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RAC MED OPINION ON REGIONALIZATION

The Executive Committee, met in Barcelona on 30th May 2012, unanimously adopted the opinion proposed by the WG5 on the socio economic impact of the CFP reform, held in Marseille on 19th April 2012 and, among other matters, regionalization was discussed. During the meeting the following considerations were made:

On 28th October 2011 RAC MED issued an Opinion (prot.266/AV) which included a first evaluation of regionalization: *“the lack of a governance framework in the reform proposal makes it difficult to envisage the correct execution of the process of compliance that the reform entails, given the variety and characteristics of Mediterranean fisheries, while also reducing the margins of flexibility and adaptation of the measures that are theoretically acceptable. The RAC MED, in accepting that the multi-annual management plans are an adequate response to the need for management that considers the diverse conditions of the different European seas, **proposes the evolution of their formulation, opening up participation to the all stakeholders, organized into representative associations, rather than allowing only member states to propose them**”.*

The RAC MED expressed its disappointment in discovering that the intentions declared in the Green Book on regionalization had not been taken into consideration in the regulation on the CFP Reform. The RAC MED hoped to see greater decentralization of the decision making process, including the use of the RAC system which is open to contributions originating from scientific research. In the absence of decentralization, an improved definition of the above mentioned management plans could have a positive effect.

Where the EC *“non-paper”* is concerned, and with particular reference to regionalization, the WG expressed serious concerns about the mechanism planned. Indeed it is difficult to imagine how the different Member States could suddenly begin cooperating in order to carry out the EC proposals (on management plans or technical measures) without any kind of consultative process.

If the use of delegated acts is implemented in cases where efficient application by the Member States is absent, autonomous decision making would likely naturally fall to the EC in most cases. If on the other hand the EC genuinely plans to carry out joint measures with the active participation and accountability of the stakeholders, it is considered necessary to introduce an adequate consultative process before EC proposals are developed, this process should see the involvement of the Member States in a suitable context such as the RACs.

The regular presence of the Member States at Advisory Council meetings is crucial and needs to improve in order for them to gather input from all stakeholders in the design of management plans and prevent an



excessive use of delegated acts to the point that their use could appear to be an attempt by the EC to concentrate power.

Consequently the RAC MED underlined that this risk could be reduced if the EC modifies this mechanism guaranteeing that the management plans and technical measures proposed by the EC are shared with all the stakeholders, which includes the RAC, the Member States and the scientific community, right from the start, so as to avoid the EC proposals being too far removed from reality and from the needs of the regional areas involved.

The RAC MED expressed the hope that the responsibilities of each single party involved in the decentralization process will be better defined, in particular where the RACs are concerned so as to strengthen their role and function as well as to provide a contribution which corresponds to the expectations of the reform.

In view of the planned strengthening of the role of the RACs, the opportunity was taken to highlight the need to see greater attention given to the RAC Opinions, which should always receive due acknowledgement from the EC.

