



NEWS FROM THE DECK

The monthly newsletter of the

Low Impact Fishers of Europe

May 2017

MAIN NEWS

✚ Latest report by the European Court of Auditors confirms lack of transparency in the allocation of fishing opportunities

LIFE's Deputy Director Brian O'Riordan attended the launch of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) special report on "EU fisheries controls: more efforts needed" that took place in Brussels on the 30th of May. Available in 23 languages, the ECA report highlights two key issues for small scale fisheries (SSFs). First and foremost, that small-scale fishers fall short in providing catch data to the authorities. Secondly the system for allocating fishing opportunities through Producer Organizations lacks transparency and increases the risk of favouring "specific interests of certain economic operators at the expense of others". Full report: <http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=41459>



✚ LIFE members from Finland, France, Denmark and LIFE staff as ambassadors of European small-scale fisheries at the event organized by Slow Food in Genoa (Italy)

LIFE members and staff spent three days at the international event 'Slow Fish' held from the 18th to the 22nd of May. The event **gathered small-scale fishers' community representatives from all over the world**, including North and South America, northern and southern Europe and Africa. LIFE members, staff and supporters actively participated in workshops, film screenings, debates, best practices exchange and EU-funded seminars. They explained the work carried out by their respective fishing communities to ensure



viable fisheries and the number of benefits they experienced in being part of the pan-European platform that is LIFE. In addition, LIFE's Executive Director and Communications Officer held a workshop addressed to the stakeholders of the sector to discuss together the policy needed in the EU for small-scale fishers and to better inform the

future work to be carried out at all institutional levels. Outcomes and recommendations stemming from the debate are summarized here: <http://lifeplatform.eu/lifes-workshop-slow-fish-2017-main-outcomes/>.

OTHER NEWS FROM AROUND THE EU

7-11/5, Lipari (Italy) – Upon invitation of the Blue Marine Foundation, an environmental organization, LIFE's Executive Director and Med Coordinator travelled to the island of Lipari, in southern Italy. The field trip included a series of formal and informal meetings with local small-scale fishers, NGOs and authorities. It allowed LIFE staff to get a better **understanding of the local reality and challenges**, including: undesired interactions with dolphins, lack of diversification of SSFs activities stemming from restrictions for tuna and swordfish, need for marketing strategies coordinated among the different cooperatives, etc. Fishers highlighted many projects and aspirations (including a management plan designed by themselves) while LIFE staff laid the foundations for potential future cooperation.



08/5 Malta - Alicia Said, LIFE's Project Manager for Malta, met the Mediterranean Culinary Academy (MCA) which is looking at extending its profile by designing courses to educate diverse audiences on how to cook underutilized and sustainably-caught fish. The MCA also plans to open a restaurant that will respond to the concept of slow food. To reach their objectives, they need locally-sourced and sustainably caught fish and this is why they want **to establish a partnership with Maltese SSFs**. Alicia informed them about the role of LIFE and said that Maltese fishers will surely benefit from a market that diversifies their local products. Potential cooperation ahead.

10/05 Malta - Alicia Said met the Maltese Environmental Resource Authority (ERA) to discuss the implementation of national marine protected areas (MPAs). While complementing ERA for engaging in a nation-wide consultation exercise, Alicia highlighted the importance of **reaching out to fishers and to identify the heterogeneity that exists across the Maltese fishing segments**. She explained that although marine protected areas are important to protect habitats, they must not come to the detriment of the livelihoods of the small-scale fishers and that reaching a consensus with fishers is a necessary step to reach conservation objectives and for the successful implementation of co-managed MPAs.

10-11/5 Porto (Portugal) – LIFE's Deputy Director Brian O'Riordan participated in the review of French consultant Benoît Guerin's project funded by DG Mare to investigate the representation of small-scale fishers by formal organizations in the area covered by the South-Western Waters AC (SWWAC/ CCS). He also attended the Traditional Fisheries working group of the SWWAC/ CCS (<http://cc-sud.eu/index.php/fr/agenda-du-ccsud/item/groupe-de-travail-traditionnel-2>). Guerin's Report highlighted that, compared to larger scale fisheries, and based on numbers of vessels, at first glance small-scale fishers were underrepresented. However, considering the low contribution small-scale make to fish landings, it could be argued that they are overrepresented in local and national structures. Guerin described the **historic exemptions accorded to small-scale fisheries in European and national level regulations as a "poisoned chalice"**, in as much as this has resulted in a lack of data and knowledge about the sector, and the absence of small-scale fishers in EU structures, such as Producer Organizations.

