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RAC MED Report of the 13th Session of the Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCSS)
FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, 18-20 February 2013

The RAC MED participated to the SCSS (SAC/GFCM), that was held at FAO, Rome, from 18th to 20th February 2013. Please, find attached the annotated agenda.

Giampaolo Buonfiglio, coordinator of the WG5 “CFP Reform Socio-economic Impact Assessment”, made the presentation of the document addressed to DG MARE on the socioeconomic impact of the EFF:

“The Regional Advisory Council for the Mediterranean is a stakeholder led organization and its role is to enable the EC to benefit from the knowledge and experience of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of fisheries management measures. The RAC MED is composed of representatives of the fishing sector organization from seven Member States in Mediterranean region and of other parties involved in the CFP (NGOs, recreational fishery organizations, etc). RAC MED works according to an annual program (which is approved and financed by EC), providing opinions, positions and information to EC and MS Authorities. In this framework, RAC MED started to assess some official figures and information collected by its members in their own countries, concerning the socio-economic situation of the sector and the related impact of CFP which, in our opinion, has not been always given due consideration in the European decision-making process, particularly for the Mediterranean region.

During the first meeting of the ad hoc Working Group which was held in 2012 in Marseille, a questionnaire has been drafted and few months later RAC MED sent the European Commission a brief paper reporting some indicators (such as fleet composition, level of employment, average age of fishermen, management costs) for three reference years 2007, 2010, 2012 (and 2013 as forecasts).

From the analysis of these figures, it is clear that there is an overall decrease in the EU Mediterranean fishing fleet, which is considerable in some country such as Spain (-17,74%), Malta (-20,5%) and France (50%).

Referring to the numbers of employees (although it was not possible to extrapolate Mediterranean data from the general data of Spanish fishing sector, and no data was available for France) we can see a very sharp



decline, around 5%, up to 38% in Spain compared to 2010. The situation is even more serious considering the average age of fishermen – 36 years the youngest (Malta) 50 years the oldest (Italy) –as it is very hard to retrain them for alternative jobs .

As far as the economic aspects are concerned, in the considered period, a general increase in the operating costs has been observed (Spain 24%, Malta 29%, Slovenia 45%), particularly for fuel costs that in the last few years have increased approximately 20%, even though in many countries fuel for fishery is tax exempted.

From these few figures, it is clear that European fishery sector in Mediterranean is undergoing a structural crisis with the decline of fishing companies, fleet, employment, profitability of catching activities. Is this a consequence of overcapacity, of over-exploitation of the stocks or of illegal fishing? Is it an effect of the general economic crisis? And, in this scenario, which role is the CFP impact playing? Maybe it is a mix of all these different factors but, anyway, it is not a RAC MED task to give answers to these questions.

The only thing we hope is that GFCM, EC and all the management bodies of the Mediterranean sector, will pay more and more attention to the socio-economic situation and impacts of fishery policies, in the imperative progress towards sustainability.” (Find attached the PPT presentation).

Among the general recommendations drawn by the SCESS, there is one related to the RAC MED: “Collaboration between GFCM and RACMED should be strengthened in relation to areas of common interest, including recreational fisheries, in view of the possible development of joint activities”.

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