



ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

26 June 2013, Baiona

CONCLUSIONS

Participants

Advisory Board Representatives: Ms S. Clink (BSRAC), Mr M. Park (NSRAC), Mr R. García (LDRAC), Mr C. Aldereguía (LDRAC), Ms S. Sainz (MEDRAC), Mr J. F. Beltrán (PRAC), Mr V. Badiola (SWWRAC) and Mr A. Rodríguez (NWWRAC).

EFCA: Mr P. Savouret (ED), Mr P. Galache (HoU C), and Ms C. E. Fernández (PO).

OBS.: Mr M. O'Mahony and Mr G. O' Keeffe (Ireland representatives).

Approval of the Agenda.

The agenda was approved without any amendment.

1. Introductory remarks: RACs state of play and EFCA latest developments

The ED gave the floor to the Advisory Board representatives to present the RACs state of play.

The NWWRAC apologised for the absence of the NWWRAC representative, Mr H. González and presented a summary of the latest activities of the NWWRAC. *Inter alia*, he referred to the Workshop on Fisheries Control organised by the NWWRAC in Dublin on 3 July 2012, where the need to have an early engagement from the stakeholders in the planning, management and assessment of the control plans was highlighted. On the framework of the CFP the significance of regionalisation and the importance to move to regional control plans and multispecies/mixed fisheries approach was underlined. With reference to the landing obligation ("discards ban"), the NWWRC pointed out that, while ensuring compliance with the rules, there should be compensation measures for fishermen for landing those species with low or non-commercial value.

The NWWRAC informed the Agency that a letter requesting a maximum cost for data transmission related to the use and connection of electronic devices for satellite surveillance, monitoring and control has been sent to the Commission.

The NWWRAC asked the Agency whether it would be possible to reflect on the possibility of developing a coordinated communication strategy with the RACs and have some regular informative tool, e.g. monthly/quarterly e-bulletins including reports on compliance by fleets and

Member States, press releases on good practices to improve the image of the fishing sector among the general public.

The LDRAC thanked the Agency for its work. It was highlighted that the new CFP will face great challenges, namely ensuring compliance, increasing the level playing field and enforcing governance at all levels. Attention was drawn to the need to strengthen and use the external dimension of the EU to increase enforcement and surveillance standards. The importance to improve the level of compliance in the FPAs (Fisheries partnership agreements), in order to ensure that they are in line with the international regulation, was pointed out. In this field the LDRAC pointed out that the Agency could also be very useful providing advice and training.

The LDRAC mentioned that it would be important that the Agency is involved in the FPAs, namely on compliance issues. This would be a good tool to improve compliance (e.g. ICCAT). The need to reinforce the role of the Agency in the Expert group on compliance at EU level was highlighted.

On discards policy the LDRAC showed some concerns about what the implementation policy would be for the Long Distant fleet. It was stressed that any measure should be preceded by an evaluation of the impact that local producers may face due to the landing of discards.

The MEDRAC expressed its concern with the implementation of the discard policy in the Mediterranean. Regarding the recently adopted management plan for pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic by the GFCM, attention was drawn on how the control of these fisheries between EU and third countries would be, in this respect the collaboration with the RAC should be strengthened. In terms of pelagic fisheries the MEDRAC is active in swordfish and BFT. It was pointed out that the level of compliance has substantially improved but it still needs to be carefully followed up. The MEDRAC informed that a MoU has been signed with the GFCM and that the RAC collaborates in the process of adoption of management plans for which guidelines were adopted last year.

The BSRAC apologised for the absence of the BSRAC Chair, Mr R. Johansson. With reference to the suggestion on the communication tool, the BSRAC mentioned that the structure was already in place, namely through the Advisory Board, and the Advisory Board representative in the Administrative Board of the Agency, however the RACs should check how to provide a better input, e.g. Advisory Board contribution to the Administrative Board. With reference to the salmon fisheries, the BSRAC mentioned that the advice is a TAC which also covers unreported and misreported catches and discards. The BSRAC was recommending a rollover, providing problems with unreporting are reduced. This issue will require especial attention. On cod the BSRAC will issue its advice; the management system could be questioned taking into account the TACs and the current heavy control management.

