

# MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL – MRAC

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## DRAFT REPORT ON THE WORKING MEETING OF 4 JUNE 2009 AT MARSEILLE

**Chair: Mourad Kahoul**

List of participants: see annexe:

1. The President opened the proceedings and gave the floor to Mr Gil de Bernabé for a brief presentation on the first Euro-Mediterranean meeting of fishing cooperatives which is being organised in Tangier on 12 and 13 November 2009 (<http://remcp.mpm.gov.ma>). In Morocco fishing contributes significantly to employment, food security and foreign exchange earnings. The seminar aims to promote exchanges on the cooperative model and on subjects of common interest and identify opportunities for cooperation. The Moroccan Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture will inaugurate the work. For further information, participants may contact the organiser, Mr Abdellah Elasri ([elasri@mpm.gov.ma](mailto:elasri@mpm.gov.ma)). Representatives from France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Libya, Tunisia, the FAO and other horizons will attend the event. Mr Gil de Bernabé said that the National Federation of Cofradías had hosted a delegation from Morocco to Galicia two years ago to visit the training centre at Bamio, the Maritime Social Institute, the cofradías and the authorities in Madrid. Chairman Murad Kahoul concluded the presentation by pointing out that the southern shore of the Mediterranean was very active. He gave the example of Algeria, which had recently hosted a major conference in Oran at which the future of the fishing industry was discussed in the presence of scientists. The conference had also examined possibilities of development, processing, etc.
2. Mr Lamplair of the European Commission then presented a briefing on the Green Paper on the reform of the CFP, released on 22 April by the Commission. The Green Paper provides a long-term vision of sustainable fisheries. Addressed in particular are the external component, small-scale fisheries, employment, simplification of legislation, profitability of undertakings, bringing the industry closer to citizens, the overexploitation of resources and fleet overcapacity. Some of these factors have resulted in a low resistance of undertakings to the crisis. The CFP is too expensive in the eyes of the Commission. Citizen attitudes have changed: consumers want greater product traceability, and information on product sustainability. The Mediterranean is, of course, a very specific case. The current objectives of the CFP lack any serious prioritisation and the current decision making system promotes short-termism. The sector is not held accountable. Micro-management decisions are also taken at the political level, which is no longer appropriate. The Commission is putting forward the

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proposal that decision-making proceed differently: for macro-management questions and issues of overall policy direction, the Council, Parliament and the Commission will participate as co-decision makers. For micro-management questions, the Commission envisages a decentralised system where the Commission and stakeholders could decide at regional levels which measures are most suitable (real-time closures, etc.). It is important to further involve the industry and promote self- and joint management. Quota management be devolved to POs. The sector may also adjust its capacity through access rights. There are other issues open to discussion: coastal fisheries, relative stability, market globalisation, integration into maritime policy. The Green Paper also tackles the EFF. With capacity reduction leading to job losses, the Commission is seeking solutions to preserve local fishing communities. The Commission is aiming to maintain small-scale coastal fishing alongside an industrial fishing industry (trawlers and others) that is profitable. A capacity adapting system needs to be adopted. It is also important to open the debate on the scientific bases. The sector needs to collaborate with scientists because professionals have precious research data. For aquaculture, the growth period appears to have come to an end and the sector is now stagnating. It plays a role in supplying the market. What is its place in the CFP? The question of relative stability is less relevant in the Mediterranean. On markets: prices are stagnant, the industry is in a spiral. We need a reform of the CMO, with processors accepting their responsibility. How can production costs be passed on to consumers? Is certification a solution? The considerable structural support that existed in the past was without any strong link with the objectives of the CFP. This will change. On external policy, it is important to further strengthen the GFCM in order to harmonise management measures throughout the Mediterranean. The Commission will publish a 450-page diagnosis of the CFP, including studies and analyses. The consultation period will run until 31/12/2009. The Commission will then put together a report on the contributions and, in 2010, an impact study will be produced. The proposals will be drawn up in 2011 for final adopting in 2012.

