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Minutes

From a meeting of Working Group 1 of the BISAC

February 24, 2021

Topic: "Fulfillment of the landing obligation"

Landing obligation

On February 24, 2021 in Bulgaria, Stara Zagora, in the hotel Calista gathered the members of BISAC from the Bulgarian side and in Tulcea, gathered the members of BISAC from the Romanian side and through video link between the two groups was held a meeting of working group 1 of the BISAC with the following agenda:

1. Landing obligation - new requirements by 2021
2. Review of the previous work of BISAC on the landing obligation;
3. Challenges for Romania and Bulgaria;
4. Opinions of scientists and administration;
5. Comments and discussions;
6. Preliminary text for recommendation.

The meeting was attended by videoconference: Ms Pinelopi Belekou, DG MARE Unit D 1, Ms Evelien Ranshuysen, DG MARE Unit D 1 (who joined the meeting at a later stage) , Assoc. Prof. Violin Raykov, Institute of Oceanology, Varna, Mr. Dimitar Valkov - NAFA, Burgas, Mr. Victor Nita from the Grigore Antipa Institute, Constanta.

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the BISAC Mr. Yordan Gospodinov. The participants and the guests of the meeting greet the members of the BISAC.

Following is a speech by Mr. Dimitar Valkov who presented some new aspects related to the Landing obligation. From 2021 in Bulgaria is applied an electronic fishing logbook for vessels over 12 m, which greatly facilitates the work of NAFA. The electronic version currently in use will be upgraded over time so that it is more accessible to ship captains and information is collected faster and easier to process. With regard to small-scale fishing (SSF) for up to 2

years, NAFA intends to introduce an option for electronic catch reporting. There is still room for improvement in fishermen's awareness of landing obligations requirements and innovations.

The meeting was not attended by a representative from ANPA Constanta to present how the Landing obligation in Romania is being implemented and controlled.

The following is an overview presentation by Ms. Mihaela Mirea of the previous work of the BISAC regarding the Landing obligation:

- Working Group 6 for 2020 held on 1 October 2020;
- Consultation by NAFA and ANPA on the general recommendation for turbot prepared by the two agencies of Bulgaria and Romania.

The BISAC proposes a joint meeting between NAFA and NARA, because in both Member States the texts of the landing obligation regulation are not strictly applied, especially by some small-scale fisheries representatives. This is due to the ignorance of some fishermen, non-application of reporting provisions and to a large extent to the lack of ports and landing sites, where for the time being is the place where the control is carried out.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov explained that the landing obligation for Bulgaria and Romania applies to commercial and small-scale fishing, and there is one category - recreational fishermen, who, however, turn out to catch sometimes larger, even industrial quantities of fish. The administration must take measures to differentiate and correctly identify them.

Mr. Violin Raykov briefly presented his participation in the newly launched MedBLand project "Synthesis of measures for the obligation to land and discharge rates for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea." The main purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the integration of (management) measures put in place to facilitate the fulfillment of the landing obligation, including the measures adopted by Member States to ensure control, implementation and detailed accurate documentation of all fishing journeys. As far as discards are concerned, the landing obligation itself implies that there should be no dumping of fish back into the sea, ie. fishing has reached a certain level of development that avoids discards. In order to be successful in this direction, it is necessary to work on the selectivity of the devices - technical measures aimed at determining the mesh size of the nets, the type of fiber, the way of work, etc. The Institute of Oceanology is working on a doctorate to improve the selectivity of fishing gear. The study is by a young doctoral student, but the publications have not yet been published.

Mr. Victor Nita added that the MedBLand project is an important step. He also expressed regret that there is no representative of ANPA Romania to share how the landing obligation in the country is observed.

Mr. Danko Penev, representative of the Ro-Pescador Association, addressed a question to Mr. Nita - this year the ships of the association are trying to catch bivalves at certain coordinates, which they found in the past 2020, but now find only shells. and dead clam. At the same time, Romania is carrying out large-scale dredging of sea sand to fill beaches. This is

close, but not at the same coordinates, and is this the reason for the disappearance of the bivalves from the area?

Mr. Nita: The answer is that dredging may be the reason for their disappearance from this area. It would be interesting to study the process.

Mr. Penev invited scientists from the Grigore Antipa Institute if he wished to provide them with a ship and crew to carry out an observation or a specific study.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov explained that representatives of the BISAC often express a desire to provide their ships to scientists for research.

Ms. Pinelopi Belekou described the work of the BISAC as more focused, especially in the new work program for 2021. She reminded that the Landing obligation is not a new topic and the regulation has been in force since 2014. The full implementation of the landing obligation is one of the most important elements of the CFP. She also mentioned that DG MARE had recently received the general recommendation for turbot. It is also very important to comply with the landing obligation for the shark. It is good that the BISAC acknowledges that there is a lack of awareness of the sector and this is an issue that needs to be considered. To Assoc. Prof. Violin Raykov - if there are already scientific results from the developed doctoral dissertation on the selectivity of devices, DG MARE will be happy to get acquainted with them.