Regarding the discard policy, the BSRAC members have not reached any conclusion yet. There are experiences with reference fleets that have proved to be efficient. In this field the BSRAC pointed out that good cooperation with EFCA is needed.

The NSRAC commented that they were preparing a note to the Commission on control issues. With reference to the discard policy, it was mentioned that the CCTV system has been tried in Scotland; it works well but it is not for all fisheries. Concerns about the implementation of the discard policy were raised. The NSRAC underlined that, if the system goes wrong the mortality could increase, especially if there is no monitoring plan. In this respect, it was highlighted that the Agency would be the right entity to monitor and ensure that the system is working properly.

The SWWRAC mentioned that there was no internal consensus about the political measures.

The PRAC apologised for the absence of the PRAC representative, Mr I. Mc Sween. It was mentioned that the PRAC members were concerned about the discard ban and that the engagement of the stakeholders at an early stage was important.

The ED took the floor and replied to the RACs' questions.

With reference to the Expert group on compliance the ED explained that, in line with the current CFP proposal, the Agency will attend the meetings as an observer and will provide advice if requested.

Concerning the different ways to provide more communication during the JDP preparation, the ED clarified that this issue was discussed in the last Administrative Board meeting. After reflection it was considered that the best way would be to discuss the risk assessment of the JDPs in the Advisory Board, starting on the current Advisory Board meeting.

Regarding the discard ban, for the time being, it should be taken into account that it is more a management issue than an enforcement question considering that most of the decisions and definition of detailed rules depend on the Member States. There could be very different options e.g. to have an individual quota system etc. Consequently, enforcement will be facilitated when such implementing rules are devised by the Member States and the Commission. For the Western waters pelagic and for the Baltic Sea the new SCIP model applies and the discard policy will be implemented through this Inspection and Control Programme. The ED mentioned that the reference fleet has also been tested in the Netherlands; the system could work for some fisheries but maybe not for mixed fisheries. The main driver for the Agency has been to reflect on the catch rate and the reference fleet. The ED clarified that the Agency could only provide support once the management tools are adopted. It was mentioned that an increase of the cost of telecommunication, to have background information with fully documented fisheries trip, is potentially foreseen.

Regarding the external dimension, the Agency would like to be involved, especially considering tuna issues or western coast of Africa, but it should take place at the request of the Commission. Currently the Agency is providing support to the Commission in third countries audits in line with IUU regulation. The idea is to make available training to third countries to help them to set up a control framework.

In the Mediterranean the Agency is contemplating to include the small pelagics in the Adriatic Sea, in line with the Recommendation adopted in the last meeting of the GFCM. It is likely that control policies improved significantly the compliance and the situation of the BFT stocks which seem to be recovering. The purse seine campaign has not finished yet and the Agency will be very vigilant.

2. Exchange of views: implementation of the EFCA Annual Work Programme 2013

The HoU C presented a PowerPoint with the main highlights on the Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2013 implementation. The provisional data of each JDP and the main risks identified were presented to the Advisory Board.

In terms of technical measure infringements the NSRAC asked which ones were connected with the Omega gauge. The NSRAC pointed out that they still find some discrepancies on the technique, the point is to avoid the mesh size going below the current regulation.

The HoU C clarified that the apparent infringements were mainly connected to the reduction of the selectivity of the gears.

The LDRAC raised a concern about how often the control scheme has been changed and the need to harmonise it.

The ED explained that the Agency is not in charge of the setting up of the control scheme and therefore these questions should be addressed to the Commission.

The ED asked the Advisory Board representatives if they agreed on presenting the risk assessment reports to the RACs during the Advisory Board meetings in order to get RACs' feedback.

The NSRAC mentioned that it would be useful to see the trend and how it is responding.

The NWWRAC suggested including in the presentation of the risk assessment the methodology for the risk assessment and the categorisation of risks.

