Flash Report – Meeting between Commissioner and the Federación Nacional de Cofradías de Pescadores (FNCP), 18.11.2022

Participants FNCP: [Redacted]
Commission: Commissioner Sinkevičius, HoC S. Šatūnas, DHoC, C. Preising, [Redacted]

Commissioner opened the meeting stating that socio-economics and impact on the fishing communities are always assessed before making proposals/taking decision in EU. Having Fisheries in its portfolio means having at heart the work and interest of fishermen communities. He welcome this meeting in person, to which [Redacted] replied by extending an invitation to visit FNCP in Spain and the +200 Cofradías represented.

- West Med. MAP

FNCP does not want to be considered as “predators” but rather they depend on the sea. The West Med MAP is paralysing the sector. by 2025 the stocks will not be at MSY (even science says so), and effort reduction is too important. Small boats (<12 m) have lost 40% of their activities. FNCP asks COM to take socio-economic consequences into account and to postpone MSY beyond 2025. Sector considers selectivity is the best way forward and there should not be further trawling effort reduction.
+ Complained about discrimination within ES fleets/regions due to the organisation of fishing days in Spain.

Commissioner understands the difficulties linked to implementing West Med MAP but points that half of West Med stocks started recovering. We need to continue efforts years after years to reach ~40% effort and the EU has prepared a package approach to factor in the socio-economic aspects. In addition, there are compensation mechanisms at hand for increased selectivity. One example of success already is the large closure of the Gulf of Lion, where juvenile hake is recovering.

- Recreational Fisheries, Plastic and Climate Change
FNCP claims that recreational fishing has increased its capacity and is now at the same level as commercial. This is unfair and illegal competition in the Med (Baleares) and asks what COM will do. 

**Commissioner** indicated that there is no reliable figure on recreational fishing and MEP Aguilera’s report is welcome in this context – recreational fisheries need to become more accountable and have reporting duties as commercial fisheries do.

FNCP indicated that 70% of plastic as marine litter comes from Algeria and other neighbour – fishermen are the dust-man of the sea, they clean up the mess. 

**Commissioner** said he is aware of the key role by fishermen in collecting litter, expressed full respect and recalled the “port state measures” to finance bringing the waste back to port. He mentioned the Waste and Pollution package to help Med countries to develop waste treatment standard to reach EU level but this still takes time. 

On Climate change, **Commissioner** said that we witness migration of species, invasion of more aggressive species, all this is threatening and changing the marine ecosystem. Size, reproduction grounds are affected indeed. EU is stepping up fight against CC.

- **Venus clams: Unfair practice from Italy**

FNCP claims of unfair competition from IT for the past 6 years on Venus clams. TMR specifies size 25 mm but IT has 22 mm size in its waters via an EU Delegated Act and push its product on the market. Unfair competition. Sanitary issues on the clams as well, we need more time to carry on the test activities on the clams for chemicals. Can we change TMR? Revision under MedAC opinion? Can you help to have more time on sanitary tests? 

**Commissioner** indicated that there are 2 different stocks of clams in locations, and there is no mistreatment of ES in the matter, and HoC will contact DG SANTE to coordinate on the matter of sanitary testing.

- **Cofradias as Producers Organisations**

FNCP informed of the recurring concern that Cofradias are not recognised as Producers organisations, thus cannot get the EMFF or EMFAF funding. Asked COM to amend regulation to allow Cofradias. 

**Commissioner** understands the issue but points this is only an ES issue and if we are to amend the Regulation, we would need to broaden the case. The use of EMFF and EMFAF should not be blocked as it is currently, and ES has underspending on its funds while sector needs it.

**Commissioner** concluded there is no little issue when it comes to fishing communities and we should keep the dialogue open, discuss all matters together regularly.