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REPORT OF THE RAC MED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the RAC MED Executive Committee was held on 30th May 2012 at the Departament d'Agricultura Ramaderia i Pesca de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government), Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 612-614-Barcelona. 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 Rome, 27th March 2012;
2. The adoption of the Opinion on Regionalisation;
3. The approval of the letter addressed to the EC on the socio-economic impact of the EFF;
4. The approval of the letter addressed to the EC on stock assessment methods and their consequent incorporation into European regulations ;
5. The proposal to modify article 6 of the RAC MED Statute;
6. The updated list of the RAC MED members, membership fee payments for 2012 and the membership requests that have been received;
7. Fisheries associations in the European countries of the Mediterranean: a presentation of the Prud'homies in France, the Cofradias in Spain and the Cooperative in Italy;
8. Any other matters

At the time the meeting began the following participants were present: Massimo Coccia; Gilberto Ferrari; Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni; Alain Rico; Gemma Quilez; José Maria Gallart; Kahoul Mourad ; Giampaolo Buonfiglio; Jose Manuel Gonzalez Gil De Bernabé; Edouard Pages; Antonio Pucillo; Oriol Ribalta; Rosa Caggiano; Marco Sammicheli; Iolanda Piedra; Joan Parera Molero; Eusebi Esgleas Pares; Mario Vizcarro; Antonio MarzoaDopico; Antonio Marzo Notlevsen; Oscar Sagué; Marta Suriol; Encarnacion Benito Revuelta; Maria Papadopoulou; Didier De Vandeul; Pierre D'Acunto; Bertrand Wendling; Franz Lamplmair; Susana Sainz-Trapaga; Maria Jose Cornax; Joan CanavesBordoy; Antoni GarauColl; Gianfranco Santolini; Giorgio Di Stefano; Esteban Graupera; MauricioPulido; Marc Planas; IgnaciFerrer.



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, he thanked the Catalan Government for hosting the RAC MED and FNCCP and for the valuable collaboration provided. 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 Rome, Italy (27th March 2012)

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

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Opinion on Regionalisation

Giampaolo Buonfiglio, coordinator of WG5 summarised the Opinion on regionalisation in which serious concern is expressed relative to the mechanism of delegated acts as described in the “*non-paper*”. During the discussions that took place during WG5, it arose that the meeting participants are concerned that the EC has not given due consideration to the need for wider consultation among stakeholders on proposed technical or management measures in order to avoid the risk of applicative difficulties. The draft Opinion therefore proposes a procedure for participatory consultations, and the natural forum for this could be the RACs. In their established format the RACs are a suitable context for such consultation and have the advantage of already being in place, the RACs will also be improved by the involvement of scientific expertise through the constant participation of the relevant scientific institutes according to the issue under consideration. No requests for modification to the Opinion were advanced and therefore it was unanimously adopted.

Agenda item 3: approval of the letter addressed to the EC on the socio-economic impact of the EFF

Giampaolo Buonfiglio, the WG coordinator, presented the document to be sent to the EC in order to provide a contribution to the debate on the socio economic impact of the EFF, on the basis of the data collected among the WG5 participants. The aim being to draw attention to the specific nature of the Mediterranean area if compared to the data relating to the whole European fleet. This document is a first attempt to monitor the actual situation within the Mediterranean basin using data which are specific and, as far as possible, up to date. Analysis has shown that there has been a significant reduction in the fleet, and therefore also of the number of people employed in the sector, whose average age is relatively high. The Coordinator stressed that this document represents an important step as it is supported by data which confirm the acute nature of the socio economic crisis that has been brought about by the introduction of the CFP in the Mediterranean basin. The Meeting was also reminded that this kind of study had not been carried out since the demise of the ACFA Mediterranean working group 10 years ago. The current study is in its initial stages and the WG5 will continue updating it with new data as these become available from the RAC MED members. Lastly, the Coordinator informed those present that the concluding part of the letter underlines the need to have a greater margin of flexibility where the expiry of the application of MSY is concerned due to its specific impact in the Mediterranean. It was proposed that necessary measures should be identified to minimize present impact.

The OCEANA representative expressed her appreciation of the document, which in her opinion correctly reflects the specific case of the Mediterranean. Where the data supplied by Spain on employment numbers are concerned, however, she suggested that only the data relative to the Mediterranean should be included, these are available on the Spanish Ministry website, the link for which has been sent to the Secretariat. The Executive Secretary requested



an explanation from the IVEAEMPA representative, who is the coordinator for Spanish data. The IVEAEMPA representative informed the Meeting that the data sent to the Secretariat are from the Environment Ministry. The Executive Secretary said that the above mentioned OCEANA email will be sent to IVEAEMPA, it was thus requested that the updated numbers on Spanish employment in the Mediterranean area should be sent to the Secretariat by 10th June.

