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TECHNICAL PAPER FROM THE CPMR GENERAL SECRETARIAT

THE GREEN PAPER

Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy - COM(2009)163 final

AND THE COMMUNICATION

**"Building a sustainable future for aquaculture: A new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture" - COM(2009)162 final**

1. On 22 April 2009, the European Commission published a Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The objective of this paper was to launch a public debate and gauge opinions on the future CFP. This will replace the current policy, which was designed in 2002 and will come to an end in 2012. In addition, the Commission has adopted a Communication on aquaculture entitled "Building a sustainable future for aquaculture - A new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture." Contributions to the open consultation on the Green Paper should be sent to the European Commission no later than 31 December 2009.

2. The fishing industry has always been a key feature of the identity of the member regions of the CPMR, which has devoted much time to the issue and done its utmost to participate in the European Commission's debates and initiatives. One such initiative was the Pesca-Regio project, which ran between 1996 and 2000 and was one of the actions of the interregional strand of the PESCA programme. This entailed the organisation of 14 interregional meetings to exchange experience and good practice in the fisheries field, and four thematic conferences. Another initiative was the organisation of ten conferences to launch the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) between May 2005 and February 2008.

The CPMR is currently involved in implementing Priority Axis 4 of the EFF on the sustainable development of coastal fishing areas through Far-Net (Fisheries Areas Network), which has been set up by DG MARE. Within this network, the CPMR will be responsible for planning and organising seminars and training workshops for exchanging experience and good practice, as well as yearly conferences for managers of the Axis 4 beneficiary areas.

3. To influence EU policies and promote the values to which they are attached, the member regions of the CPMR set up a working group involving its different geographical commissions (the Fisheries Intercom Group, FIG). It is the organisation's oldest working group. Aside from this intercom group, several geographical commissions have their own working groups on the subject (North Sea, Atlantic Arc and Mediterranean), while the other commissions are represented within the FIG by regions nominated by their executive secretaries.

The CPMR's positions on fisheries issues are therefore established on the basis of contributions from each geographical commission. The FIG draws up a synthesis of these, under the coordination of the General Secretariat.

Bearing in mind that the Green Paper has only recently been published and that the deadline for responses is 31 December 2009, most of the geographical commissions only drew up their contributions in mid-July 2009 (for example, the Mediterranean contribution was presented at the Intermediterranean Commission's General Assembly on 17 July and the Atlantic Arc Commission only plans to finish its contribution in mid-September 2009).

4. In order to present the CPMR General Assembly in Gothenburg with the main threads of a common position of the maritime regions on the CFP reform Green Paper, the FIG met on 8 June 2009. The meeting

identified the major options on which the CPMR should build its position. These major options, which in the main concern aspects of the future CFP, are set out in the CPMR's policy position paper on the CFP reform Green Paper. These options will be submitted for the approval of the Gothenburg General Assembly.

Bearing in mind that certain points are yet to be dealt with, including:

- o aquaculture,
- o the international dimension of the CFP. The FIG has not yet had an opportunity to give its views on the FAO's offer to give the CPMR observer status on its Committee on Fisheries,
- o an assessment of the specific fisheries issues in the Outermost Regions, which, even though they have a somewhat different system based on the compensation of additional costs, must also be included within changes to the CFP,

and that there are some points on which the geographical commissions still have differing opinions, for example the system of total allowable catches (TACs) and quotas, the FIG will have a coordination meeting on 14 September 2009 in Brussels. After this meeting the CPMR's position will be definitively agreed and submitted for the debate and approval of the General Assembly.

Drawing on the main options adopted by the General Assembly, the General Secretariat will draft the definitive version of the CPMR's position on the CFP reform Green Paper and send it to the Commission by the end of 2009.

In addition to this CPMR policy position, which will focus on the political framework the regions would like to see adopted for the CFP in future years, two other aspects should be dealt with:

- the involvement of the CPMR in transnational and interregional cooperation projects, and
- its participation in the implementation of the Far-Net network.

