

Black Sea Advisory Council

Work Programme of 2024 [01.01- 31.12.2024]

1. Background

The establishment of the Black Sea Advisory Council (BISAC) is provided in Article 43 (Establishment of Advisory Councils) of the Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, in order to promote a balanced representation of all stakeholders and to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy. The Black Sea Advisory Council is a non-profit legal entity for public benefit, established on 20.07.2015 pursuant to the provisions of the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities of the Member State Bulgaria. The Advisory Council is registered under the Bulgarian legislation with headquarters in Varna – Republic of Bulgaria. The Advisory Council has also established a second office in Constanta - Romania.

The composition of the General Assembly includes 17 members who are associations, non-governmental organizations and societies whose activities cover all major areas of fisheries in Bulgaria and Romania – fishing of marine living resources, aquaculture, processing, import and export, retail and wholesale of fish and fish products. Members of BISAC also include environmental NGOs and other stakeholders with activities related to promoting fish products and involved in social aspects of the fishing community.

The Executive Committee of the BISAC is composed of 10 members, of which 6 are fishing organizations and 4 organizations from the group of other interested parties, respecting the 60/40 principle:

1. NGO "MARE NOSTRUM" , Romania
2. Federation of Black Sea Fishermen's Organizations, Romania
3. Association of marine fishing Tomis, Romania
4. Association "RO-PESCADOR", Romania
5. Association Ivan Patzaichin - Mila 23, Romania
6. National association Bulgarian Black Sea, Bulgaria
7. Association of the fish products producers - BG Fish, Bulgaria
8. Association "MENA", Bulgaria
9. European fishermen Association in the Black Sea, Bulgaria
10. Foundation "Institute for Ecological Modernisation, Bulgaria

2. Mission and objectives of BISAC

The Black Sea Advisory Council will continue its efforts to play an active role within the Common Fisheries Policy. In 2024, the BISAC will continue working on the topics set out in the previous Work Programs with regard to the Common Fisheries Policy, including its external dimension namely within the GFCM. In addition, the BISAC will contribute to the priorities and goals set out in the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea, namely on synergies towards sustainable fisheries in the Black Sea. The 2024 workplan will also address current

challenges such as climate change, Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), energy transition and decarbonisation, protection of marine ecosystems and of vulnerable species, such as cetaceans (harbour porpoise) and sturgeons, particularly important for Black Sea fisheries and the mitigation measures to fisheries interactions.

The Working program is based on:

- the Common Fishery Policy – CFP,
- EU Action plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries;
- EU strategy on Energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture.
- The GFCM instruments, notably the Strategy 2030, the Regional Plans of Action on small-scale fisheries (RPOA-SSF), on eliminating IUU fishing (RPOA-IUU), on vulnerable species (RPOA-VUL), and GFCM Recommendations and Resolutions on conservation, fisheries management, bycatches of vulnerable species, monitoring control and surveillance,
- the 2016 Bucharest and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declarations,
- the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea and the Technical Group on Sustainable aquaculture;
- The Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter adopted by the Black Sea Commission;
- The strategic guidelines for a sustainable aquaculture in the EU;

3. General Principles of Action

The BISAC will act as a forum for dialogue and discussion with stakeholders and will facilitate regionalization and cooperation between Member States, while continuing to work closely with the European Commission. The BISAC will follow the work of the EU and the GFCM and will participate in key meetings in 2024.

The BISAC will continue its cooperation with other Advisory Councils, notably the Mediterranean Advisory Council, and take benefit of sharing knowledge and experience in other sea basins.

Following the experience from previous years, BISAC will enhance the cooperation between Member States administrations in terms of BISAC involvement in planning and decision-making processes for the establishment of management plans and measures related to Black Sea fisheries.

BISAC WORK PRIORITIES in 2024

1. Overarching long term and short term work priorities (at least 3 priorities)

Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems

1. Fisheries conservation and management such as, implementation of the landing obligation, the turbot discard plan, TAC and quotas for turbot and sprat, measures on piked dogfish and rapana, both at EU level and regional level within the GFCM; recommendations to be provided; Further work on fisheries management following the ecosystem approach; Participation in awareness raising campaigns of GFCM on piked dogfish; Recommendations to be provided;
2. Implementation of multiannual management plans (MAPs) for turbot, sprat, piked dogfish, new MAPs for other priority species in Black Sea fisheries, recommendations to be provided; Potential revision of technical measures included in the turbot map, such as the closure period, effectiveness of MAPs, recommendations to be provided;