The PASEGES representative took the floor to express her reservations concerning the data provided by PEPMA, especially where the employment numbers are concerned. She informed those present that she had contacted the Greek government in order to send the data to the RAC MED Secretariat as soon as possible.

The DG MARE delegate congratulated RAC MED on this valuable initiative and he proposed that capacity parameters be added, such as tonnage. In the future it would be worthwhile attempting to make a comparison with the other obligations that member states have where the delivery of data is concerned, such as the annual economic report of the fishing fleet, divided by segment, and the MS capacity report that has to be communicated to the EC each year.

The Profilmer representative thanked RAC MED for this initiative and remarked that, unfortunately, the data supplied by France were not included. The document would, in any case, send an important message on the structural change that is underway in the Mediterranean basin.

The Coordinator suggested that the document be approved as it stands and to give the Spanish and Greek representatives a further 10 days in order to check and/or modify the data provided.

Agenda item 4: approval of the letter addressed to the EC on stock assessment methods and their consequent incorporation into European regulations

The coordinator, Susana Sainz-Trapaga, illustrated the discussion held during WG 3 which analysed the issues concerning the state of stocks in the Mediterranean. RAC MED participated in the January meeting of the EWG- STECF as an observer. This working group bases its work on the capture statistics, in order to be constantly informed on the work of the researchers, RAC MED invited the experts from this group to participate in the WG. The WG decided to ask the EC to ensure involvement of all the interested parties in order to improve knowledge of the various issues and to create ever stronger collaboration between the stakeholders, research community and the decision makers. One of the problems highlighted by the WG concerned the time lapse between the data collection and the ensuing stock assessment, this creates a discrepancy between the real situation of the stocks and the formulation of the relative recommendations. On this basis four focal points were identified and inserted into the document produced by the WG, plus a further one proposed by the WWF.

Following the presentation of the document, the OCEANA representative declared that she did not agree with point 3 of the letter: *“fully understand the impact on fisheries stocks of the measures described in the regulations currently in force before formulating others...”*, because before this measure is adopted it is crucial to adopt the precautionary principle. The OCEANA representative therefore proposed the reformulation of this point. The AGCI AGRITAL representative suggested that the sentence could be changed by adding: *“unless clear signals justify applying the precautionary principle”*. The OCEANA representative accepted the proposal and the document was approved with this modification.

The Coordinator underlined the importance of strengthening collaboration of the interested parties so as to integrate these recommendations. He presented the paragraph proposed by the WWF: *“implement specific studies that are able define both the various effects produced by the management choices and the time-scale involved in the achievement of MSY of the stocks, as well as the impact on the fleet and on employment”* and underlined that the



process should be more flexible. The starting point is the management plan for one specific stock. After having read this to the Meeting, he asked for any comments. The paragraph proposed by the WWF was approved.

The AGCI AGRITAL representative reminded the meeting that the management plans should take into consideration data from research, but the time required for the presentation of the management plans is not compatible with the annual definition of fishery opportunities and thus, for technical reasons, it is undeniable that before the evaluation of any one stock is translated into a recommendation at least two and a half years pass. The management plans formulated with national scientific data are sent by each MS to the EC and there is no time limit for the EC to respect in replying. This is the main inconsistency and the whole system should be reorganized. The STECF produces annual data that the EC only uses for the TAC and quota systems, and are therefore not considered in the management plans that the MS send to Brussels. The results produced by the STECF are evaluations made using mathematic models which are only for the reduction of fishing mortality (F). The recommendations on the reduction of F are not connected to the MS management plans; the STECF works on the fishing opportunities on which the EC can legislate without co-decision procedures (TAC and quotas). In the document under discussion it is necessary to ask the EC to reduce the technical time requirements as much as possible.

The Coordinator replied that the problem is between the management plans and the recommendations. These recommendations are not only based on F but are also about changing the management models and then, if appropriate, adopting management plans. The measures must be specific to each stock. He suggested concentrating on shared stocks.