The Chairman gave the floor to Mr Buonfiglio who kicked off discussion by stating that the diagnosis of failure given in the Green Paper was wrong, pessimistic, generalised and not shared by professionals. The Commission had wanted to create RACs to achieve a more appropriate approach at the regional level. But what we see for the Mediterranean is that statistics continue to be assimilated with those for Europe as a whole by declaring that 88% of stocks are overfished, that overcapacity is due to technological progress, etc. None of these statements apply to the Mediterranean. In the Mediterranean there is no industrial fishing and fishing has an important social component. Moreover, fishing effort is increasing in non-EU Mediterranean countries and decreasing in the EU ones. It is time to address the issue of collaboration with scientists to work on sound foundations. In the 2002 reform, the Green Paper was

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already talking about decentralising management of coastal fisheries to Member States. The Commission already removed at the time the end of subsidies for new vessel-building. But the only result for the Mediterranean obtained after this reform concerns the regulation on technical measures with all the inconsistencies therein, and an action plan for the Mediterranean which the Commission has never followed up on. Moreover, the Black Sea was forgotten when creating the RAC, and we find ourselves with a ‘non-existent’ area on the map. The results of the recent reform are largely inadequate in the opinion of professionals. Job cuts should bring with them conversion activities, which are difficult in the Mediterranean. The Commission has never made a study on this subject, but social partners have conducted a survey revealing that 80% of fishermen prefer to stay in their industry for lack of alternatives. Professionals in the Mediterranean have never had access to socio-economic or scientific data on the reduction of employment and restructuring in the Mediterranean. Decision-making procedures need to be greatly improved in this region. Professionals do not trust the Commission in the current consultation system. Only co-decision seems more democratic. In the opinion of the President of Languedoc-Roussillon, Mr Gronzio, Mr Buonfiglio had said everything, especially on pseudo-overfishing in the Mediterranean. There may be sensitive areas like the Gulf of Lyons, but it is wrong to generalise statements. The same goes for tuna: despite alarmist statements in the press, tuna stocks are not facing extinction. With highly migratory stocks, it is difficult to accurately assess fluctuating and changing populations. Industrial fishing does do damage, even if the idea is to produce feedstuff for farmed fish. Landings have declined, perhaps, but this is also an issue related to markets. The Commission needs to move around ports more before issuing new regulatory proposals. The Commission lacks on-the-ground knowledge. The Maltese representative believes that the Commission ought to strengthen and exploit further the tools of the GFCM. For Mr Ettore Iani, the Green Paper is not of the classic type. It is important to distinguish once and for all between industrial and small-scale fishing. Fishermen agree with the concepts of traceability and with the ecosystem approach, with ACFA and RACs, and with the handing of responsibility to fishermen. But we know that good intentions are transformed once we reach the implementation stage. The reform of the control system is a glaring example of how things go wrong: the Commission uses an alarmist style in its communication (88% of stocks are overfished) to justify its policing decisions. This policing mentality is tantamount to ‘anti-responsibilisation’. Mr Iani also rejects the term ‘extractive’ to describe the catching sector: ‘extractive’ refers to minerals, an activity in the secondary sector, whereas fishing is in the primary sector. Parliament and the Commission recognise that RACs are underfunded. This issue needs to be resolved. The RAC must be granted access to STECF work on an observer basis. Mr Didier Devandeul was surprised that environmental issues are not addressed: the change in temperature, currents, etc. especially in the Gulf of Lyons. It is untrue that

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hake is overexploited in the Gulf of Lyons. Quality analyses are lacking. When it comes to structural funds, fishing requires investments for food security, crew safety, shore management costs (port, control, etc.), so that all support must not be removed impulsively. In a concerted management system there are always many outsiders with no idea of the fishing business, so it is important to be vigilant. Respecting balances is important. A region must preserve a balance between different activities : tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, recreational boating. The PACA region is one of the regions which want to preserve this balance. The question of markets cannot be addressed without mentioning imports. To differentiate its products, European fishermen need to enhance their products, on board or ashore. This generates additional costs. Appellations of origin remain a cost, even if the concept is interesting. With containerships losing 350 tons of cargo a day must necessarily speak also of pollution. The fishermen are calling for low access zones to protect resources. For the WWF, the long-term vision is not very well described in the Green Paper, which is also short of details on a greater involvement of the fisheries sector in resource management. Management plans ought to be developed by ‘management platforms’. RACs have been a good initiative taken by the Commission in the past. Mr Taoultzis (GR) wanted to present a video if time permitted showing the damage to the marine environment resulting from the poor technical measures adopted by the Council. The Green Paper needs to improve import monitoring. Traceability is important. The Commission is mistaken when it assumes that all fishermen want to reduce the number of boats so as to actually increase the technology on new vessels. Greek fishermen know how to fish professionally without all these technologies. Fishermen are economic agents, the entire Greek fishing industry is small-scale. That the market is in crisis is indisputable: fish is sold in Greece today at the same price as a decade ago. What is the Commission planning to do here? The representative of ‘Pêche Collectif et développement’ does not share the environmental challenges as set out and is disappointed by the projected vision of fisheries in 2020. Certain interactions, among others plankton evolution and biodiversity, are global in scale. Coasts are well managed by small-scale fishermen. Having human-sized social organisations is important. Fishermen have been part of the territory for centuries, and constitute the social and economic fabric of a region. The Commission does not question the aquaculture industry in its Green Paper. The economic part seems to be reserved solely for industrial fishing and not for small-scale fishing, with which only the social aspect is associated. We must move away from concepts of ‘acute productivism’ in order to manage fishing in the Mediterranean. Mr Gil de Bernabé (ESP) is opposed to individual transferable quotas for the Mediterranean. He shares everything said by previous speakers on the problems arising from imports, and confirms that coastal fishing is the Cinderella of the most recent reform. Given that consultation on the Green Paper is open to all, Mr Gil de Bernabé hoped that RACs advice will weigh more in the balance than that of citizens.