3. The fight against IUU fishing activities in the Black Sea - Identify the commercial species under IUU pressure in Black Sea, risks and the extent of “illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing” by operators of all nationalities and provide recommendations on how to prevent, deter and eliminate such activities; Traceability and catch certification schemes, such as the implementation of the turbot catch certificate ; BISAC members to fully be involved and contribute effectively to the fight against IUU fishing, to the collection of data, and to the effective implementation of the catch documentation scheme for turbot;
4. Biodiversity, vulnerable marine ecosystems and vulnerable species in the Black Sea; Fishing activities and interactions with vulnerable species, mitigation of by-catches, discards and by-catch data, improved selectivity of gears, technical measures. In line with the EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries, BISAC will be heavily involved in the implementation of the action plan in Bulgaria and Romania, notably and in priority for the protection of vulnerable species in the Black Sea such as harbour porpoise and sturgeons indicated in the EU action plan. recommendations to be provided; participation in the GFCM pilot project on cetaceans bycatch in turbot gillnet fisheries
5. Climate change and impacts to marine fisheries, non-indigenous species; Recommendations on NIS recently observed by fishermen in Black Sea and possible impacts;
6. Small-scale fisheries, specificities of the Black Sea and implementation of the GFCM RPOA-SSF; recommendation to be provided on the protection of SSF and valorisation of catches;
7. Recreational fisheries, state of play, fish stocks, fishing gears/techniques, legal framework, national licencing or registration regimes, catch reporting, interaction with commercial fisheries, recommendations to be provided. The BISAC will be actively involved in the GFCM pilot project on recreational fisheries, in coordination with the Member States’ authorities;
8. Promote digitalization in fisheries; Recommendations to be provided.
9. Cooperation with the Black Sea Commission (BSC) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC)
10. Participation of all stakeholders, especially fishermen, in the designation of management plans for marine protected areas. Promote the participatory approach and provide recommendations;
11. Participation in the identification of restricted areas where traditional fishing with high selectivity equipment can be allowed and provide recommendations;
12. Monitoring of impacts in fisheries due to the evolving maritime security situation in Black Sea; Fuel crisis and the energy transition, decarbonisation of fishing fleets and possible financial support to fishermen;

A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea:

13. Active participation in the maritime spatial planning definition and implementation, supporting Romania and Bulgaria in setting joint measures to avoid potential conflicts between different uses and space competition especially future wind farms;
14. Promote and support the restorative aquaculture development in the region, on turbot and sturgeons, in the context of the GFCM Aquaculture Demonstrative Centres;
15. Socioeconomic assessment of fisheries for turbot, clams, sprat, piked dogfish, red mullet and rapana in both Member States.

2. Work priorities identified for each Working Group and Focus Group (where available)

Working Groups

- WG 1 – Selectivity of the fishing gear
- WG 2 – Climate change effects in fisheries and impact on biodiversity
- WG 3 - Small scale fishery, recreational fishery and mitigation of the IUU
- WG 4 - Marketing of fish products. Digitalisation in fishery.
- WG 5 – Turbot, picked dogfish and rapana management plans.

Focus Groups

- FG 1- Technology transfer for a sustainable aquaculture as an opportunity to diversify the fishing activities
- FG 2- New invasive species
- FG 3 – Noise impact from human activities and military exercises in the waters of the Black Sea on pelagic and bottom species.
- FG 4 – Ghost fishing gear - opportunities for reconversion or involvement in the direction of a blue economy;
- FG 5 - Supporting measures to allow investment in fishing fleet modernization of the, guaranteeing sustainability, preventing negative environmental impacts during fishing and decarbonisation.
- FG 6 - Fishery and marine aquaculture evolution and impact of the war
- FG 7– Fisheries and aquaculture interactions with wind renewable energy sea farms - in the context of MSP

Other issues of interest if any:

1. Interinstitutional cooperation

The BISAC shall maintain close cooperation and continue to work jointly with the Commission, the European Parliament, GFCM, EFCA, EU Advisory Councils, Scientific Committees and Advisory Boards of the EU and of both Member States, Member States' Authorities, national scientific research institutes, and related projects.

2. Collaboration with scientific and research Institutes

Furthermore, the BISAC shall closely cooperate with the scientific community on issues related to discards and landing obligation, on technical measures and improvement of selectivity on bycatches of vulnerable species. BISAC will also facilitate on its capacity the BlackSea4Fish project.

3. Collaboration with other ACs

In 2024, BISAC will retake their activity to enhance the exchange of experience with other advisory councils through visits, common meetings and actions.

The BISAC shall focus on these issues within its planned meetings and shall build up on the achievements of the working groups.

Planned recommendations for year 2024:

No	Issue/subject	Link with the CFP	WG/FG at the origin of the recommendation	Planned date of adoption
1	Fleet modernisation, decarbonisation and sustainability	(33) Member States should promote responsible fishing by providing incentives to those operators who fish in the least environmentally damaging way and who provide the greatest benefits for society.	FG 5 - Supporting measures to allow investment in fishing fleet modernization of the, guaranteeing sustainability, preventing negative environmental impacts during fishing and decarbonisation.	March
2	Efficiency and impact of the state aid, needs and challenges of the fishery sector	Art 2, p5. (f) contribute to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities, bearing in mind coastal fisheries and socio-economic aspects;	FG 6 - Fishery and marine aquaculture evolution in pandemic and war years	March
3	Aquaculture needs and challenges in the Black Sea	Art 2. (e) promote the development of sustainable Union aquaculture activities to contribute to food supplies and security and employment;	FG 1 - Technology transfer for a sustainable aquaculture as an opportunity to diversify the fishing activities	April
4	Small Scale fishery challenges and data collection, recreational fishery registration regimes. Mitigation of IUU in the Black Sea.	Art 7. Measures for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources	WG 3 - Small scale fishery, recreational fishery and mitigation of the IUU	May
5	Fishing sector involvement in ghost gear mitigation to reduce bycatch.	Art 7. Measures for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources	FG 4 – Ghost fishing gear - opportunities for reconversion or involvement in the direction of a blue economy	May