16/5 United Kingdom - LIFE's Executive Director Jeremy Percy presented a Paper on 'LIFE in European MPA's' to an international marine **environmental conference** in the UK. The organisers have now asked that the well-received paper be written up as a book chapter for a forthcoming publication.

16-17/5 Brussels (Belgium) LIFE's Deputy Director and Communications Officer attended the **Market Advisory Council (MAC) Executive Committee and Working Groups 1-3**. The MAC is the newest Advisory

Council, and LIFE is both a member of the Executive Committee and the three working groups that cover production, EU market, and regulatory aspects.

17/5 London (UK) - At the invitation of the Open Seas Trust, LIFE's Executive Director Jeremy Percy attended their meeting as an advisor focusing on the elements of inshore fishing activity, **the interaction between mobile and passive gears** and the need for fair and balanced regulation that seeks to minimize damage to the marine environment and protect and maximize the socio-economic aspects of coastal fishing activities.

17-18/5 Brussels (Belgium) – Marcin Rucinski, LIFE's Baltic and North Sea Coordinator, participated in a workshop organized by Pew Trusts on the **future of the relative stability** principle. Two days of lively discussions among leading scientific experts, administration, fisheries and NGOs have shown that, for all its resilience over the last 30-odd years, this basic (if disliked by many) Common Fisheries Policy principle will be subject to at least two strong additional pressures – effects of climate change on fish stocks and Brexit. While in Brussels, Marcin also used the opportunity to hold a friendly meeting with the Farnet team responsible for the Baltic Sea, which has shown that our priorities in the region converge to a large extent and there's important scope for closer cooperation.

26/5 Warsaw (Poland) - LIFE staff got in touch with Matilda Valman from the Stockholm's University's Resilience Centre to discuss **Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management**. Growing in popularity in the Baltic Sea region, this all-encompassing management principle requires that small-scale fisheries' priorities and problems are properly communicated to managers and other stakeholders in the process. We know all-too-well that in the past our sector has been "under the regulatory radar", much to its detriment when decisions are made. There is perhaps a scope for more concrete input into the University's research on the topic from LIFE and member organizations.

30-31/5 London (UK) – In a busy but productive two days, LIFE's Executive Director met with **the Board members of the Coastal Producer Organisation [CPO], Pesky Fish and LIFE's Deputy Director and Coordinator for the Mediterranean:**

- The CPO is a groundbreaking initiative to support the development of a specifically **small-scale Producer Organisation for the ten metre and under sector** of the English fishing fleet with the aim of giving those fishermen more control and influence on the way that the quota pool is managed. The model that has been developed has already been used as the basis for a similar initiative in Ireland and has created interest further afield.
- Pesky Fish is an exciting project to significantly **reduce the length of the supply chain for small scale operators** in the UK by developing a logistics system that can effectively sell fish as soon as it hits the deck rather than wait for it to be landed from day boats. This not only gives fishermen far more certainty with regard to prices but also provides retailers and the food service sector with the chance to buy fish of the very highest quality in a straightforward and transparent way. This in turn allows Pesky to pay a much higher rate for fish whilst maintain a workable profit margin. Like the CPO example above, this model will provide a format for replication across Europe where fishermen do not benefit as much as they could and should from their efforts.
- The Mediterranean is in trouble, deep trouble and this has been recognized by a range of institutions, not least the European Commission who recently launched their "Medfish4ever" campaign to develop and implement an effective management plan for the area. LIFE is already having a positive impact with a highly proactive and experienced Mediterranean Coordinator ably backed up by the rest of the LIFE team. LIFE's two Directors, together with the Med Coordinator met **to thrash out the shape and extent of what is going to be an extensive and impactful project covering a range of Mediterranean issues** based on a cooperative co-management approach at regional, national and European levels to

ensure a holistic remedy to at least some of the ills that currently beset this sea. LIFE contends that it will only be via an all-embracing approach that genuinely engages with the 80% of the Med fishing fleet that is deemed to be small scale that real and lasting change will be possible.

