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QUESTIONS ON POST-2020 EU FUNDING FOR FISHERIES AND MARITIME SECTORS

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

a) What should be the priority areas of intervention?

On the first question, many responses have recalled the need for priority actions on **commercialisation**, for the valorisation of the product (creation of added value), stabilization of minimum prices at the first sale and therefore support for the profitability of the company.

Another consistent group of responses focused on the need to include the **environmental protection and the implementation of management plans** at regional level and for controlled access areas among the priorities. Moreover, this group recalls the achievement of CFP objectives, reaching MSY and full sustainability, and the reward for best practices for more restrictive measures of the rules in force and on the possibility for the Member States to adopt temporary and permanent cessation measures notwithstanding the limitations currently set by the EMFF (the latter position, however, it is opposed by NGOs).

The need for maintenance, reinforcement, greater participation of the sector organizations in the European decision-making process, assistance to communities dependent on fishing and aquaculture and greater support for the generational turnover with greater incentives for young people is then expressed by several stakeholders. In particular, for the aquaculture sector it is necessary to continue the effort of a bureaucratic simplification for the requests of development of the sector both for new plans and for the modernization of the existing ones, besides to put in place, in the regional context, the definition of the allocations zones for aquaculture (AZA).

A strong reference to the priority of developing **research and stock assessment, increasing and improving the data collection and extending studies and assessments also to recreational fisheries**. The scientific research, according to some members, should also focus on the **innovation** of the capture instruments and the improvement of selectivity and on other sources of impact other than fishing (climate change, pollution)

Another group of responses concerns the intensification and improvement of **control** activities, to be extended to recreational fisheries, and the fight against IUU fishing. This framework also includes a proposal for financial support for the installation and activation of VMS.

Opinions that are more isolated but not far from the widespread sensitivities of the stakeholders recall the priority of sustainable aquaculture development, administrative-bureaucratic simplification, a redefinition of the SSF, more effective measures on solidarity in the event of natural

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disasters and environmental disasters, and information campaigns that make the image of the sector for public opinion more positive.

Perhaps more controversial positions have been expressed in support of the increasing production, the renewal and modernization of the fleet (with a reference to safety problems of navigation) and engines, flexibility in inspections. A negative opinion was also expressed on the development of fishing tourism as an alternative source of income for fishermen.

b) What should no longer be eligible for support?

This question has received few answers, one group simply replies that **nothing must be excluded a priori.**

A position refers to the need not to support **CLDD managed by public administrations**, while cross-cutting is the proposal not to grant funds to **companies that work with countries that do not comply with EU environmental and / or social standards** to prevent the distorting effect of alteration of the internal market to the detriment of European companies that produce or use "made in EU" products.

On the other hand, we hope that in future measures will be readmitted to support the fleet, both for its renewal and to more effectively encourage the businesses start-up run by young fishermen, all in a logic of compatibility with the principles of protection of fish stocks and the environment.

The 40% group expresses **opposition to any support to fishing fleets** (except if it is aimed at reducing the fishing effort and habitat impacts) **and to subsidies to improve the sustainability of commercial fisheries which, instead, are used to support unsustainable jobs.**

A negative position was also expressed on public campaigns addressed to EU citizens **to promote seafood consumption** that should no longer be supported.

Some positions refer to the aquaculture sector to underline that intensive activities should not be sustained in strictly coastal and in-shore areas, encouraging practices that can better safeguard the aquatic environment.

2. REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

c) What are the main challenges encountered by your sea basin?

Today the Mediterranean is at the heart of European fisheries policy; the Malta Declaration MedFish4Ever, signed in 2017, demonstrates the commitment of all the governments of the basin to devise and implement fisheries management policies that guarantee its environmental, economic and social sustainability for present and future generations

The answers to this question concerned both general aspects for the Mediterranean and details for some areas or MS. In general, the answers concern a wide variety of topics.

It would therefore be necessary to support all forms of collaboration, even with non-EU countries, aimed at identifying common and shared management measures.

A first group has naturally indicated the main challenges in the **sustainability of fisheries for some resources,** but also the conformity of the CFP to the specific characteristics of the fishing fleets operating in the basin. There were several references to the **difficulties of managing fisheries in shared areas with fleets from third countries.**

Otehr main challenges concern:

- the pollution effects;
- the socio-economic sustainability of the sector;
- the IUU fishing;
- the implementation of the Landing Obbligation;
- the competition in areas where there are other uses of the sea.

Other issues raised concern the lack of assessment of resources for SSF and recreational fisheries (coastal species), the need to revise the MCRS and technical measures, the implementation of an effective control, the impact of offshore aquaculture and the risks of genetic pollution, the impacts of the SSF on the sensitive coastal area and on the trawling on the seabed. Referring to marine aquaculture it is necessary the implementation of three European Directives: Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Framework Directive for maritime space planning.

Particular problems have been raised by Cyprus and Greece:

- for Cyprus
    - Mitigation from Invasive species (for example lionfish) and promotion of large scale well-funded methods for impacts on species expansion.
    - Activity of industrial vessels in coastal regions of Cyprus is no longer viable.
    - Long-term conservation of protected species is influencing the livelihood of SSF.