This paper therefore discusses:

- transnational and interregional cooperation in the fisheries field;
- the CPMR's involvement in the Far-Net network for the implementation of the EFF's Priority Axis 4.

A further paper sets out the CPMR's policy position on the member regions' major options regarding the CFP reform Green Paper.

## I. TRANSNATIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE CFP

► Transnational and interregional cooperation projects are currently mainly funded by the Interreg Programme. While fisheries issues often feature in the priority axes of the operational programmes, the results show that this type of project is either difficult to develop or focuses on interesting but limited aspects. This can mainly be explained by the fact that it is the member states that have responsibility for this area, and cooperation between stakeholders in the fisheries industry has still not achieved a critical threshold that would facilitate project development.

For example, projects supported by the Interreg IIIB Atlantic Area Programme during the 2000-2006 programming period focused on improved knowledge, enhancement or management conditions for several species such as certain shellfish (razor shells), eels and salmon, as well as the analysis of the necessary conditions for improving the management of certain coastal areas such as salt marshes, or integrated coastal zone management.

These projects were therefore mostly either very specialised or on the margins of the fishing industry proper. In the new programming period that began in 2007, there was some change in the type of projects that stakeholders in the fisheries industry wanted this cooperation instrument to fund. This change can be partly explained by the creation of regional advisory councils (RACs), which have greatly helped to create, within homogenous areas, a culture of dialogue and exchanges between people responsible for this sector.

► These changes focus on:

- exchanges of experiences and good practices concerning the preparation of fisheries management plans or the establishment of fisheries protection zones;
- the development of activities that are complementary to the production sector, with particular emphasis on tourism activities, which are of increasing economic importance in all sea basins;

- efforts to find ways of having the fishing industry participate in the debates in coastal areas on policies affecting these territories;
- practical ways of meeting cooperation needs that have emerged as a result of the creation of the RACs, which have developed a culture of dialogue and exchanges between partners in the industry. These new needs concern, for example, knowledge sharing, forging common understanding of fisheries issues and management and the preparation of long-term management plans.

► Two projects illustrate these needs, the role the CPMR can play and the help it can give in designing, developing, disseminating and exploiting the results of cooperation projects.

- The MAREMED project, which was developed by the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission and includes a strand on cooperation in fisheries,
- The GEPETO project, which was prepared by the South Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (otherwise known as the CCR.S), in which the Atlantic Arc Commission is involved.

Although these projects should mainly be run within and/or with the support of the geographical commissions in which they are being developed, there are still many requests from project leaders for access to the CPMR network as a whole in order to identify relevant partnerships, potential expertise and possibilities for exploiting the results beyond the cooperation areas concerned.

*The Maremed project was submitted by PACA Region, which leads the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission's Working Group on Maritime Policy. It is coordinated by Marche region, which is responsible for fisheries within the working group.*

- Fisheries management plans - Regulation No. 1967/2006. Sharing experience and good practice on the preparation and implementation of management plans, the installation of offshore equipment to take the pressure off coastal areas, preparation of good practice guidance;
- Protected fisheries: gathering information, strengthening dialogue between professionals and with the scientific community;
- Energy-related issues: sharing experience on successful energy saving experiments and the diversification of energy sources in the fisheries industry: motorisation, type of fuel, innovative fishing methods and vessels;
- Contributing to the implementation, exploitation and dissemination of the results of the measures taken under the EFF's Priority Axis 4 through participation in Far-Net, improved knowledge of the links between fishing/aquaculture and tourism related activities;
- Launching pilot projects.

