

An association registered in the Register of Legal persons engaged in a non-profit making activity UCI 176964109

Domicile & Head Office:

No.24-26 Ohrid St., Floor 1, Varna

[office@blsaceu.eu](mailto:office@blsaceu.eu)

Asociatie, inregistrata in Registrul persoanelor juridice fara scop patrimonial al R Bulgaria, CUI 176964109

Sediu si adresa de conducere:

Mun. Varna, str. "Ohrid" N 24-26, etaj 1

[office@blsaceu.eu](mailto:office@blsaceu.eu)

## MINUTES

### Of the meeting of Focus Group 2 of BISAC – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022

#### Topic: “ Fishing for picked dogfish”

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022, at the Rosslin Dimyat Hotel in Varna, a ZOOM meeting of Focus Group 2 of BISAC was held on the topic of ‘Fishing for picked dogfish’.

The following attended the meeting: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violin Raykov from the IO Varna, Mr. Ivan Ivanov from EAFA, Mr. Dobrin Lechev from EAFA Burgas, Mrs. Eleonora Fikasova from EAFA Burgas, Mr. Gabriel Popescu, Director of NAFA Constanta.

The meeting was officially opened by the Chairman of BISAC Mr. Daniel Buhai.

A letter sent by NAFA Romania regarding data on the catches of shark (picked dogfish) for 2021 was presented. The following was declared and filed with the Agency:

- Incidental catch by 01.06.2021 – 300 kg;
- Catch using longlines by 01.06.2021 – 387 kg.

It is also stated in the letter that since 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021, after establishing a total allowable catch (TAC), 40 vessels have been granted permits for fishing picked dogfish, for longlines for picked dogfish, with a fixed quota of 13.5 tons.

After presenting the letter from EAFA Bulgaria, for picked dogfish catches by years:

- In 2017, 50451,4 kg of picked dogfish were caught by 34 fishing boats;
- In 2018, 10082,4 kg of picked dogfish were caught by 37 fishing boats;
- In 2019, 16765 kg of picked dogfish were caught by 53 fishing boats;
- In 2020, 47511,6 kg of picked dogfish were caught by 57 fishing boats;
- In 2021, 19652,2 kg of picked dogfish were caught by 51 fishing boats.

These are the quantities of dogfish caught in Bulgaria, including incidental catch, using longlines.

Discussions followed:

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov asked the representatives of EAFA what the maximum allowable catch for Bulgaria is.

Mr. Dobrin Lechev: the maximum allowable catch for Bulgaria is 133 tons, based on the catch in 2016. This decision was taken in the Working Group on the Black Sea at the GFCM in 2017 in Constanta. There are new recommendations of the GFCM after the 44th session in November 2021 on how to determine the maximum allowable catch for the future, but there are no exact quantities.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov proposed that BISAC should prepare a statement of position and submit it to EADA, stating that it is the recommendation of the Council that the maximum allowable catch determined by the EC for Bulgaria and Romania should be approved.

Mr. Daniel Buhai: first of all, it should be clarified that Bulgaria and Romania have just come out of a two-year pandemic period, so the data from these last years is not very indicative. Therefore, he supports the proposal of Mr. Gospodinov that the maximum allowable quantities should be kept. There is no picked dogfish quota for Romania under the regulation, the quantities mentioned in the 13.5 tonne NARA letter were requested by the fishermen and allowed by the Agency.

Mr. Aleksandar Trapchev asks what should be done with the incidental catch.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: the by-catch under the Regulation must be recorded. Up to 5% of the quota may be recorded as by-catch. In Bulgaria you do not pay for a permit for a species of fish, but a year-round permit for fishing is issued, with a special permit for catching turbot and separately for shellfish being issued. Boats pay a license for fishing gear.

Mr. Aleksandar Trapchev asks how picked dogfish should be recorded when, for example, the fishing boat goes fishing for sprat, and ends up with 150 picked dogfish as incidental catch in its nets, and these constitute 100% of the catch.

Mrs. Lyubov Georgieva: perhaps the possibility of catching picked dogfish as a by-catch should also be accepted, and not just longline fishing, because as you can see, the permits are only for longline fishing of picked dogfish.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: The picked dogfish is a grouped fish and sometimes many specimens fall into the trawl. Perhaps it should be added in the recommendation that by-catches of trapped dogfish should be considered as by-catch rather than discarded.

Mr. Daniel Buhai proposes that two separate recommendations should be prepared – the first that the maximum allowed quantities for the catch of picked dogfish for the two member-states should be kept, and the second – to check if the Regulation allows or does not allow the by-catch of picked dogfish, and then to prepare the second recommendation.

Mrs. Lyubov Georgieva: the very response of NAFA Romania shows that there was an incidental by-catch - 300 kg for 2021, which means that this catch was not by means of longlines. That is, there is no problem with dogfish catches to be reported in this way.

Mr. Daniel Buhai proposes that a separate recommendation should be prepared requesting compensation between the two quotas – the one for Bulgaria and the one for Romania – if the quota in either country cannot be reached. Thus if the quota for Bulgaria is exceeded and the one for Romania has not been reached yet, the quota will be compensated for by one of the countries.

Under Item 'Any other business':

Mr Daniel Buchai: I ask the fishermen present whether they have been affected in any way by the current conflict in Ukraine. For example, Romanian fishermen near the Danube Delta, who catch mostly turbot near Snake Island, feel threatened and do not go fishing. Mr. Dragos Buhai: Regulation of the European Commission 1139/2021 in Art. 26 Specific objectives, paragraph 2 states that: "By way of derogation from Article 13 (j), in the event of exceptional events leading to significant market disruption, the support referred to in paragraph 1 (b) of this Article may cover: (a) compensation to fisheries and aquaculture operators for lost revenue or incurred additional costs', and it goes on to say: The support referred to in the first subparagraph may be admissible only if the Commission has ascertained the occurrence of an exceptional event by means of a resolution to be implemented. Expenditure shall be eligible only for the period specified in this resolution to be implemented. "

Mrs. Dimitrina Kostova: on March 10, 2022. The European Commission sent a draft proposal to the Member States providing advice on a temporary framework for state aid in BISAC needs to prepare a recommendation signaling that the sector is facing economic problems due to the energy crisis and rising natural gas prices, and that many fishermen are afraid to fish.

As there were no other items on the Agenda, the meeting was closed.

Minutes taken by: Mrs. Elena Peneva

Chairman of BISAC: Mr. Daniel Buhai