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REPORT OF THE SEMINAR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CFP 25TH OCTOBER 2013, BRUSSELS

Agenda:

- 1) Landing obligation
- 2) Regionalisation

1) Ms Lowri Evans opened the meeting and passed the floor to Mr Ernesto Penas, who spoke on the matter of discards, notifying the participants that the STECF is organising a second meeting at the end of November in order to acquire a scientific base. He also informed the meeting that, where the plans for discards bans are concerned, the Commission would like to know in which areas and on which species the Member States are currently concentrating. If the Member States are not preparing these plans then the Commission will do so, although there is not much time available. He therefore invited the Member States to prepare and present the plans in question by June, at least where small pelagics are concerned, as the landing obligation for these species will come into force on 1st January 2013. He further informed those present that the EFCA is organizing a two-day seminar at the beginning of January in order to develop the best practices where the landing obligation is concerned.

PELRAC announced that work on the pelagic species had already been started, however the meeting was reminded that there are several migratory species that are shared between several Member States. A regional approach would be ideal but in the pelagic sector it is not easy.

NWWRAC informed the meeting that there are difficulties where mixed fisheries are concerned, as well as for the north eastern sector, and that every attempt will be made to contact the different Member States involved. The EC was requested to apply a flexible approach when the landings obligation is enforced.

Mr Buonfiglio recalled that, in the Mediterranean, the discards ban will only concern those species that have a minimum landing size, for small pelagics this means the undersized specimens of anchovy and sardine as well as mackerel and Atlantic mackerel. The main difficulty is data collection on undersized specimens, and the management of the discards (storage and conservation). For RACMED, the landings obligation is the priority in the 2014 work programme. The main landing points are already being monitored in order to establish pilot projects as



described in the EMFF, with the aim of finding a solution to these problems. Article 14 (2) of the basic regulation on the CFP requests that the Member States produce a “discards atlas”, in order to achieve this there are some other issues that need to be taken into consideration: the problem of organizing landing and storage areas in the ports, understanding who will need to (and be able to) cover the costs of managing this, the fact that the EMFF does not contemplate structural interventions in the existing ports does not facilitate matters. Furthermore, in the Mediterranean, small quantities of fisheries product in storage may risk dispersion. The only solution is the timely implementation of pilot projects with the help of the scientific community.

Ms Lowri Evans thanked RAC MED for this contribution to the discussion and for the determination to find solutions to the problems being faced.

Mr Penas replied to Mr Buonfiglio saying that the “discards atlas” is a good idea; he also stated that, even though the EMFF is not yet in force, this does not mean that it is not possible to begin investing in those activities that have been declared admissible, within the economic framework that has already been adopted.

The vice Chair, Ms Sainz-Trapaga, recalled that, in the Mediterranean, the obligation to land bycatch will only encourage trade in small-sized specimens, when for years efforts have been made to educate the consumer not to purchase these products, she wondered how it will be possible to avoid their distribution.

2) Ernesto Bianchi took the floor and presented the second agenda item on regionalisation. He underlined that a specific format has not been established for the plans envisaged within the scheduled regionalisation, and there is a difference between the way in which the specific plans for discards are presented and the general presentation of the multiannual and management plans within the regionalisation process. In the first case, if the details for the implementation of the landing obligation have not been inserted into multiannual plans, it will be the Commission that adopts delegated acts covering the stipulations detailed in article 15, paragraph 5, from a) to e), of the CFP basic text (in this case the Member States can cooperate with the Commission). If, on the other hand, the procedure outlined in the regionalisation process is followed, it will be groups of Member States with an interest in a specific area or stock which prepare joint recommendations. The Advisory Councils will then be invited to comment, the recommendations will be submitted to the Commission and their compatibility with the general and specific objectives of the reform will be verified a delegated act will then be adopted in the form of regulation. Mr Bianchi informed the meeting that the Advisory Councils will be consulted again during the process in order to hasten the conclusion of the procedure. He closed by explaining how to adopt a delegated act: a common position is drafted, which becomes a regulation, after this the text is passed to the interservice consultation phase, which takes about 20 working days. Following this the experts from the Member States and the European Parliament are consulted and at least a further two months are required. Therefore, at least six months are necessary to complete all these stages – which means June 2014.

Ernesto Penas took the floor and underlined that the RACs must invite third countries as observers. National administrations are also invited to observe, but the RACs must not depend on the presence of these administrations to be able to operate. From now on, with regionalisation, the RACs will have a new function and the Member States should take advantage of this, consulting the RACs in the preparation of these initiatives.

NWWRAC stressed that the basic regulation maintains that it is the Member States that must consult the Advisory Councils, therefore it will be necessary to work both with the Member States and with the European Commission,



moreover, as funding is annual, it will be necessary to choose the priorities. Each RAC will also have to organize several meetings with the Member States, with the STECF as well as bilateral meetings – he wondered how it will be possible to comply with the requirements of this new role without adequate funding from the EC.

Mr Penas replied stating that in order to finance the RACs, within the framework of the EMFF the co-legislators are currently establishing the amount to allocate for each budget item. He therefore suggested that appropriate pressure should be put on the members of the European Parliament. Lastly, he reiterated that it is the Member States that must consult the Advisory Councils according to the basic regulation.

Mr Buonfiglio, posed two questions. Firstly he wondered whether the Member States will collaborate with the RACs, as with regionalization they will be required to consult with the Advisory Councils. Secondly he asked whether it will be possible to optimise the decision-making process within the RACs, creating groups that cover specific geographical areas, and that do not involve all the associations of the Member States that are part of RAC MED. For example, if a proposal is made that concerns the Gulf of Lion, this could be dealt with by France, Spain and Italy alone.

Mr Penas replied in the first case stating that the Council is among the co-legislators, therefore the Member States are informed in a timely manner on the regionalisation process, and the Commission also interacts with the Member States at regional level. He concluded by saying that the RACs are free to organise themselves as they see fit; and where support to the regionalisation process by the EMFF is concerned, he informed the meeting that the European Parliament has approved an amendment and it is possible that the EMFF could contribute. He recalled, however, that the triilogue has not begun and therefore it is too early to predict the outcome.

