



Ref.: 155/REL

Rome, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012

## REPORT OF THE RAC MED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the RAC MED Executive Committee was held on 27th March 2012 at the RAC MED headquarters in Via Torino 146, Rome. The meeting was called to consider and discuss the following matters:

### Agenda

1. The adoption of the report of the Executive Committee meeting held in Bari (20th October 2011).
2. The adoption of the Opinion on the proposed European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.
3. The adoption of the Opinion on the proposed Common Market Organization.
4. The adoption of the Opinions on recreational fisheries.
5. The composition of the Executive Committee – amendments
6. The updated list of the RAC MED members, membership fee payments for 2012 and the membership requests that have been received.
7. Participation of the RAC MED Directorate in international meetings (GFCM 14-19 May, Marrakech, Morocco; ICCAT, 12-19 November, Agadir, Morocco). Agreement of members.
8. Any other matters

At the time the meeting began the following participants were present: Gilberto Ferrari; Alain Rico; Gianfranco Santolini; Esteban Graupera ; Gemma Quilez ; José Maria Gallart; Kahoul Mourad ; Giampaolo Buonfiglio ; Edouard Pages; Antonio Pucillo; Francesco Zizzo; Oriol Ribalta; Antonio Angotti; Corrado Peroni; Rosa Caggiano; Snezana Levstik; Erika Monnati; Sabela Perz Mais; Laura Pisano; Marco Sammiceli; Jonathan Cassar; Paul Piscopo; Victor Degabriele; Saša Raicevich; Steven Mackinson; Phillippe Maraval; Elena Ghezzi; Luca Stasi; Joan Parera Molero; Eusebi Esgleas Pares; Joan Batista Company; Giulia Gorelli; Antonio Marzoa Dopico; Mario Vizcarro; Antonio Marzoa Notlevsen; Pere Brull; Massimo Brogna; Maria Isabella Verardi; Alessandro Buzzi.



The list of participants was signed by all present and is annexed to this report.

Mr Mourad Kahoul was elected Chair of the meeting and the meeting secretary was Ms Rosa Caggiano.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, apologising for the late start of the meeting due to a demonstration in central Rome. The Chair introduced the Agenda which was adopted with no changes.

**Agenda item 1: Adoption of the report of the Executive Committee meeting held in Bari, Italy (20<sup>th</sup> October 2011)**

The report of the Executive Committee meeting held in Bari was approved with no changes

**Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Opinion on the proposed European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**

Elena Ghezzi, the coordinator of Working Group 1 (WG1) gave a brief presentation of the discussions held during the WG1 meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February in Rome. She illustrated the content of the proposed Opinion on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which includes positive aspects (higher contributions for small scale fisheries; improvement of working conditions and the abolition of the convergence criteria) as well as more critical points which were also examined by the WG1. One of these is the concern expressed about the fact that there is only one way of accessing the funds because this entails one single Organization issuing payments and only one way to account for expenditures; the introductions of Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFC) which is still to be defined for the Mediterranean; the EMFF conditionality criterion causes some concern because it depends entirely on the compliance of the single Member States, and should they not comply the application of EU control measures could bring about sanctions that also affect fishers and fishery operators at all levels.

If a fisher commits a serious violation all financial assistance is suspended, the amount and the length of time are established by delegated acts. During the discussion Oceana and WWF objected to some aspects, the coordinator informed the Meeting that not all the WWF objections are reflected in the proposed Opinion because they were not fully supported by discussion or evidence; the WWF representative took the floor at this point to emphasize the view that the principle of conditionality is necessary and that the elimination of overcapacity should be one of the prerequisites to receive economic aid for on board improvement of fishing vessels. The WWF representative also stressed that the system of delegated acts is necessary to allow for greater transparency of EMFF measures.

The representative of BIG GAME Italia proposed the insertion of a paragraph dedicated to financing ecologically sustainable projects in order to offer an incentive to use good practices in recreational fisheries.

The representative of ETF would also like to see reference made to national group contracts.

The representative of KGZS requested clarifications on the application of the TFC system in the Mediterranean and then highlighted that landing by-catch also creates an environmental issue to be tackled, on a final note the KGZS



representative reminded the Meeting that compliance with the new regulations that are planned by the EMFF could entail higher administrative costs, which would be particularly relevant for small Member States such as Slovenia.

The Secretary took the floor to reply to the last intervention by specifying that the first two issues raised by the KGZS representative were dealt with in the Opinion on the planned reform to the CFP that was adopted by RAC MED last year.

No further requests were made to modify the Opinion it was thus adopted with the proposed amendments of the ETF, the objections of the WWF, the request of BIG GAME Italia and of KGZS.

### **Agenda item 3: Adoption of the Opinion on the proposed Common Market Organization**

Elena Ghezzi, the coordinator of WG1 gave a brief presentation of the proposed Opinion on the Common Market Organization. She underlined appreciation of the procedures concerning voluntary labeling of fishery products and informed the Meeting that requests have been presented on issues such as the removal of the description of storage so as not to limit the species listed in the one annex, in this way producers can access financial support for storage giving priority, for example, to local species. The Secretary informed the participants that comments had been received from WWF and therefore passed the floor to the WWF representative for further details so as to include these comments in the Opinion.

