



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
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Mr Marian Lixandru
President of NAFA/ Director General
National Agency for Fisheries and
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Strada Sf.Vineri, nr.29, sectorul 3
(cladirea BECTRO CENTER etaj 3)
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Subject: Financial support to the Black Sea Advisory Council (BISAC)

Dear Mr Lixandru,

In December 2019, the chair of the Black Sea Advisory Council (BISAC), Mr Gospodinov, wrote to Mr Oros, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development¹, claiming financial support from Romania for the functioning of the BISAC. The BISAC never received an answer to this letter. We also wrote to you in March 2020 on this issue, but did not get a reply either².

Advisory Councils are stakeholders' organisations that bring together the industry (fishing, aquaculture, processing and marketing sectors) and other interest groups (environmental and consumer organisations as well as recreational fishermen). They were set-up to provide the Commission and Member States with advice and information on issues related to fisheries management and they play an important role in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). We are very grateful for the work they are doing and the recommendations we are receiving from them.

Since 2014, Member States have the obligation to consult the Advisory Councils when preparing joint recommendations under Article 11, 15 and 18 of the CFP, or for technical measures at sea basin level³. They also have to be consulted on Commission measures in

¹ Ref.No.76/18.12.2019

² Ares(2020)1363996)

³ See Chapter III of Regulation 2019/1241 (OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105)

case of a serious threat to marine biological resources (Art. 12 of the CFP), on Member States' emergency measures (Art. 13 of the CFP), or on pilot projects on the landing obligation (Art. 14 of the CFP).

In parallel, in accordance with the CFP Regulation (Art. 44 of the CFP), whenever the Commission or a Member State receives a recommendation from an Advisory Council, it has to reply within 2 months and to state detailed reasons for divergence where final measures that are adopted diverge from their recommendation.

The Commission supports each Advisory Council with an operational grant, covering up to 90% of its costs. The remaining 10% is covered by national, regional or local resources and by membership fees. Since its start in 2017, the BISAC, which has its seat in Varna (Bulgaria), requested both Romania and Bulgaria to contribute to its functioning, but they never got a positive answer. The Commission encourages Member States to provide appropriate technical, logistical and financial support to facilitate the functioning of the Advisory Councils. Indeed, most Member States concerned contribute financially to the operational costs of the existing Advisory Councils. It also happens that Member States provide support in kind, such as staff, premises or meeting rooms.

The absence of Member States' contribution makes the functioning of the BISAC very difficult. Its limited financial capacity prevents it from having a wide representation of all stakeholders. As the BISAC is a small Advisory Council with only 13 members, the fee for industry members was set in 2020 at between €1.000 and € 2.200 in order to try to reach the minimum 10% requested by the Commission. Representatives of Small Scale fishermen are now considering to leave the BISAC because they cannot afford to pay their fees. NGOs also are facing difficulties in paying their fees. A small contribution of € 5.000 from both Bulgaria and Romania would make it possible for all stakeholders that would like to join the BISAC to participate to it.

I would be grateful if you could give consideration to this request to provide this very limited financial support to the BISAC.

I remain at your disposal for any further discussion on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

Cc: Ms Luminita Odobescu, Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Romania to the European Union - 12 Rue Montoyer 1000 Brussels
Mr Ionut Petrescu, Fisheries attaché, Permanent Representation of Romania to the European Union, 12 Rue Montoyer, 1000 Brussels