- for Greece:
  The insular coastal areas constitute a disproportionate area compared to the mainland, where the overwhelming majority of fishing vessels and businesses are family enterprises. It is a reality where the distinctions between the SSF and medium-range fleet are particular and specific for each sub-area and do not lend themselves to horizontal rules "one size fits all".

d) *Which EMFF instrument should be adapted on a regional basis to tackle these challenges?*

Also in this case the answers were very different, but a consistent group is oriented to the **total regionalization** of the instruments.

Where there are particular problems, such as in Cyprus, there is a strong reference to the solution of local problems and the development of infrastructures dedicated to this, as well as to opportunities linked to tourism.

Some positions underline, with regard to shellfish farming and, more generally, the production areas of bivalve molluscs, the necessity to set up management committees to manage the protected areas for molluscs, as provided for by the Water Directive, as is the case for other types of protected areas.

In support of a broad regionalization of the instruments are also indicated topics such as:

- Funding research on recreational fisheries, including socio-economic aspects;
- Compensating SSF for respecting a minimum distance from shores;
- Assessment of coastal SSF and RF and the most relevant coastal species;
- MAP implementation with a bottom-up approach;
- Improve gear selectivity.

e) *What kind of flexibility should be granted to Member States demonstrating a good management of their fisheries?*

As it is easy to imagine, the professional fisheries sector answers this question by requiring maximum administrative and procedural flexibility in managing the fund.

Someone, however, links this flexibility to the **achievement of sustainability objectives** shared with the EC, while others specify that "**flexibility and simplification should be granted on a country level**" (that is because the fisheries sector legislation and management, and the productivity and threats are not the same for all countries within the same basin). In particular, some believe that the measures of temporary and permanent cessation and modernization which must not only continue in the future but, entrusting their implementation to the competence of MS, are necessarily adaptive to take into account the ongoing developments, depending on the different bio characteristics - ethological values of the various stocks and of the different fishing activities in a multispecific context such as the Mediterranean one.

The position of the members representing 40% group is totally opposite asking for "**the minimum of flexibility**", arguing that it is important to enforce compliance requirements until "good management" becomes the only way to go.

A third way is supported by other components of 40% that indicate in **co-management** the best way (co-management between fishermen, NGOs, research, public administrations), also at the decision making process level.

f) *How can future funding be even more closely aligned with CFP implementation, for example fisheries management measures?*

A common answer among members representing 60% of the MEDAC stakeholders for this question is that **the opinion of the fishermen should be taken into greater consideration**, avoiding criteria laid down by political guidelines. In particular, it is requested to increasingly encourage participatory practices that foster the elaboration of management measures with an inclusive approach and co-management: to increase financial support for ACs to enable them to do more by fostering collaboration with research, not only scientific but also technical and socio-economic, to support their opinions and support forms of co-management that encourage coexistence between public and private stakeholders, in all those areas where it is necessary to carry out ad hoc interventions (such as the recent measures on Pomo Pit and the Channel of Sicily). Others, both in the professional fisheries and 40% sectors, indicate management measures such as the temporary cessation of fishing activities (by species and by the capture system) and others a generic **aid to the implementation of the management measures**, but revising the eligibility criteria and facilitating presentation of dossiers (simplification). As stated in section 1.a) funding temporary and permanent cessation are not supported by NGOs.

From 40% members, there is also a reference to the urgency of assessing and protecting the coastline and the need to support the implementation of MAP measures.

3. SUPPORT FOR SMALL SCALE COASTAL FISHERIES (SSCF)

g) *How can EU public support tackle more efficiently these three challenges (lack of investment, lack of quota, lack of innovation)?*

The prevailing aspect of the answers to this question leads to the general lack of knowledge of the SSF and therefore to the need to fill in the knowledge gaps to analyze its needs and to identify the actions to be taken, as well as to adapt its definition, so that it is closer to the reality. In this context, data quality must be improved, and the procedures of European funds simplified.

Management indications consist in adapting the zones dependent on the SSF fleet, in allocating seasonal quotas (tuna) to increase the diversification of the catches, even if others reiterate on the

occasion their opposition to the introduction of quotas in the Mediterranean. The lack of innovation in the SSF is indicated as a critical factor, to be overcome through the solution of problems already indicated (market). The lack of investment, connected with the lack of innovation, is also due to the Authority's inability to monitor and control the activities of the SSF. Close collaboration with scientific research is also necessary to identify more efficient, more selective and less impactful practices. Innovation and modernization are necessary to reduce impacts but improving livelihoods.

Market policies that encourage the inclusion of fishermen in a more transparent market, starting with direct sales, the implementation of leopard-like fisheries policies covering individual species in a manner appropriate to their biological cycle, the modernization of fishing techniques and processing are further indications from both the catch sector and 40%

h) *Which kind of preferential financial support would be relevant for SSCF?*

For SSCF, it would be relevant:

- Commercialization support;
- Security on board;
- Investments in coastal areas;
- Tax relief related to innovative investments;
- Implementation of collective systems of logistical support for fishery;
- A social security and welfare system to better cover risks and additional measures on social welfare (social shock absorbers, etc.);
- Fleet renewal;
- Products promotion;
- Positive communication on the sector;
- Prize for catches fully assessment and for significantly reducing unwanted catches;
- Technical innovation with 100% financing (to overcome inability to anticipate and co-funding).