The WWF representative explained that her organization is against granting financial assistance for storage because the entire catch should not be landed.

There were no further objections so the Opinion was adopted with the addition of the explanation given by the WWF.

### **Agenda item 4: Adoption of the Opinions on recreational fisheries:**

Firstly the coordinator Esteban Graupera summarized the course of action taken by this Working Group: the aim of one of the two Opinions on the definition of recreational fisheries is to invite ICCAT, through the EC, to adopt the definitions in the GFCM glossary. Where this Opinion is concerned FEDAS requested the addition of the definition of underwater fisheries, including the use of harpoons. The text of the other Opinion aims to inform the EC on the position of the WG4 relative to the recreational fisheries activity described in art. 17 of the EC regulation on the Mediterranean (1967/2006). The coordinator informed the participants on the comments received from BIG GAME Italia, WWF, EAA and FEDAS, the latter made a specific request that their position be made clear.

The Vice Chair, Giampaolo Buonfiglio, commented on the FEDAS document which reports the exchange of emails between FEDAS and Graupera, and which includes the request by FEDAS that the WG should not approve the two proposed Opinions, bring up a series of problems. The Vice Chair reminded the Meeting that RAC MED is an advisory committee which must reflect the opinions of each member group, even when these opinions are conflicting. It is not acceptable to criticize a WG coordinator just because he or she comes from one particular organization.

The Opinions were adopted with the requested amendments.



### **Agenda item 5: composition of the Executive Committee – amendments**

The Executive Secretary reminded the Meeting that during the last General Assembly a formal request was received from some associations to become members of the Executive Committee given that there were places available, on the condition that they would agree to revoke membership in April 2013, so as to allow the reelection of the whole Executive Committee on expiry of its 4 year mandate. The General Assembly requested and received authorization for this procedure from DG MARE and therefore the Executive Secretary asked the Meeting to officially ratify the inclusion of the associations that had requested membership (IVEAEMPA, OCEANA, FEDAS, EAA in one third, AMOP in two thirds), on the condition that these associations send a declaration to the Secretariat signed by the legal representative which states that membership of the Executive Committee will cease in 2013.

No objection was expressed and so the list of the new members of the Executive Committee was approved.

### **Agenda item 6: The updated list of the RAC MED members, membership fee payments for 2012 and the membership requests that have been received**

The Executive Secretary illustrated the updated list of RAC MED members and requested agreement of the participants on the addition of three members who have already completed all necessary procedures (EFSA, ALCP and LEGAMBIENTE). No objection was presented and so the RAC MED members increased from 32 to 35. Where the membership of UNCI Pesca is concerned, the Italian Ministry has not yet acknowledged that the association in question is representative and therefore the Secretariat will request a reply on this matter and will also contact the association.

On the matter of membership fees for 2012 the Executive Secretary requested compliance with the deadline for payment which is 31<sup>st</sup> March, failing this the associations should inform the Secretariat if they intend to schedule payment later than this date.

### **Agenda item 7: Participation of the RAC MED Directorate in international meetings (GFCM 14-19 May, Marrakech, Morocco; ICCAT, 12-19 November, Agadir, Morocco). Agreement of members.**

The Executive Secretary reminded the Meeting that participation of RAC MED in external meetings had already been approved during the Executive Committee meeting in Bari. She went on to give details on the forthcoming international meetings relevant to the Mediterranean: during the forthcoming annual session of the GFCM (to be held in Marrakech in May) a memorandum of understanding between RAC MED and GFCM will be signed, this will formalise the close collaboration and exchange of information between RAC MED and GFCM in the areas of common interest. The Chair Mr Kahoul will participate in this meeting alone according to the result of the members' vote.

It was decided that the delegation which will represent RAC MED at the annual session of ICCAT (November 2012, Agadir) will include the Chair and the Executive Secretary.



## **Agenda item 7: Any other matters**

The vice Chair Mr Buonfiglio proposed that half a day's meeting be dedicated to the presentation of the history of fisheries associations in the European countries of the Mediterranean area, for example the Prud'homie in France, the Cofradias in Spain and the Cooperative in Italy. The Executive Secretary proposed the organization of this meeting back to back with the next Executive Committee (which will probably be held in Alicante in May) as during the next Working Group meetings there will not be enough time to examine all three presentations.

The Chair Mr Kahoul took the opportunity to invite the participants to the next Working Group meetings which will be held in Marseilles and at the same time visit the Prud'homie structures in the city which are the oldest in France.

Before closing the meeting the Executive Secretary informed the participants on the public hearing on regionalization organized by the European Parliament Fisheries Commission which was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March in Brussels, a report on this hearing will soon be available on the RAC MED website in Italian and in English. It was highlighted that the Agenda of the hearing included an intervention by one representative of all seven RACs and in order to hone the points of view and ultimately define a shared position thorough preparatory work was carried out.

The results of the hearing demonstrated that the practical application of the regionalization principle is still unclear.

The vice Chair Mr Buonfiglio reminded the Meeting about the report on the EC *non-paper* and reiterated the worries already expressed by the European organizations on the risks of an excessive use of delegated acts in the planned mechanism.

No further matters were put forward for discussion and therefore the Chair thanked the interpreters and closed the meeting at 12.30.

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