



**BLACK SEA ADVISORY COUNCIL /BISAC/
CONSILIUL CONSULTATIV PENTRU MAREA
NEAGRA**

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MINUTES

From the meeting of BISAC Working Group 5 - May 10, 2022

Topic: "Recreational fishing"

On May 10, 2022 in the hotel Continental Forum, Constanta and via video link in ZOOM was held a meeting of working group 5 of BISAC on the topic: "Recreational fishing".

The meeting was attended by: Ms. Yana Velina from the Ministry of Environment and Water, Mr. Kolyo Zhelev - Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture /EAFA/ Statistics Directorate, Ms. Dimitrina Chakarova - EAFA, Mr. Konstantin Petrov Representative of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) for Bulgaria, Mr. Alexandru Simeonov - National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture /NAFA/, Constanta.

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

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov made a brief overview of the recommendation sent by the BISAC in connection with recreational fishing in 2021 to the Ministries of Agriculture of Bulgaria and Romania and to EAFA and NAFA. The proposals made were:

- Need for catch data collection from recreational fishing, due to information that the same gear is used for recreational fishing and commercial fishing, and sometimes recreational fishing is transformed into small-scale fishing because the sale and the realization of the caught fish is sought;
- Better control over fishermen, engaged in recreational fishing in the Black Sea by boat - a way to report catches via SMS;
- Information campaigns for recreational fishing, organized by the Ministry, with information on allowable catches for own consumption and permitted fishing gear.
- Clear distinction between recreational fishing and sport fishing.

Mr. Gospodinov explained that recreational fishing in the Black Sea in Bulgaria is growing every year, especially in the autumn months, when the fish passing through the Bosphorus appear. According to the law in Bulgaria, up to 3 kg of fish can be caught from

recreational fishing. This type of fishing is carried out with very modern fishing gear and high-speed boats and sometimes the caught quantities of fish can reach 100 - 200 kg. This fish is then sold illegally in restaurants. For recreational fishing, NAFA issues a one-time document to individuals, and these people are not under the control of the authorities, ie there is a legislative omission. In the past, as in 2021 and 2022, the government has not taken measures to resolve this situation. Unfair competition from amateurs is worrying for fishermen.

Mr. Alexandru Simeonov: Recreational fishing in Romania starts in May, and fishermen have the obligation to send a completed catch slip online to NAFA. The online platform of the National Fisheries Agency is currently being updated. Information on the quantities caught is sent to the Data Collection Institute. NAFA issues permits for recreational fishing to individuals, not boats. Also, amateur fishermen must comply with fishing bans at certain times of the year. The amount of fish that can be retained from this type of fishing is up to 5 kg, which is for personal use.

Mr Laurentiu Miria, representative of the Federation of Black Sea Fisheries Organizations in Romania: What he observed in the seaside town of Mangalia was that there were about 80 fishermen, most of whom were amateurs. When they return from a fishing trip, the amateur fishermen have larger quantities than the commercial fishermen. The fish caught is traded daily without documents and this is not only in Mangalia, but also in Constanta and Navodar. It can be said that recreational fishing in the Black Sea is a poaching activity and is the worst phenomenon, because these fishermen use other fishing gear in addition to fishing rods - baskets or nets. Proposes that NAFA introduce a high fee to pay for recreational fishing in the Black Sea by boat, because it is a kind of entertainment, not a profession, and thus would reduce the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing).

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: a legislative change must be made in Bulgaria - amateur fishermen in the Black Sea should have the right to fish from the shore and from the ports, and those who fish by boat - for them to introduce a permit as for the small-scale fishermen (SSF) and to have diaries in which to record the catch. Then this fish will be able to be sold legally and the amateurs will be placed on an equal footing with SSF. It is very important to distinguish between sport and recreational fishing. In Bulgaria, sport fishing is carried out in registered clubs and the fish caught are weighed, measured and returned to the water. He proposes to make a legislative change and to ban recreational fishing from a boat, except with a harpoon of certain species not subject to quotas or subject to seasonal bans.

Mr Daniel Buhai: proposes that the BISAC make a recommendation to the authorities for stricter control of recreational fisheries and that this recommendation mention specific measures such as:

- Higher fees for recreational fishing by boat in the Black Sea;
- Disposal of the quantities of fish caught in the sea in excess of those permitted by law - 3 kg for Bulgaria and 5 kg for Romania;

- Boats engaged in recreational fishing to have a special signal system;
- To limit the trips to the sea of amateur fishermen;
- To fill in the catch slip, which should be sent electronically to the Fisheries Agency;
- To develop a set of legislative sanctions for violators;

In general, recreational fishing in the Black Sea and for Bulgaria, and Romania has become a phenomenon out of control, it can even be said that this is poaching and unfair competition for professional fishermen.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: Mr. Buhai's idea is very good in order to avoid conflicts between small-scale fishermen and amateur fishermen, and it is really necessary to exercise greater control over amateur fishermen. In Bulgaria, there are even cases when amateur fishermen pull out the nets of small-scale fishermen. EAFA receives large funds under the Maritime and Fisheries Program for data collection and can set up an online platform for reporting catches by SMS.

Mr. Konstantin Petrov: the topic of recreational fishing is very important and at the level of General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) there is an expert group for this type of fishing. It mainly deals with aspects in terms of the pressure of recreational fisheries on resources, its points of contact with small-scale fishing, as well as cases where the catch of recreational fishermen is greater than that of commercial fishermen, which is partly due to the modern devices - radars, fast boats, etc. The expert group also examines the importance of recreational fishing for coastal development. A guide has been adopted at FAO level in 2021 to collect data from recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Its main objective is to provide a more harmonized framework that will allow the Black Sea countries to have a uniform model for analyzing the dimension and impact of recreational fishing on Black Sea fisheries. Uniform monitoring schemes for the different types of fishing can also be seen in the handbook, it provides minimum criteria for information to be collected from countries and at a later stage to be able to account for and present the dimension of recreational fishing, while time is tailored to the specifics of each of the regions. The handbook is divided into 5 sections and if needed in a next meeting, Mr. Petrov's colleagues from FAO can present it to the members of BISAC.

Ms. Dimitrina Kostova: it is good to see if the BISAC proposals are in line with the guidelines included in the FAO Handbook for recreational fishing.

Mr Daniel Buhai: In the conclusion of the working group, it can be said that much stricter control and better regulation of recreational fishing is needed in order to avoid unfair competition with small-scale fishing. There is a need to emphasize the need to facilitate the collection of data from this activity and, last but not least, to reduce the possibility of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing disguised as recreational fishing.

Next: closing the meeting.

The minutes was prepared by mrs. Elena Peneva

Chairman of BISAC – Mr. Daniel Buhai