



## WORKGROUP ON FISHING AND AQUACULTURE

# FINAL DOCUMENT

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### Introduction

The Adriatic Sea is long and narrow and therefore each action taken on one shore inevitably produces some effect on the other one. For this reason an integrated intervention shall be carried out with regard to all economic, productive, tourist and recreational activities that are conducted in the area of interest. This is particularly true for the fishing sector and its common management on coastal waters and on the open sea. This Workgroup aims at laying the foundations for setting out a unitary fishing policy in the Adriatic Sea as part of the community fishing policy in Europe. In this respect it is recommended to take agreed and effective measures for a common and sustainable management of the Adriatic sea. The goal of fishing is a rational and responsible administration of the resources and this requires collaboration and openness, not barriers. A radical cultural transformation of the whole sector is necessary in order to ensure the sustainability of fishing in biological terms and its economic competitiveness.

It is therefore essential to plan a new catching system based on modern technical-scientific and sustainable criteria. Furthermore it is necessary to set out common procedures accounting for the complexity of the productive sector, the diversity of the marine weather conditions and the biological characteristics of the fish resources along the different geographical parallels and meridians criss-crossing on the Adriatic Sea.

Representatives of institutions, research, cooperative and entrepreneurial organizations coming from Croatia, Montenegro, Italy, Albania and Greece have joined the Workgroup on fishing and aquaculture for the 8th edition of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce. The Workgroup dealt with issues related to the management of fish resources in the Adriatic Sea from a scientific, economic and commercial point of view.

The problems related to the creation of a protected biological and economic fishing area (ZERP), which had been set up by the Croatian government in 2008 but suspended two months later, have been widely discussed. This area had been created to protect the fish resources from a biological point of view but it had entailed serious consequences for the fishing activity of Italian and Slovenian fishers who had been prevented from catching any fish on the waters East of the *midline*. This issue has been tackled very professionally by the sector representatives who jointly support a common and responsible management of fish resources, thereby avoiding conflicts among marines which need to safeguard such resources through sustainable fishing.

The Research Institute of Split has carried out a survey of the fish stocks in the Adriatic Sea and of the management of all the resources on the Italian and Croatian coasts with evidences of the biomass trends for the main fish species. Such data have allowed us to have an objective idea of the situation and to make essential considerations as for the future management of the resources. Scientific and technological research, supported by the experts experience, shall encourage fishers to experiment with and apply new



techniques and systems that reduce the negative impact of fishing while keeping its economic validity.

All those attending the Workgroup were concerned about the steady increase of the gas oil price, in particular for Albania that requires an incisive intervention of the State in order to improve the fishing sector that shows great criticalities at present. It is therefore necessary that all countries implement a policy aimed at saving gas oil by resorting to some devices such as: reducing the hull speed, more careful repairs, removal of the fouling from the hull etc. or long- term investments through the use of alternative energy sources. Several studies have been carried out so far stating the validity of alternative energy sources but no marine has tested them yet.

The meeting has also outlined the need to share and be involved in study and research programmes, regulatory and financial interventions carried out at different competence and decision-making levels by some organizations such as the ones belonging to:

- The European Union (also for the candidate countries)
- All the Nations
- Local institutions such as Regions, Provinces, Municipalities, Universities, Research Centers etc.

## Proposals

Several proposals have been put forward to find a solution to the problems raised, namely:

- a meeting among the Presidents of the fishing associations of the Adriatic countries in order to agree upon and set up common strategies to manage fish resources. Such proposal, put forward by the President of the Fishing department of the Split Chamber of Economy, has been welcomed by all those attending the Workgroup;
- setting up a "Transnational Network of Fishing Producers Organizations" allowing a self-management of fishing in the framework of institutionalized rules and regulations. This shall enable an exchange of experiences and skills in order to develop a common strategy enhancing both the resources and the economy. In Italy there is the Federation of the Organizations of Fishing and Fish-farming Producers (FederOP), a national association of local producers organizations recognized and regulated by the current community legislation. The President of FederOP of Ancona suggests setting up a logistic support by sharing the *best practices* so as to create the "Transnational Network of Fishing Producers Organizations";
- promoting the creation of fish markets based on the experience gained by the Marche Region and allowing health inspections, statistical checks and tax controls of the fish catch, thus preventing any kind of speculation and providing guarantees of fair trade practices to the Market dealers (fishers, buyers, consumers). This initiative has been promoted by the regional manager of LegaPesca Marche, a professional association of the cooperatives working in the fishing sector of LEGACOOOP, National League of Cooperatives and Mutual Aid Associations;
- implementation of a project called "Andar per mare" (To Go to Sea), promoted by LegaPesca Marche in collaboration with CoomarPesca Fano which aims at fostering, through the participation of fishers and their cooperatives present on the territory, the organization of public events involving the catering industry, retailers and fishers of both shores of the Adriatic Sea. The objective of this proposal is to promote actions that shall boost food education and expand the knowledge of



the fishing sector (to be understood in broader terms) in all Adriatic Countries by carrying out a series of initiatives in all the cities and towns involved in the project. The “Andar per mare” project can be included among the activities of “Pesca Turismo” (Fishing Tourism) and “Ittiturismo” (Fish Tourism) that shall be promoted along the Adriatic coast.

- specialized training for the fishing workers with particular reference to new technologies that can be applied in this sector both aboard and ashore. The meetings shall also include elements of marine ecology and protection of the fish resources;
- creation of an “Adriatic Trademark” for the fishing and aquaculture products.

## Conclusions

All those participating in the Workgroup have welcomed the proposals put forward during the meeting in order to enhance the collaboration aimed at fostering an integrated management of fishing. All the participants will be contacted to agree upon the project activities after analyzing the sources of finance that shall be used for funding and implementing the above mentioned initiatives.

The interventions and objectives identified are the following:

Description of the Intervention	Objectives
Meeting among the presidents of the fishing associations of the Adriatic Countries	To agree upon common strategies for managing fish resources.
Creation of a “Transnational Network of Fishing Producers Organizations”	To allow a self-management of fishing in the framework of institutionalized rules and regulations. This shall enable an exchange of experiences and skills so as to develop a common strategy enhancing both the resources and the economy.
Creation of fish markets based on the experience gained by the Marche Region	To allow health inspections, statistical checks and tax controls of the fish catch, thus preventing any kind of speculation and providing guarantees of fair trade practices to the Market dealers (fishers, buyers, consumers).
Implementation of a project called “Andar per mare” (To Go to Sea)	To promote, through the participation of fishers and their cooperatives present on the territory, the organization of public events involving the catering industry, retailers and fishers of both shores of the Adriatic Sea. To enhance the “pesca turismo” (fishing tourism) activity along the Adriatic coast.
Training workshops, vocational training and further training	To train the fishing workers with particular reference to new technologies that shall be applied to the sector.