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He reminded delegates that Medisamak needs to be involved in the management of Mediterranean fisheries, along with the GFCM. Medisamak should receive financial support from the Commission to hold preparatory meetings in the same way as the other European organisations (Europêche, Cogeca EAPO), international organisations (ITF, AIPCEE) and the RACs. Mr Gilberto Ferrari (IT) rejected positions that tend to diminish the strategic value of the co-decision process and sensed a danger in the Commission's manoeuvres to circumvent this principle in the management of Community fisheries. To date, the European Parliament has been listened to but rarely heard. The problem with the Council of Ministers is that only a single position can be taken. The regional approach to management is therefore more interesting, but before plunging headlong into this decentralised process, it is important to clarify in whom decision-making powers will be vested. Which institutions? The Commission only? Will the Commission concentrate decision-making powers in the hands of people who are free from pressure from the sector? Mr Oriol Ribalta expressed his regret that recreational fishing had not found its place in the Green Paper. Recreational fishing has problems of co-habitation in the Mediterranean with coastal fisheries and is calling for quotas. The representative of the Region of Sicily, Mr Targia, said that the emphasis is always on production and rarely on commercialisation. The fact is that importers offer products that are 30 to 50% cheaper than European ones (social, economic and environmental dumping). It is important to protect European products by using a certification (label) system. Ms Béjar of CEPESCA explained that she had already sent her organisation's contribution to the European Commission, insisting on the external aspect of the CFP, which is vital for the operators she represents. The future CFP needs to give room for bilateral partnership agreements in the Mediterranean, as a regional agreement would be virtually impossible to negotiate. For the Maltese delegate, Member States are sending wrong signals to the Commission. Member States should be required to set up 'Fisheries Boards', in which fishing is discussed with stakeholders and scientists. A tripartite dialogue is needed.

In conclusion, the Commission is satisfied with these initial contributions which will certainly be enriched in subsequent discussions in the RAC. It acknowledges that much of the Green Paper concerns the Mediterranean only very little. On non-EU Mediterranean fleets, the Commission has succeeded through the GFCM to have fleet registers adopted in order to assess capacity and begin to limit it. The RAC is invited to make proposals on suitable formats for the system of decentralised decision-making.

3. The Chairman, Mourad Kahoul, then addressed the item relating to the management plans deriving from the regulation on technical measures, and gave the floor to Mr Baron, representing the French government, for a presentation on the situation in France. Mr Baron explained that the government had drawn up a timetable with

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French professionals for formulating proposals for management plans between now and 1 July. For him the technical measures regulation is incompatible for the varied nature of certain fleet segments. Added to this there is an MASP for each management plan and there is a capacity ceiling. The Mediterranean has inherited a lot of rules issued by the Prud'homies and these must be taken into account in management plans. The government was examining available scientific opinions with IFREMER and STECF. He hoped things could be clarified by June-July to order to be able to send something concrete to the Commission. The plan provides for fisheries be managed in accordance with the technical measures contained in the regulation for trawling, seining, gangui fishing, etc. The plan will focus on the environmental aspect and the administration is working with IFREMER here. The plan reveals that recreational boating is also an important factor in the degradation of the marine environment, with boats anchoring near posidonia beds. Pollution is another factor to be taken into account. There are already a very large number of marine protected areas in France. Natura 2000 will generate even more. For trawling, there is an agreement with Spain in international waters.