Regarding deep sea access, the NSRAC requested information about the protocol used for gathering the information.

The ED mentioned that the Agency did not have information on deep sea fisheries. The Agency information is based on VMS information during the JDP campaigns and tries to complement the VMS with other maritime information e.g. AIS. The Agency carries out pilot projects, e.g. in the BFT JDP the information is accessed directly.

3. Exchange of views: Provisional Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2018 and Annual Work Programme 2014

The ED presented a PowerPoint on the Provisional Multiannual work programme 2014-2018 and Annual work programme 2014. He informed the Advisory Board that they would be consulted on the draft Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2018 and Annual work programme 2014 (deadline for comments end of July).

The ED explained that the Agency is trying to assess the behaviour and the compliance. The possibility of training the industry was discussed during the last Administrative Board. For the time being the training activity should focus on the Member States.

The BSRAC asked whether the Agency would be able to obtain money from the products they may deliver.

The ED replied that the Agency would need to explore that possibility.

The LDRAC drew the attention to the cut of the Agency budget despite the CFP reform. This point was raised during the hearing in the EP on 27 May 2013.

The ED explained that the Agency will depend on the implementing rules. With reference to the Experts Committee on compliance, as mentioned before, the Agency would be an observer.

The NWWRAC mentioned that they have asked DG MARE to appoint a desk officer in the Commission to deal with interpretation issues on the applicable control rules and they would like the Agency to support their request.

With reference to the discard ban the NWWRAC asked if the Agency has produced any study on fully documented fisheries and/or on regulations in place in other parts of the world. In line with the control plans the NWWRAC asked the Agency to develop a template to ensure uniformity of execution and assessment of control inspections across Member States.

The LDRAC mentioned that it would be positive if the Agency could widen its role in the JDPs and access regime to non-European countries and to engage more stakeholders, thus to play a catalyzer role.

The MEDRAC highlighted the need to deal with compliance issues; in the Mediterranean the JDP only includes BFT, it would be important to widen the scope to other species including shared species with third countries managed by the GFCM.

The ED explained that the only JDP in the Mediterranean is the BFT. A lot of training has been carried out since 2010 (e.g. Turkey, Libya). Last year there was a common seminar for EU and third countries (Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). The Agency has provided support to Croatia and Slovenia and is very involved in the Black Sea with Romania and Bulgaria. The possibility to widen the scope to pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea will be discussed in the Board but depends on a Commission decision (SCIP).

With reference to a possible new role in the new CFP, the Agency is open to exchange views but needs the mandate, namely regional SCIP decisions encompassing a significant number of regulated species.

With reference to the request made by the NWWRAC to DG MARE to appoint a desk officer to provide clarification on the interpretation of the applicable control rules, the ED confirmed that the Agency has no interpretation powers and took note of the request.

Regarding the question on the discard studies, the ED clarified that it could have been a misunderstanding as the Agency did not have such studies.

On the template for inspections (EIR), the ED explained that the Agency is preparing a call for tender and reminded that the Agency has to stick to annex XXVII of the Control Regulation.

4. Rotation of the Advisory Board representative in the EFCA Administrative Board

The PO reminded the rotation shifts agreed by the RACs:

From 2 March 2013 to 1 March 2014

- Representative: PRAC
- Alternate: LDRAC

From 2 March 2014 to 1 March 2015

- Representative: LDRAC
- Alternate: NSRAC

From 2 March 2015 to 1 March 2016

- Representative: NSRAC
- Alternate: MEDRAC

From 2 March 2016 to 1 March 2017

- Representative: MEDRAC
- Alternate: NWWRAC

The PO pointed out that, in line with the new CFP Regulation, new Regional Councils will need to join the Advisory Board and to be included in the rotation system.

5. Cooperation with the RACs: discussion

Item handled under item 3.

6. AOB

The SWWRAC made a comment regarding an inspection and the register in the logbook of all the discarded species and sizes.

Closure of the session 13h20.