



NEWS FROM THE DECK

The monthly newsletter of the

Low Impact Fishers of Europe

July 2016

MAIN NEWS OF THE MONTH

The Low Impact Fishers of Europe meet with Commissioner Karmenu Vella



On the 7th of July LIFE Director for the Med Christian Decugis, LIFE Executive Director Jerry Percy and LIFE staff met with Commissioner Vella and his staff during a meeting that lasted an hour and a half and focused on the way forward for small-scale fisheries (SSFs), in particular in the Med.

Among the topics discussed were the recognition that SSF issues need to be specifically included in policies and regulations; SSF participation in decision-making, including with the help of LIFE [the Director offered especial thanks to the Commissioner for the introduction of the amended Regulation recognising the need for focused SSF representation at Executive Committee level within the AC's]; the importance of regionalisation; a fairer distribution of the quota of Bluefin tuna and access for artisanal fishers to the resource; the urgent need for improvements in SSF data collection and the importance of small-scale fishers to generate local revenue.

The EU Commissioner recognized the importance of having the official platform of LIFE to represent the voice of the sector and to increase cooperation between LIFE and the EU Commission to improve the status of stocks and put the SSF fisheries sector back on track.

The Baltic Members of LIFE meet to develop an Action Plan for the Region

On the 20th member organizations of LIFE in the Baltic (Poland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden) and LIFE staff gathered in Gdynia, Poland. Through robust and far reaching discussions the meeting agreed LIFE's overarching strategic approach to the challenges faced by members there. Main topics on the agenda: Western Baltic Cod situation & measures in the form of an Action Plan, 2017 ICES scientific advice for other stocks (Eastern Baltic Cod, Sprat, Herring), as well as newly adopted and proposed regulations from Brussels and upcoming meetings of BSAC and BALTFISH.



The meeting also provided an opportunity for member organizations to meet with LIFE's EU funded Baltic and North Sea Coordinator - Marcin Rucinski. The following day LIFE members went to meet the Sea Fisheries Institute staff (www.mir.gdynia.pl). Polish scientists are very keen to find ways to help the small-scale sector by providing support on several issues, including: poor availability of cod in the coastal zone, damage to catches by seals and incidental catch of seabirds in gillnets. Both parties agreed that preservation and development of SSCF is key to retaining the traditional social fabric of local maritime communities.

Additional relevant information on the Baltic Region can also be found in the BSAC newsletter of July at <http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/Home/Message9.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

OTHER NEWS FROM AROUND THE EU

✚ The Low Impact Fishers of Europe have recently been granted funds by the European Commission to provide additional support to the low impact small-scale fleet working in the Baltic and North Sea. The first step of the two-years project has been recruiting a new member of staff. After a tough selection process, Marcin Ruciński has been selected by the Board of Directors to become **the new Baltic and North Sea Coordinator** starting 1st of July! Learn more about him in our welcome interview: <http://lifeplatform.eu/meet-marcin-rucinski-lifes-new-baltic-north-coordinator/>

✚ On the 11th LIFE Brussels' staff met with **Ruža Tomašić, a Member of the European Parliament from Croatia**. Mrs Tomašić participates in the Fisheries Committee and was responsible for an "own initiative" report on "Innovation and Diversification of Small-Scale coastal fishing in fisheries-dependent regions (2015/2090(INI))", which was adopted as a resolution by the European Parliament (<http://lifeplatform.eu/european-parliament-calls-regional-approach-small-scale-fisheries/>).

Mrs Tomasic's objectives are to rationalise the way that fisheries are managed in Croatia; to establish a reliable system of recording fish catching data; to promote a proper and effective system of control and respect for the law. LIFE staff and her office will continue to cooperate in the near future to improve the working conditions of the sector in Croatia and more widely in the Med.

✚ On the 15th LIFE Brussels' staff attended the **Seminar on "Fish Stocks and the Economics of Fishing Fleets."** organized by the European Commission. The event was attended by stakeholders of the sector with the presence of EU Commissions' representatives, including Commissioner Karmenu Vella. A series of presentation by scientific bodies ICES and STECF showed the current status of fish stocks. Results highlighted that there are generally positive trends, with the exception of the Mediterranean where there is a big problem with scientific advice and the need for a permanent set of key stocks to be evaluated every year. For the small scale fleet, STECF report shows declines in profitability from 2008 to 2013, but with some improvements in 2014, mainly due to fuel cost reductions.

✚ At the request of a number of fisher organisations in Croatia the **Executive Director Jerry Percy together with LIFE's Med coordinator spent three days in Croatia**, from the 11th to the 14th, meeting with a range of fishermen, their representatives and officials in order to more clearly understand the challenges and opportunities facing coastal fishers in the Country. The hospitality of the Croatian people was overwhelming and it is clear that they face many of the same issues in the Adriatic as in the wider Mediterranean. Everyone they met was keen to engage with LIFE and our team came away from the visit with yet more challenges for LIFE to work at in collaboration with small scale fishers to overcome the challenges and how to maximise the opportunities.