*The Gepeto Project (GEstion de las Pesquerias y Transnacionales Objetivos) was submitted by the South Western Waters Regional Advisory Council. It aims to:*

- Develop common understanding of fisheries management in the area and propose long-term management plans for pilot fisheries with a view to their adoption by the EU;
- Prepare an "Atlas of Fisheries" in order to share knowledge;
- Define management units in order to develop the use of a common language by the member states involved in the South Western Waters Regional Advisory Council;
- Prepare long-term management plans in order to shape a common future.

The CPMR thus believes that CFP reform should take these cooperation needs into account, especially those that have arisen due to the new culture of exchanges and dialogue brought about by the creation of RACs.

It also stresses that priority should be given to ensuring that the CFP takes the consequences of climate change into account, in particular the need to prepare adaptation strategies.

## II. THE FAR-NET PROJECT

Under Priority Axis 4 of the EFF on sustainable development in coastal fishing areas, DG MARE has launched an initiative creating a network to support Priority Axis 4 areas. The network, called Far-Net (fisheries areas network), was officially created in June 2009. It is managed by a European economic interest grouping (EEIG) called DEVNET.

The CPMR General Secretariat, with the agreement of the FIG, contributes as a subcontractor responsible for the organisation of network conferences and seminars.

Each year, these events will include:

- a conference to report on progress made in the implementation of Priority Axis 4, the difficulties encountered and support expected. These conferences will also be an opportunity to promote exchanges between managers of the fisheries areas involved in Priority Axis 4.
- two *ad hoc* training seminars for Priority Axis 4 area managers;
- three transnational seminars focusing on the acquisition of techniques, methodological approaches, the exchange of experiences and good practice and cooperation between areas.

**The importance of Priority Axis 4 :** Considering the operational programmes that the member states have sent in to the European Commission, Priority Axis now accounts for over €167 million, which represents 13.2% of total EFF funding and involves about 220 groups or coastal areas. These figures conceal huge differences between both member states and sea basins, as the percentages of EFF funding devoted to Priority Axis 4 varies from 32.5% to 2.64%, depending on the member state concerned, and the amounts allocated to local action groups managing Priority Axis 4 areas range from €150,000 to €8 million.

The sea basins most concerned at present are the Baltic (40 to 50 groups are planned in Poland, for example), the North Sea and Black Sea (15 groups are planned in Romania, the country that is devoting 32.51% (€75 million) of its EFF grant to Priority Axis 4.

### AN INNOVATIVE USE OF EU FUNDS

- for the fisheries industry, Priority Axis 4 of the EFF constitutes a new approach and a big effort is still needed to explain to people how it works, to ensure it is fully understood and bring the expected benefits to the whole of the industry.
- Each sea basin—the Baltic, North Sea, Atlantic, Mediterranean, Black Sea and also island regions—have their own characteristics in terms of the extent to which their fisheries industry is willing and able to accept and implement Priority Axis 4, and the “culture” and tradition of cooperating with other structures representing other interests;
- The very issue of Priority Axis 4 means that seminars and conferences can be designed in close **coordination with existing working groups and networks** in the areas concerned, on complementary issues or in relation to fisheries activities.

**Mobilisation of the CPMR:** The CPMR’s Fisheries Intercom Group (FIG) and the fisheries groups of each geographical commission will be involved in implementing Far-Net. The first meeting between the FIG and DG MARE was held on June 2009. A second meeting is planned at the beginning of November 2009, between the FIG and Devnet, Far-Net’s coordination unit. The aim will be to define how the FIG and the geographical commissions’ fisheries groups can provide help to implement Priority Axis 4 and the benefits they might derive from this involvement:

- identification of training needs,
- inventory of good practices and successful experiences,
- identifying experts in each sea basin.

The aim will also be to:

- ascertain whether the CPMR member regions are keen and able to organise and host such events;
- to exploit the results of their action and benefit from existing good practice;
- to coordinate transnational and interregional cooperation projects containing a fisheries strand with the implementation of Far-Net. This is the case for the Intermediterranean Commission’s Maremed project and the Atlantic Arc Commission’s Ancorim project.