



NEWS FROM THE DECK

The monthly newsletter of the

Low Impact Fishers of Europe

March 2017

MAIN NEWS

✚ LIFE and AKTEA in the spotlight at the Ministerial Conference on Mediterranean Fisheries in Malta

After the political initiative launched in Catania (February 2016) and in Brussels (April 2016), the EU took a step further for the recovery of the Mediterranean by proposing a Ministerial Declaration on sustainable fisheries to all Mediterranean countries around the basin. The Declaration sets the work in the Region for the next 10 years on critical issues such as small-scale fisheries, fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and data collection among other things. All concerned recognise that it is an ambitious plan given the short deadline (2020) to reach some of these key objectives. In this framework, LIFE actively participated in the meeting organized by Commissioner Vella **“Empowering small-scale fishermen in the Mediterranean as actors of ecological, social and economic sustainability”** held in Malta on the 29th as a **side-event to the Ministerial Conference** (taking place the following day, where all Ministries signed the official declaration). The event provided an opportunity for Christian Decugis, LIFE Director for the Med, and Katia Frangoudes, spokesperson for AKTEA (LIFE’s partner “women in fisheries” network) to speak on co-managed MPAs and on the role of women. Commissioner Vella posed the rhetorical question to LIFE “do we truly believe that all small scale fishers [ssf] are low impact?”. He partially answered his own question by highlighting that even if the small-scale represent over 80% of the fleet they only contribute 20% of the catch, thus demonstrating a much lower impact than larger scale fisheries. More information:



<https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/inseparable/en/medfish4ever#quicktabs-medfish4ever=6>

✚ Small-scale representation increases in the Baltic Sea Advisory Council as three members of LIFE attend the subgroup on Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM)



The 1st meeting of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council [BSAC] subgroup on Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM), held in Copenhagen (Denmark) on 28/3, was attended by the representatives of **three LIFE Member Organizations**: Bengt Larsson and Stefan Smalander (SYEF, Sweden), Hanne Lyng Winter (FSK, Denmark), Wolfgang Albrecht (Fischereischutzverband Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), along with LIFE staff. The agenda of this well-attended meeting comprised i.a.: the concept of EBFM, the BSAC position on Marine Protected Areas, where a lively discussion on the added value of spawning closures was held,

as well as a very interesting presentation by the CEO of www.plasticchange.org. Based on a request put forward by SYEF and carefully elaborated in cooperation with LIFE staff, the group spent most of the afternoon session discussing the **interaction between seals and fishers**, with special attention to the difficult situation of small-scale fishers. The well-known differences in approach to this delicate matter between various stakeholders have surfaced; however, there was agreement that work should continue to better understand and address this situation in multiple local contexts of the Baltic Sea, with clear and strong preference for non-violent solutions. LIFE is at the forefront of the debate in terms of ensuring that everyone who has an interest on the subject is provided with the opportunity to contribute to a balanced and honest search for solutions.

OTHER NEWS FROM AROUND THE EU

1/3 London (UK) – LIFE’s Executive Director Jerry Percy attended an event **‘The Oceans Around Us’** organized by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch). The inclusive meeting of minds considered issues around “Sensing: Why do you value the ocean, individually and collectively? Observing: What are interesting examples of collaborating to communicate the value of the ocean? Mapping: How do existing collaborations relate to each other? What hypotheses and messages are emerging?” A worthwhile and interesting meeting where the Director was able to provide pragmatic comments from ‘the coal face’.






7/3 Brussels (Belgium) – Marian Harkin MEP and LIFE organised a **screening in the European Parliament of the film “A Turning Tide in the Life of Man”**. A number of invitees from European institutions (Commission, Parliament, Permanent Representations, European Economic and Social Committee, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions), academia, NGOs, fishers, and others turned up for the event, including John O’Brien whose story the film tells, and the producer Loic Jourdain. The film was especially appreciated by Irish Parliamentarians, who committed themselves to supporting the struggles of LIFE members to gain privileged access to resources around their shores. More information in the press review at the end of this newsletter.