Following this presentation, Mr Buonfiglio reiterated that he did not understand why the Commission considered it important to address this item in the Mediterranean RAC. This item is not intended to generate an RAC opinion, being outside the advisory system. Mr Lamplmair from the Commission explained that the exchange of views on management plans and on technical measures is rewarding in itself for all stakeholders. It enables people to acquaint themselves with initiatives that may be interesting for other zones in terms of management, including the southern Mediterranean shore. The exchange of views can also shed light on specific difficulties encountered in the Mediterranean. The President of the Languedoc Roussillon CRPMEM requested a management plan for eel. Mr Baron noted this.

The Chairman then gave the floor to the representative of the Spanish Ministry, Ms Encarnación Benito, who presented a clear and precise exposé of the highly detailed management plans developed by the Spanish authorities. The Ministry has undertaken awareness measures for protecting the marine environment, developed marine protected areas, marine fishing reserves, etc. Management is also based on the EU regulation on technical measures. The fleet concerned is included in a register. The most drastic efforts relate to trawling and seining. The management plans adopted in 2006 have been renewed every two years. Fishing effort has been reduced by 10%. The next plan will see new negotiations to reduce fishing effort. Spain has prepared specific plans for each zone and each fleet segment, including a special plan for tuna. The environmental aspect is also taken into account: seven marine reserves have been created, Natura 2000 will create new marine parks and the Ministry plans to introduce marine protected areas in the short term. The Ministry is conducting a census of

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authorised traditional fisheries. It is installing artificial reefs. Mr Buonfiglio noted that the management plans as provided in the technical measures regulation concern only fishing systems and asked whether the Spanish Ministry's initiatives to introduce reefs and the like was a choice negotiated between the Ministry and the Commission, and whether consultations had been held with fishermen. Ms Encarnación Benito replied that the Ministry works collaborates with the IEO (Spanish Institute of Oceanography). Plans also go quite a bit further, including tuna tagging for boaters and jellyfish detection plans. These initiatives fall under Spanish laws dating from 2001. The Ministry has decided to integrate everything into the management plans. Mr Gil de Bernabé supported initiatives to install artificial reefs, especially as cofradías were pioneers in this field. However, when it comes to the quantities of marine protected areas, he hopes the administration will listen to the recommendations and requests of the sector. Mr Farrugia, the Maltese representative, welcomed the dialogue between administrations and the industry in other countries and denounced the fact that the Maltese authorities had never been in contact with professionals to exchange views on management plans. In this way the latter are totally in the dark as to what is going on and are asking the Commission to insist that States consult the sector. In Italy, the Ministry goes ahead and decrees marine protected areas without consulting with professionals either. To summarise and conclude the debate on management plans and technical measures, the RAC Chairman reminded delegates that vessel length is a safety issue, contrary to what the Commission thinks, and stressed the need to fight poaching and control recreational fishing. Fishermen are calling for marine protected areas. Engine power does not affect fishing effort for static gear, only for vessels with trailing gear. Professionals manage their territory, exercise social control, act as sworn guards (Prud'homies). Lastly he said it would be interesting to conduct further discussion on the management plans and see how the RAC can help solve the lack of dialogue between national authorities and stakeholders.

3. Mr Arnaud Breuil, Director of ICOSI (Institut de Coopération Sociale Internationale, [www.icosi.org](http://www.icosi.org)) apologised to participants for his late arrival at the RAC and briefly presented the collaboration of the body he represents with the Moroccan authorities for organising the first Euro-Mediterranean meeting of fishing cooperatives in Tangier. As ICOSI is not specialised in fishing, it greatly appreciates the cooperation offered by professional organisations (including Medisamak for dissemination and for bringing into contact operators from the two sides of the Mediterranean, and today the RAC), for promoting this initiative. ICOSI is seeking examples of good practice in the Mediterranean.
4. Given the late hour, the President closed the debate by suggesting that Mr Taoultzis present his video at the next working meeting of Mediterranean RAC. He thanked

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participants and the national governments for their meaningful contributions, the Commission which is always ready to help, and the interpreters for their good work.