6	Improvement of selectivity and needs for gear modernisation. Reduce impact on vulnerable species.	Art7, (e) reducing the environmental impact of fishing, including through measures to improve the selectivity of fishing gears.	WG 1 – Selectivity of the fishing gear	July
7	Sea space use and reconciliation between traditional activities with emerging ones	Art2, p5. (f) contribute to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities, bearing in mind coastal fisheries and socio-economic aspects;	FG 7– Fisheries and aquaculture interactions with wind renewable energy sea farms - in the context of MSP	October
8	Turbot, picked dogfish and rapana management	Art 1, p1. (a) the conservation of marine biological resources and the management of fisheries and fleets exploiting such resources;	WG 5– Turbot, picked dogfish and rapana management plans.	October
9	Noise impact assessment and opportunities for mitigation	Art2, p5. (f) contribute to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities, bearing in mind coastal fisheries and socio-economic aspects;	FG 3 – Noise impact from human activities and military exercises in the waters of the Black Sea on pelagic and bottom species.	December

Planned participation to Commission public consultations

Topic/subject	Link with the CFP	Deadline for the EU Survey (if available)	Planned date for adoption (if available)
According to the EC calendar and BISAC topics of interest		-	-

BISAC planning of meetings

BISAC PLANNING OF MEETINGS (from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024)

No	Date	Topics /subjects of meeting	Type of meeting	EC participati	If EC participati on requested, specific issues to be dealt with	Priority for EC participati
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1.	21.02.2024	FG 5 - Supporting measures to allow investment in fishing fleet modernization of the, guaranteeing sustainability, preventing negative environmental impacts during fishing and decarbonisation.	hybrid	yes	New FG for BISAC	1
2	21.02.2024	FG 6 - Fishery and marine aquaculture evolution and impact of the war	hybrid	yes	Impact of the pandemic and war on fishery and aquaculture evolution, efficiency of the state aid	1
	22.02.2024	Executive committee	hybrid	yes	Presentation of an audit certificate for the performed audit for 2023, final activity report for 2023	1
4	26.03.2024	FG 1 - Technology transfer for a sustainable aquaculture as an opportunity to diversify the fishing activities	hybrid	yes	Opportunities for marine aquaculture, permits and sustainability	2
5	27.03.2024	FG 2- New invasive species	hybrid	yes	Updates on the evolution of research in the field of new invasive species, their impact and potential.	3
6	28.03.2024	General assembly meeting	hybrid	no	Approval on 2023 audit, final activity report, updated list of members.	
7	23.04.2024	WG 3 - Small scale fishery, recreational fishery and mitigation of the IUU	online	yes	Challenges for SSF, fishing gears/techniques, legal framework, national licencing or registration regimes, catch reporting, interaction with commercial fisheries, recommendations.	2

8	24.04.2024	FG 4 – Ghost fishing gear - opportunities for reconversion or involvement in the direction of a blue economy	online	yes	New WG for BISAC	2
9	30-31.05.2024	European maritime day	Svendborg, Denmark			
10	11.06.2024	WG 1 – Selectivity of the fishing gear	online	yes	Future fishing gear changes in the Black Sea, updates from GFCM, EU and researchers	1
11	12.06.2024	WG 2 – Climate change effects in fisheries and impact on biodiversity	online	yes	Climate change effects on fisheries in the Black Sea, challenges, continuation of the previous year's work	2
12	17.09.2024	FG 7 – Fisheries and aquaculture interactions with wind renewable energy sea farms - in the context of MSP	hybrid	yes	Sea space planning and multi-use. Reconciling traditional activities with emerging ones	1
13	17.09.2024	WG 5 – Turbot, picked dogfish and rapana management plans.	hybrid	yes	Discuss new measures, pressures etc	2
14.	18.09.2024	Executive Committee	hybrid	yes	Preparation of GA, presentation of activities in 2024, Proposals for 2025	3
15	15.10.2024	General Assembly meeting	hybrid	yes	Adoption of the WP for 2025, adoption of the budget proposal for 2025	2
16	16.10.2024	WG 4 - Marketing of fish products. Digitalisation in fishery.	hybrid	yes	Opportunities for certification of fish products and increase competitiveness and EU level visibility.	2
17	20.11.2024	FG 3 – Noise impact from human activities and military exercises in the waters of the Black Sea on pelagic and bottom species.	hybrid	yes	New WG for BISAC	2

18		47th annual session of GFCM	Planned			
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*(from 1 to 4) (1= highest priority)