



КОНСУЛТАТИВЕН СЪВЕТ ЗА ЧЕРНО
МОРЕ /КСЧМ/
CONSILIUL CONSULTATIV PENTRU MAREA
NEAGRA

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MINUTES

Of the meeting of Working group 2 at BISAC "Sustainable fishing – facilities and resources", held on 24th June 2019

Subtopic: Turbot, catches, quotas, total allowable catch (TAC), regional distribution of the stocks, intensity of fishing, social and economic effect. Opportunities for marking.

On 24.06.2019, at the Ibis Hotel, Trayan Hall, Constanta, commencing at 10:30, a meeting of Working group 2 'Sustainable fishing – facilities and resources', was held in accordance with the following Agenda:

1. Turbot fishing – is it of social or economic significance at the moment? Opportunities for identifying fish – reducing IUU fishing to an absolute minimum.
2. Future approach to determining the total allowable catch (TAC) and turbot quotas;
3. Term of validity of TAC at a certain level;
4. Turbot stocks in the Black Sea – total or different for the different geographical sections;
5. Opinion of research-scientists and the administration;
6. Comments and discussions;
7. Recommendations and advice;
8. Expected results./Final versions of recommendations to DG MARE, GFCM, ministries and authorities in the member-states/.

The members of the Working group attending the meeting are as follows: Aleksandar Trapchev – Chairman of the Working group, and participants: Dimitrina Kostova, Lyubov Georgieva, Dimitar Kanariev, Florin Luchian, Dragosh Buhay, Michaela Candea, Plamen Kamburov, Yordan Gospodinov. As an active observer, Associate Professor Violin Raykov from the Institute of Oceanology in Varna, also attended the meeting.

Objective of the Working group: to draw up recommendations regarding the catches and turbot quotas distribution, taking into account both the interests of the business and the environmental regulations and resource conservation.

The Chairman of BISAC made a presentation on 'Turbot – catches, quotas, total allowable catch (TAC). Regional distribution of the stocks, intensity of fishing – social or economic significance. Opportunities for marking'.

Discussions and comments: In 2017, at a session of GFCM, a long-term turbot management plan was adopted, and the TAC for turbot in the Black Sea was determined. This temporary TAC was applicable and in force in 2018 and 2019, and is now to be revised. The administration is of the opinion that a 5-year TAC plan should be adopted, but the associations, members of BISAC, believe it is not reasonable, and they are in favour of a 3-year plan as it is possible that in this period there could be new evidence of increases in the turbot stocks. Some associations propose that the current quota should remain in effect in 2020, and as of 2021 TAC for a 3-year period should be determined.

Some of the countries operating in the Black Sea that are not EU members unofficially state their position that turbot stocks in the Black Sea could be divided into two groups – stocks off their coastlines, and stocks off the coasts of Romania and Bulgaria. The administrations of the two member-states and all BISAC members share the opinion that turbot stocks should be treated as one whole for the whole Black Sea region, and this opinion is supported by the scientific circles – the Institute of Fish Resources, Varna. In addition, according to the members of BISAC, the permanently effective system of control of fishing vessels catching turbot should be applied to and be the same for all countries operating in the Black Sea, because otherwise if it applies only to Bulgaria and Romania, it will be discriminative.

Mr. Aleksandar Trapchev: As to the effect of turbot fishing – whether it is of social or of economic significance – with a quota of 57 tonnes per member-country, the effect is of social significance; it would not be serious to talk about any considerable economic effect.

Mrs. Lyubov Georgieva: In the current state of fishing, it turns out that Bulgaria and Romania, being EU member-states, form a closed society with numerous restrictions as compared to the other countries operating in the Black Sea, which set their own rules. The rules for monitoring and control of fishing vessels allowed the catch turbot should be the same for the Black Sea, and GFCM should find a way to harmonize them. There should be a constantly operating control system only if it is common for all Black Sea countries.

Mr. Violin Raykov: As regards turbot stocks in the Black Sea, there is no evidence of the stocks not being a united whole; however, there are different varieties of turbot. The fact that the fishing and control measures are different for the different countries leads to an unsustainable management of turbot stocks.

Mrs. Michaela Candea: It is very important that the Black Sea and the Mediterranean should be treated differently, as in the Black Sea there are fewer commercial fish species of interest for fisheries.

Mr. Florin Luchian: Fishing in Romania has been revived since 2011 with the appearance of the veined rapa whelk, and thus the Romania fishing fleet has increased. Only some of the fishing vessels hold permits for fishing turbot, and most of them are less than 12m in length, and are not monitored. Since they have been allowed turbot catches, they should also be equipped with monitoring systems. As regards the fishing of other species, it is not well developed in Romania.