✚ On return from the Croatian visit Jerry Percy stopped off in London to meet with and provide a presentation to a range of **Portuguese NGOs hosted by the Gulbenkian Foundation**. The aims and aspirations of the NGO group meshed with those of LIFE in relation to recognition and support of coastal fisheries in Portugal and LIFE looks forward to developing a closer and positive working relationship with both the NGOs and the Foundation.

✚ With an ever increasing interest in the socio-economic aspects of small scale fishing, on the 15th Jerry Percy was **interviewed** at length by a German academic researching successful leadership elements within our sector.

✚ On the 22nd Jerry Percy attended a meeting of the UK based initiative to **develop a Coastal Producer Organisation** for the English under 10 metre sector, involving LIFE member organisation NUTFA. The project has gained EMFF support in order to run a series of consultation meetings with relevant fishers around the English coast to ensure a genuinely bottom up approach to this important initiative.

✚ From the 23rd to the 26 LIFE staff went to Sicily (Italy) to help the fishers of the Associazione Pescatori



di Pantelleria during the **gastronomic event "Fair of the Traditions"** organized by the local fishing community with the support of LIFE. The event has been a success, with participants from all over Italy and abroad. The fishers and their wives set up an outdoor kitchen and spent Saturday cooking and serving delicious dishes with less known (but not less appreciated!) local species. LIFE staff rolled up their sleeves to help: from handing out leaflets to the public to helping out in the kitchen! The event was followed on the Sunday evening by an internal meeting to discuss the way forward to support the community, in particular by setting up a processing plant with EMFF funds and creating a Marine Protected Area.

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

The Danish Association Foreningen for Skånsomt Kystfiskeri (FSK) launches its new website

On the 13 of July FSK staff announced the launch of their new website. The on-line platform contains information on the association, its members and sponsors, but most of all a brand new section dedicated to the latest news relevant to the sector in Denmark and in Europe, including the work carried out in **cooperation with the Low Impact Fishers of Europe** on Baltic and North Sea issues. The website is available at <http://skaansomtkystfiskeri.dk/>

The French Platform of Artisanal Fishers (PPPAF) concerned with the future of the sea bass fishery

In June 2016 ICES issued a scientific advice of **zero catch for the bass fishery** in 2017. Such a cut would be a disaster for the liners of the Brittany region. For years the local association denounced unselective practices implemented by the pelagic fishery to the detriment of the resource and the small-scale fleet. PPPAF asks for a fair allocation of the fishing rights and continues lobbying with LIFE and its members of the UK and the Netherlands for the correct and sustainable management of the resource. More information on the fight of PPPAF is available in their Press Release <http://www.plateforme-petite-peche.fr/?p=440>

The Artisanal fishermen of Spain launch an on-line petition for a fairer allocation of fishing quotas

Hundreds of polyvalent small-scale fishers in the Mediterranean who for centuries fished Bluefin tuna are excluded from the quota system. A group of fishers, including LIFE members Pescartes and ADPAM, are taking action via a petition to demand that their Government reviews the system of quota according to Article 17 of the CFP, that requires that member states use “transparent and objective criteria, including those of an environmental, social, and economic nature when allocating fishing opportunities”. Support the sector and **sign the petition** at <https://goo.gl/QeXWAb>

NEW MEMBERS ON BOARD

In addition to the members who joined since the beginning of 2016, the following organisations officially became part of LIFE this month:

✚ Kesälahti Fish Base Cooperative and Snowchange Cooperative (Finland)



The Kesälahti cooperative represents 7 professional fishermen working on 4 vessels. They practice seining on Lake Puruvesi, in the province of Eastern **Finland**. Among the aims of the Cooperative is ensuring benefits for the local fishers **practising winter seining and using pots**. The Cooperative is part of a bigger network, the Snowchange Cooperative, that supports small-scale fishing communities based in the Arctic, especially in Alaska, Finnish Lapland and Siberia. More information can be found on:

www.snowchange.org and <http://www.lumi.fi/puruveden-muikku/> ; Welcome to LIFE to this small but active community!

✚ Sveriges Yrkesfiskares Ekonomiska Förening (SYEF – Sweden)



SYEF represents the interests of 25 fishers, working on under 10 meters' vessels and fishing for **cod, herring, turbot and other species**. The aim of the Association is to ensure the interests of its members nationally and within the European Union, to promote cooperation between coastal fishermen in Sweden and to provide services to ensure the delivery of high quality products. LIFE is delighted to include **Sweden** among its members!

This Newsletter is a simple snapshot of our external activities. In addition, the LIFE staff in the UK, Brussels, Poland and Spain respond to a vast range of queries related to our sector and continuously develop and promulgate policies related to small scale, low impact fishing and fisheries.

Our Regional Directors, all working small scale fishers also promote the values and benefits of coastal fishing.

Would you like some additional information on a specific event, project or initiative? Don't hesitate to contact us at communications@lifeplatform.eu or follow us on Facebook on Low Impact Fishers of Europe or on Twitter on @LIFEplatformEU