The AGCI AGRITAL delegate stressed that if agreement is not reached on this key aspect, as already highlighted and confirmed by the experts who were sent by RAC MED and who work with the STECF Working Group, he proposes a further analysis and clarification of the issue with Massimiliano Cardinale, Chair of the STECF Working Group.

Both the coordinator and the AGCI AGRITAL representative agreed on the fact that the system is inappropriate and should be changed. Furthermore the AGCI AGRITAL representative underlined that there are no scientific studies that proposes how to reduce F and the time frame involved; this is a political decision made by the EC and not based on scientific data. Lastly he asked the meeting participants to clarify FMSY, and precisely whether only F should be reduced. Oceana wishes to see MSY as a binding target. F alone has little meaning, it is not a reference level.

The AGCI AGRITAL representative replied by recalling that MSY is an CFP established target and that mortality FMSY is a goal set for 2015 and which cannot be renounced. He suggests that a further consultation should take place for the written procedure, leading to the drafting of a new document by the coordinator.

The Profilmer representative asked the meeting how to tackle the reduction of mortality of small pelagic (such as anchovy) in the Gulf of Lion due to the large presence of tuna and dolphins. The coordinator asked Profilmer to develop this aspect so as to adapt it to the context of the document, the aim being the improvement of the decision making process, making it more flexible while also remaining closely linked to the opinions presented by the scientific community.

The Executive Secretary suggested that the document written by the coordinator be sent by email to the ExCom members with the proposed changes by 7th June.

The IveaEmpa representative proposed that an *ad hoc* document be drafted on the issue of the Gulf of Lion as this is an important area for trawl fisheries, both for France and for Spain. The coordinator thanked the IveaEmpa representative for this suggestion and agreed with the idea. The Secretary was pleased with this option and asked for it to be sent to the Secretariat for adoption by the ExCom.



Agenda item 5: The proposal to modify article 6 of the RAC MED Statute

The Executive Secretary presented the proposal to modify article 6 of the Statute relative to the composition of the Executive Committee.

The representative of BigGame Italia reminded the meeting participants that since its inception the RAC MED base has widened and therefore believes that the situation will not occur again in the future. The Federcoopesca representative stated that a principle of law is being introduced and therefore it is necessary to proceed with the proposed modification. He observed that, from a legal point of view, the proposal to sign a declaration in which it is stated that at the end of the ExCom mandate all the organizations that are members by cooptation are removed from their responsibilities, there is inequality between those who have been part of the ExCom from the start and those who joined afterwards with the cooptation principle.

The FNCP representative affirmed that, if an associations in the ExCom designates a person then the same organization has the right to make a substitution.

The AGCI AGRITAL representative recalled that this proposal originates from a problem that may not reoccur but is made official by RAC MED as authorized by the EC. In reference to the intervention of the FNCP, he stated that this is coherent with article 6.6 and therefore it is clear that all the components of the ExCom are elected representatives of an organization. Considering that the EC plans to modify the RAC system, this integration may prove unnecessary. He therefore proposed that the change to the Statute could be deferred.

The DG MARE delegate informed the Meeting that the EC does not wish to counter the proposed modification. He also confirmed that the RACs are being re-examined, however whatever decisions are taken, the final structure will not differ greatly from the present. He requested the collaboration of RAC MED if it becomes necessary to make changes to the RAC operative procedures.

The Executive Secretary reminded the participants that RAC MED, in agreement with all the RACs, has already presented a letter (sent in February before the annual INTER-RAC meeting organized by DG MARE), which details the requests made by the RACs to improve their efficiency. During the PECH audition on regionalization held in March all the RACs again presented a common document to strengthen the requests and proposals for the future role of the Regional Advisory Councils. In particular there are two key aspects: greater funding and simplified access to the EC projects. Lastly the organization of a seminar with the DG MARE services was proposed again. The aim is to provide the possibility for an informal meeting on all the aspects of the CFP reform which involve the RACs directly.

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 asked the Meeting to approve the membership of another three associations (GKTS – Ghaqda Koperativa Tas Sajd, Prud'homie de Marseille e AEPPT – Association Euro-méditerranéenne des Pêcheurs Professionnels du Thon) which have completed all the necessary procedures. There were no objections and therefore the RAC MED members increased from 35 to 38. Furthermore FIPSAS requested membership and the Secretariat sent the request for recognition to the Italian Ministry. Where UNCI Pesca is concerned the Italian Ministry has not yet replied.

Where payment of 2012 membership fees is concerned, the Executive Secretary informed the meeting that there are still some associations that have not made the annual payment (due by 31st March) and if this is not received by 15th June they will be excluded from RAC MED according to the internal regulations.