9/3 Hamburg (Germany) – Wolfgang Albrecht, LIFE Director from Germany, and LIFE staff have taken part in a **seminar on the implementation of the Landing Obligation in the Baltic Sea, organized by the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC), the German BALTFISH Presidency and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)**. The 3rd year of application of the Landing Obligation means more inspections at sea, including those coordinated by EFCA. Many of those are aimed at the demersal trawl fishery, since the risk of unwanted by-catch and discards of undersized cod in this fishery, has been labelled as “high” by Agency officers. The inspection approach elaborated in the Baltic is to serve as inspiration for other European seas. Replying to the BSAC ExCom chair, Wolfgang confirmed a widespread view that small-scale fleets using low impact gears note very little unwanted by-catch in the Baltic. More information on this very interesting meeting is available here <http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BALTFISH-BSAC-EFCA-Workshop-on-implementation-of-t>

11/3 Šibenik (Croatia) - LIFE Staff and members from Ireland (Seamus Bonner and Enda Conneely from IIMRO) attended a **fisheries conference in Croatia organized by Eurodeputy Ruža Tomašić**. The well attended meeting included three working sessions: on mobile gears (trawling and purse seining), on small

scale fisheries, and on subsistence fisheries. According to comments from Croatian representatives, EU membership has both helped and hindered fisheries sustainability in Croatia. Hindered because prior to accession, rules and regulations were effective but the CFP weakened these; and helped because, it has highlighted a huge gap in policy and lack of infrastructure. Clearly, a lot of effort is needed to place Croatian fisheries on a sustainable footing, not the least of which is to move from a centrally planned administration, to a more democratically based and proactive engagement between autonomous fisher organizations and government.

-  14/3 London (UK) – LIFE’s Executive Director Jerry Percy supported one of LIFE’s UK member organisations at a high-level meeting with Government officials. A range of issues were discussed including the ongoing **development of a Coastal Producer Organisation** for the English small scale fishing sector [a blueprint also taken up by our Irish colleagues] and the implications for this sector related to Brexit.
-  14/3 Gdynia (Poland) – Representatives from Polish LIFE Member Organizations Śródkowopomorska, Darłowska and Mierzeja, along with LIFE staff, held a technical meeting in preparation of a **large EMFF-funded project aimed at removing ghost nets** and marine litter from coastal zones by small-scale boats. The meeting also served as an opportunity to prepare activities to increase the added value fishers can receive for their catch, as well as a useful and timely exchange of best practice on **seal-proof fishing gears**.
-  15-19/3 Lorient (France) – LIFE staff attended the 9th Annual film festival “Pêcheurs du Monde/Fishers from the World”, in Lorient, Brittany. This unique event is possibly **the only film festival in the world exclusively dedicated to the world of fishers, fishing and fisheries**. As well as providing insights and perspectives into the world of fishing, the event provides an opportunity for those engaged in the sector to meet, interact and debate key economic, social, cultural, political and ecological issues that affect the sector with citizens, NGOs, artists and academia. For more information see: <http://www.pecheursdumonde.org/>
-  22-24/3 Galicia (Spain)- Best practice exchange is a key activity of LIFE, allowing members to learn more on a variety of topics of interest to them. LIFE members from Ireland (IIMRO), Dr. Ruth Brennan (a social ecologist with a background in law, specialising in MPAs) and LIFE staff went to Galicia to meet with the fishermen engaged in the *Os Miñarzos* project and **learn more on protected inshore areas for small scale fisheries**. This project aims to expand a relatively small area of fishing reserve to some 2,000 hectares of internal waters, including 8 Cofradías, in North West Spain. Since it was initiated in the early 2000’s, the *Os Miñarzos* project has gained considerable experience in how fishers can engage with politicians, civil servants, and scientists in the co-management of inshore fishing areas. LIFE’s Irish members were keen to know how it could be applied around the Irish islands.
-  26-27/3 La Valletta (Malta) - LIFE staff and Director for the Med Christian Decugis took part in the Mediterranean Advisory Council. The first day was dedicated to the **Landing Obligation (LO)** for small pelagics; the “*Proposal for a Regulation establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks*” (COM 2017 97 def.) and the “*Delegated Regulation discards plan of some demersal fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea (Reg. 2017/86)*”. On this last topic, a list of vessels subject to the LO will be provided by each Member State. LIFE believes that most boats on the list will be gillnetters rather than trawlers, leaving unclear if the new regulation will be appropriate to tackle the needed reduction of discards. The following day, two Focus Groups **on the Western Mediterranean and on the Strait of Sicily** were held. Much of the discussions focussed on the best models for management (i.a. TAC or effort control). LIFE did an intervention to state that a TAC system, especially for multispecies demersal fisheries, would not be effective and that the MEDAC should work on a robust alternative, e.g. following the example of the new co-management plan established by the

Cataluña Region within which co-management is central. A DG Mare representative emphasised that management measures needed to be backed up by effective control measures for the Strait of Sicily, and that a new “highly effective control mechanism was to be applied, providing a real-time picture of fishing activities in the area, to crack down on IUU fishing”. More info on the Regulation for Discards: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32017R0086>

- ✚ 27/3 Malaga (Spain) – LIFE’s Executive Director **Jerry Percy met with a variety of organisations pursuing projects related to marine protected areas** and allied sustainability based initiatives funded primarily by the MAVA Foundation. Again, the Director was able to bring a pragmatic and common sense approach to the discussions, underpinned by LIFE’s extensive knowledge and experience on a pan European basis.

