fisheries and the environment is organized together in the future as well.

**Note:**

In the organization of the future meetings of the Workgroup on fisheries and aquaculture attention should be paid to the dates of the annual sessions General Commission for Fisheries, in order to ensure participation by important representatives from the administration, science and business world at the meetings, as well as to guarantee a high quality debate.

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