Mr. Yordan Gospodinov: 34 fish species are subject to catches in Bulgaria, and traditionally have been, despite the emergence of the veined rapa whelk as a fishing option.

Mr. Violin Raykov: The fact that the catches of other species in Romania are quite limited is due to the geographic location of the country and the migration of fish.

Mr. Aleksandar Trapchev: It is not reasonable to impose quotas on a certain species, and at the same time impose periods of bans and permitted fishing equipment. The quota should be uniform for the whole Black Sea, because in the current circumstances the data are manipulated and not real. The catches by fishing vessels are much bigger than the reported ones, and thus the statistical data used by EAFA and GFCM are not accurate.

In conclusion, the following proposals for recommendations to GFCM, the member-countries, and GD MARE, were drawn up:

- Turbot stocks in the Black Sea are one integral whole, and TAC should be enforced for a 3-year period;
- Rules and measures should be introduced and applied to all vessels operating in the Black Sea – both small boats and bigger vessels, as well as to all countries that are not EU members;
- There should be no turbot quotas for Bulgaria and Romania for a period of two years, as there should be TAC for the Black Sea, and during this period, only vessels equipped with monitoring systems, which meet the requirements for obtaining a license for turbot catches, should be allowed turbot fishing;
- It should be recommended to Romania, as a member-country, to determine and build ports for landing turbot. Small boats should be allowed to go 2 miles out at sea. Fishing vessels under 12 meters in length which go turbot fishing should be monitored, and monitoring systems should be provided by ANPA, Romania;

We propose the following new and more restrictive conservation measures:

1. Monitoring of all vessels with turbot catch authorization;
2. Monitoring of all vessels without turbot catch authorization, which function as boats accompanying fishing /in Romania/ or as boats with authorization for the catch of other fish species, as well as tourist boats;
3. By order of the respective minister in the member-country, sufficient number of ports and boat-shelters should be designated as landing ports for turbot in the Republic of Bulgaria, and Romania;
4. The fishing and landing should be performed only in the daytime, pursuant to a respective order;
5. In every port, an inspector should be appointed and the landing should be performed only in the presence of the said inspector;
6. The reporting should be done at least an hour prior to the arrival of the vessel and the landing of the turbot;
7. In the authorization of every fishing vessel catching turbot with passive fishing gear, the number of the authorized fishing vessels and the individual mark of each net should be stated. For boats up to 6 meters in length – 10 nets of 100 meters, each with IAPA, AMPA individual marking with a number. For vessels up to 10 meters – 20 nets; for vessels up to 12 meters – 30 nets;
8. All vessels should undergo technical inspections on an annual basis at the beginning of the season for the correspondence of the actual fishing effort to the documented one;

9. Fishing vessels of small-scale fisheries should be allowed to operate in an area of 2-3 miles;
10. Each boat of up to 6 meters should make 6 trips per calendar year with an inspector on board; boats of up to 10 meters – 10 trips with an inspector; and those of up to 12 meters – 12 trips with an inspector on board;
11. A dialogue should be established with all stakeholders, and control methods should be developed, involving the responsible institutions as well as the local communities (municipalities), associations, the public and NGOs;
12. The facilities for onboard control, land control and landings control should be funded in accordance with the new requirements;
13. Scientific research should be funded to ensure the necessary tests;
14. The damage caused by the use of gill nets should be proven scientifically.

Grounds for requesting that the quota should be suspended for a trial period of two successive years are as follows:

- IUU catches will come in the open;
- A better idea of the actual catches by vessels without authorizations, without quota, which land in unregulated places, without monitoring and control, should be obtained;
- The quota does not protect us. Neither does it protect the resources because there are indications that big quantities of turbot are caught beyond the permitted quota; this turbot is sold illegally – grounds: fishing boats without authorization, boats with permits to operate as accompanying vessels, numerous unmarked nets, more than 10-20 km per boat;
- Sale of turbot during the ban;
- Sale of undersized turbot in restaurants and shops;
- A series of cases of young dolphins drowned as a result of being entangled in fishing nets during the period of the ban and/or throughout the year /evidencing uncontrolled boats and nets with a smaller mesh/;
- The sale of turbot from unregulated catches in restaurants and hotels will stop;
- The catch and sale of undersized fish will be discontinued;
- Dolphins will be saved;
- We will be able to prove that more turbot is caught than it is reported;
- We will be able to establish if the stocks are sustainable or endangered;
- In the conditions of the system for fishing and reporting currently in force, and, at the same time the evasion of reporting catches, there is data of stable stocks;

We recommend that:

1. The quotas should be discontinued for a two-year period;
2. All catches should be evidenced and reported;
3. Turbot stocks should be established.

Minutes prepared by: Mrs. Elena Peneva.....

Chairman of BISAC: Dr. Yordan Gospodinov:.....