- ✚ 29/3 Warsaw (Poland) – Following several months of contacts and friendly negotiations, LIFE staff and the vice president of Poland’s National Chamber of Gastronomy and Catering (KRGiC) have signed a



framework agreement, declaring the will to cooperate with each other in order to assure the **supply of fish caught by LIFE Members to KRGiC Members**, respecting the practical aspects of small-scale low impact fishers’ work, such as seasonality and dependence on the weather. The agreement also foresees activities aimed at elaborating the meal standards based on fish supplied by LIFE Members and promotion of products they provide. A lot of work lies ahead of us in implementation!

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

- ✚ **LIFE representative from Sweden makes the voice of the small scale sector heard at a high-level Congress**

7/3 Stockholm (Sweden) – Bengt Larsson from Sveriges Yrkesfiskares Ekonomiska Förening (SYEF) presented the road from quantity-based to quality-based fisheries at a **Baltic Sea Future Congress, a high-level event where the improvement of the Baltic Sea environment** and business opportunities related to it were discussed. Bengt informed the participants of his direct sales system through the site www.fiskonline.se, shared his views on the main fish stocks’ situation in the Baltic Sea, pointing to lack of food for cod, and underlined the benefits of using low-impact static gears. More information on the event here <http://www.balticseafuture.org> , and Bengt’s presentation is available here http://www.balticseafuture.org/~media/files/baltic_sea_summit/bengt-larsson.pdf

- ✚ **LIFE members from Italy describe small-scale fisheries to students**

13-17/3 Pantelleria (Italy) - LIFE members Associazione Pescatori di Pantelleria (Italy) in cooperation with the Association Marevivo **organized a project involving a number of children from primary school** to explain to them the important role played by the small-scale fishers on the island. The students had the opportunity to meet with local fishers and to learn more on sustainable fisheries. A wide range of topics was discussed such as traditional gears, seasons,



minimum conservation reference sizes, and threats to biodiversity. The fishers showed traditional gears and fishing boats, as well as posters with fish species, that allowed the children to get a practical experience and to learn how to contribute, in their turn, to the protection of the sea. More information in this video produced by the project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EEoY0-WXws&feature=youtu.be>

Members from Cyprus release a video documenting their daily activity

27/3 Zygi (Cyprus) – LIFE member from Cyprus, Zygi Fishermen Association, produced and released a short video to show to other **European members and to the public their daily activity at sea and in the port**. The video shows how they set their nets, untangle local species, and fish for cephalopod molluscs such as octopus. They asked LIFE to support them in the dissemination, and it has been made available on LIFE's Facebook and Twitter pages, website and Youtube channel so do not hesitate to watch it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udis9seGMvE>



WELCOME ON BOARD

In addition to the members who joined since the beginning of 2017, the following organisation officially became part of LIFE this month:

Wolińskie Stowarzyszenie Rybaków (Wolin Fishers' Association - Poland)



LIFE has the pleasure to welcome new members from Wolin Fishers' Association from Poland! Counting 60 boats and 78 fishers, the Association is active in Poland's Western Pomeranian region, in particular in small-scale fishing harbours of Niechorze, Rewal and Wolin; some Members also originate from Szczecin Lagoon and Świnoujście. They mostly fish with gillnets, hooks and lines, as well as a few small Danish seines. They target herring,

cod, flatfish, salmonids, garfish, as well as various freshwater species, selling their catch to wholesalers and restaurants. Wolin Fishers' Association engages in many local activities related to fish and fisheries, such as tourism and sports, and is also active in "Zalew Szczeciński" Fisheries Local Action Group [FLAG]. They work proactively with national fisheries authorities of all levels.

PRESS REVIEW

Please find below a selection of news on LIFE's screening in the EU Parliament

<http://www.mediahq.com/story/marianharkinmep/175173/case-for-small-scale-fishermen-made-in-brussels.html> (english)

<http://www.inshore-ireland.com/News/the-future-of-irish-island-communities.html>. (english)

<http://lifeplatform.eu/7739/> (english)

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