Assoc. Prof. Raykov explained that in terms of the selectivity of the devices for sprat, there are already results, those for mullet and goby are to be published.

Ms Pinelopi Belekou expressed the view that the selectivity of fishing gear is very important and is closely linked to the landing obligation (LO) - their improvement also improves the LO.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: agreed that selectivity is very important, but after the catch there is also a landing, and in both Member States there are not enough ports and landing places and the BISAC has repeatedly alerted about this.

Mr. Kiril Zheglev: shared his observations as a fisherman and said that since August there are no sprats near the Bulgarian coast, but predatory fish species predominate. In the last two years, there has been a transformation in the Black Sea, which fishermen say is due to the climate. During these two years, the prevailing winds are from south and subsequently the air and water temperatures rise. Because of this, the transitional fish remain in our latitudes - bluefish, bonito, horse mackerel. That is why the sprat, which is the basis of the food chain, avoids the Bulgarian shores and goes north, where there are no predatory fish. Anchovy is the one that replaces sprat, and it is caught mainly by Turkish and Georgian fishermen. In recent years, however, the temperature of sea water off the coast of Turkey in winter is 13 ° -14 °, which causes anchovies to come to the Bulgarian coast. However, this is a problem for Turkey because anchovies are their main economic resource. The appeal of the fishermen to the scientists is to study this topic, at the same time the fishermen believe that along the Turkish coast some large-scale geological studies are being carried out, which make the fish move to the Bulgarian shores.

Assoc. Prof. Raykov: What Mr. Zheglev says is very important. From 2017 so far the water temperature in winter is higher by 1 ° -1.5 °. In 2019 and 2020 the winters are extremely warm. In general, anchovy uses the coasts of Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine for breeding, and winters along the Turkish coast. But in recent years, there has been a change of regime and a change in the behavior of predators who follow their victims. That is why people do not interfere. It is very important to note that all scientific reports so far are based on old knowledge, and now there is a change.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov explained that at the moment there are differences in the legislation between Bulgaria and Romania regarding the bans on shark fishing. In Romania, the restrictions are stricter, and there is also a distinction between male and female types of bans. In this regard, the BISAC proposes to synchronize the legislation and to hold a meeting between the two National Fisheries Agencies, which will be attended by representatives of the relevant ministries. As regards the selectivity of fishing gear, fishermen are concerned that a possible replacement by law would require a large investment, as well as a production capacity that they do not have. It is also necessary to look for a way to finance the replacement of fishing gear, if this is recommended by the EC or scientists. There is no rich fisherman in Bulgaria and Romania, so if the equipment needs to be replaced, it must be accompanied by a way of financing.

Ms Evelien Ranshuysen explained that, regarding the need for funding for the replacement of fishing gear, new European funds have been allocated, focusing on the Landing obligation and the selectivity of gear.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov presented to the members of the working group a proposal sent to BISAC by the NGO National Association of the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast (member of the Board of BISAC from the group of other stakeholders), which states that bonito (*sarda sarda*) is prohibited under Regulation 1241/2019 on fishing with floating nets. In recent months, there has been bonito on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and it is of interest to small-scale fishermen, but at the same time in Bulgaria and Romania there are no fishing vessels to catch it with permitted fishing gear. Small-scale fishermen can only catch it with nets and therefore these nets are of interest to them. Therefore, the NGOs National Association of the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast want a change in the text of Regulation 1241/2019, Annex 3- the ban on bonito with floating nets does not apply to the Black Sea.

Ms Pinelopi Belekou reminded that today's topic of the working group was the Landing obligation, and that there was a clear need for the sector in both countries to get acquainted with it and apply it. He also stressed the importance of the information received from Mr. Kiril Zheglev, as well as the impact of climate change on the behavior of species in the Black Sea. As for bonito, its catch by floating nets is prohibited - the Regulation is more than clear.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: In Bulgaria and Romania, commercial fishing is aware of the landing obligations and complies with it. The ignorance is more among the small fishermen and the fact that their catches are not reported. He gives an example that if 500 boats catch 10 kg of fish in one day and have 20 fishing days in one year, this makes 100,000 kg of fish - quite a serious amount, and the boats are much more and the fishing days are not only 20. BISAC wants these boats to account for their catches in some way. The administration needs

to think about this, and that the way of reporting should be simple. As for the topic of bonito - it really goes beyond the topic of the Working Group, but the member of the BISAC asked in a letter to the Chairman to put the topic on the agenda.

Assoc. Prof. Violin Raykov clarified that Regulation 1241/2019 has texts regarding floating or trawling nets. They are used in the process of the so-called molaring from small boats. If the boat has a permit for a certain length of the net, it does not fall under the prohibition of the regulation. For bonito (sarda sarda), the Black Sea is a small distribution area, so attention should be focused on the length of the net - if it is within the specified size, it is not prohibited.

The meeting closes.

The minutes were prepared by Ms. Elena Peneva

Chairman of BISAC - Dr. Yordan Gospodinov