The FEDAS delegate informed the Meeting that FEDAS has created a new association together with the other International organizations called "*International Forum for Sustainable Underwater Activities*" (IFSUA). The intention expressed by FEDAS is that of being substituted by IFSUA and therefore asked to be informed on the correct procedure to be followed. The Executive Secretary said that it would be sufficient to send an email to the Secretariat.

Agenda item 7: Fisheries associations in the European countries of the Mediterranean: a presentation of the Prud'homies in France, the Cofradías in Spain and the Cooperative in Italy

The Executive Secretary gave the floor to Edouard Pages who presented the Marseille Prud'homie. The creation of this Prud'homie goes back to 1376 and is one of the oldest. The Prud'homie was recognized by French legislation in 1859 with a decree that has been modified 39 times but which is still in force today. The aim of a Prud'homie is to ensure that all the professions respect the rules for fisheries. This Prud'homie, the oldest, brings together 110 fishers, it works well and all issues are resolved democratically in the presence of the Prud'home and a maritime judge. The AEPPT, on the other hand, is a more recent association which was created in 2006 when its name was European association of tuna fisheries boat-owners. In 2008 the Statute was modified and it was opened up to all tuna fishers in all fisheries systems in order to take on the problems faced by tuna fishing professionals. This association was established to represent and defend rights at European and international level, uniting French, Italian and Spanish professionals who are members with the idea of extending it to other members from the European Mediterranean countries.

The Executive Secretary gave the floor to José Manuel Gil de Bernabé who summarized the history of the fishers' Cofradías and in particular the 88 Cofradías present in the Mediterranean. An important change took place when the Cofradías received public recognition as a no-profit association, which was in 1978 when democracy took the place of Franco's regime. Every 4 years the Cofradías organize an assembly to renew their aims. They are also directly involved in the marketing of the products of the Spanish artisanal sector. In 2001 a law came into force concerning fisheries that recognizes the constitutional organization of the Cofradía as an interlocutor with the Administration. In 2008 the eighth assembly was held in which the decision to enter the Social economic movement was discussed and approved. This decision was made so as to be in a position to market fisheries products, not only for the Cofradías activities but also for the fish markets. To close the presentation the Meeting was informed that the Cofradías are waiting to observe the repercussions of the application of the reform of the CFP and the application of the control Regulation, which is problematic for many reasons. (Please find on the RAC MED website the presentation made by the Executive Secretary of FNCP)

The Executive Secretary passed the floor to Massimo Coccia who gave a presentation on the history of cooperatives on behalf of the three Italian cooperative associations (AgciAgrital, Federcoopescas and Lega Pesca). The cooperative movement in Italy is quite recent, having begun in the mid nineteenth century in response to the question of agriculture, from which it moved to consumer issues and then fisheries. After WWII the movement began working again and the Italian Republic gave cooperatives their own role in the Constitution, as a group of people that carry out social activity. Special legislation and tax relief therefore followed to facilitate their activities. Europe has also recognized the fact that these small facilitations that are still in place are compatible with the social role held by the cooperatives. In the post-war period this cooperation moved into three large associations with three ideological bases: catholic, socialist and lay, these three drove the development of the whole cooperative system. Fisheries is one of the smaller components but in terms of percentage coverage it is enormous and fishers have preferred dealing with the cooperatives in order to resolve problems of administrative and other nature. The central cooperatives have moved closer together and they have taken a path that is leading to common activities with single coordination committees, strengthening the chances of solving problems raised and at the same time gaining



political power. Entry into a united Europe created significant problems where representation is concerned; fisheries move within an alliance called ACI that is made up of 1500 cooperatives with three consortiums. Italian fishers are fewer than 30 000 but our data indicate that 85% of Italian fisheries are organized into cooperatives.

Agenda item 8: any other matters

The representative of FEDAS drew the participants' attention to the fact that, during the previous ExCom meeting which he did not attend, definitions were adopted for recreational fisheries that FEDAS does not agree with because they are considered inappropriate by researchers on recreational fisheries. Nevertheless FEDAS will continue to work on these definitions within WG4.

The members of ExCom decide to appoint Rosa Caggiano as a representative of MED RAC to attend meetings organized by EFCA, especially the Advisory Board.

No further matters were put forward for discussion and therefore the Chair thanked the Catalan Government for the hospitality provided and the interpreters for the great job done. The meeting was closed at 12.30.