31/5 – 1/6 Jastrzębia Góra (Poland) – LIFE staff attended the 22nd Scientific Conference of Freshwater Fishermen. The meeting served as an opportunity to **screen the film describing the work of LIFE members from Finland on Puruvesi lake** and their responses to the challenges facing the profession, such as effects of climate change and market challenges, to which they responded by i.a. obtaining a Protected Geographical Indication for their main target species, Vendace. LIFE's work was also presented to the conference, with elevated interest from participants and many questions.

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

✚ **Members from Catalonia contribute to innovative co-management scheme with new multi-stakeholders' committees and extra fishing days for low impact vessels.**

02/05 Barcelona (Spain) - The Catalan member organizations of LIFE provided their input to **a new Decree for managing professional fisheries in their region**. They analyzed the draft and provided their contribution to the local Directorate General for Fisheries. LIFE welcomes this Decree that is innovative, timely and fully in line with the needs of the sector. It will allow resources to be regulated through management plans considering environmental, social and economic sustainability (in line with the demands of the current CFP) and, most and foremost, articulate a co-management scheme involving stakeholders in the design and implementation, thus leading to a shared responsibility on marine resources and effective public policies. More information about the Decree in this article by Sergi Tudela: <http://international-view.cat/2017/05/23/its-the-governance-stupid/> (English)

✚ **LIFE NL raises awareness on the work carried out by local fishing communities**

6/5 Lauwersoog (The Netherlands) - LIFE-Netherlands attended the "Shrimp Day" where they visited the stand of Barbara Rodenburg, shellfish gatherer who runs the company Goede Vissers (the Good Fishers and sells delicious wild oysters and smoked gurnards. Willem de Waal, spokesperson of the organisation in cooperation with LIFE's Director Ger de Ruiters, gave LIFE flyers to **raise awareness about the importance of buying local and fresh sustainable products** and to explain the work of LIFE to the general public that attended the event.



✚ **LIFE voice now stronger in the Baltic Sea Advisory Council as German Director becomes member of the Executive Committee**

11/5, Stockholm (Sweden) - **Wolfgang Albrecht, LIFE's Director for Germany, has been unanimously accepted as the 26th Executive Committee member of Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)**. This important achievement hopefully starts a new chapter in Baltic Sea fisheries management – where the interests of small-scale, low impact fleets are truly recognized and taken into account. LIFE will spare no effort to assist LIFE Members who are active within BSAC in this important and daunting task. The joint General Assembly and ExCom meeting also took other decisions which are positive for small-scale, low impact fishers and allowing the ExCom to expand to 30 Members for small-scale fishers' representatives and enabling on-demand whispered interpretation at meetings.

✚ Arts Menors Costa Brava and Adpam provide their input for co-management of local archipelago

20/5 Palamós (Spain) – LIFE members of Arts Menors Costa Brava and Adpam attended an informal meeting organized by the association working for the protection of a local archipelago called “Illes Formigues”. The meeting was based on the willingness to clarify some **rumors on a potential closure of fisheries activities around the islands, a situation that concerned the fishers working in the area**. The President of the association offered to collaborate with the local fishers’ association to guarantee the interests of all the parties involved. Both Adpam and Arts Menors Costa Brava underlined their readiness to cooperate, providing their contribution for co-management in order to achieve sustainability in the area. Another topic of discussion was the FLAG recently established and the need for small-scale fishers’ organizations to join it.

✚ French small-scale fishers contest national decree on Bluefin Tuna

France - A legal case is being prepared in France by the French Platform for small-scale fisheries, the SPMLR union, some fisheries committees from the Mediterranean and LIFE to contest the French Ministerial Decree of the 10th of February 2017 establishing the criteria for **the allocation of the Bluefin Tuna** quota. This is likely to involve a lengthy procedure, but is considered a vital step towards a balanced and fair allocation of the quotas of both Bluefin tuna, and subsequently other species

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:

✚ The Federation of Fish Producers Organisations from the Danube Delta (Romania)



The Federation of Fish Producers Organisations from the Danube Delta counts 785 professional fishers, 12 small-scale associations and 3 commercial companies (family businesses in tourism and fish processing), with a **total of 834 boats**. They fish for a wide range of species, including flat-fishes, carps and mullets. They joined LIFE to make the voice of their fishers heard and contribute to the improvement of policies and legislations, including the CFP. Welcome Romania!

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