



NEWS FROM THE DECK

The monthly newsletter of the Low Impact Small-Scale Fishers of Europe

MAIN EVENTS OF THE MONTH

Meeting with DG Mare on Baltic issues

On March 4, LIFE arranged a meeting with The European Commission's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG Mare), to discuss issues affecting small scale fishers in the Western



Baltic Sea. The meeting was attended by LIFE Brussels Office staff, Wolfgang Albrecht (LIFE Director, Germany), Katarzyna Wysocka (LIFE Director, Poland), David Lange and Hanne Lyng Winter (representing FSK – Denmark, a Member of LIFE). The meeting was hosted by DG Mare, with Bernhard Friess, Head of Directorate C (Atlantic) and Acting Head Directorate E (Baltic Sea) and his staff.

The main issues under discussion included the state of stocks, closure of the cod fishery, selectivity and by catch in the trawl fishery, exemptions given to industrial fisheries, fair treatment for small scale fishers, and the participation of SSCFs in the Advisory Councils. The meeting was very positive, and Bernhard Friess suggested more regular meetings with LIFE and its members to exchange on issues of concern.

The GFCM Regional Conference on “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”

LIFE staff members participated in the Regional Conference on small scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in partnership with the FAO and the Algerian Government (<http://www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/ssfconference2016/en/>). The GFCM is the Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) responsible for the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Ensuring a sustainable future for small scale fisheries in the Mediterranean in the context of Blue Growth was the main theme. Other thematic panels included co-management, Marine Protected Areas [MPAs], the role of small-scale fishers in the value chain, and the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines)*. Brian O’Riordan, LIFE’s Deputy Director, was a speaker on the small-scale fisheries panel, presenting on “The implications of the reformed CFP for SSCFs” and Marta Cavallé, LIFE’s Mediterranean Coordinator was interviewed by the official media team of the event



The meeting also gave LIFE the opportunity to network with some key decision makers, international stakeholders, fishers from North Africa and to arrange a series of meetings to foster its Mediterranean strategy.

Meeting with the UK government

LIFE recently worked closely with Amber Rudd, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye on England's south east coast to facilitate a meeting between one of our UK member organisations, the New Under Ten Fishermen's Association (NUTFA, www.nutfa.org), the Coastal PO (<http://fish.coop/>) and the Minister of State for Food, Farming and the Marine Environment, George Eustice MP.



The meeting, which took place Thursday the 10th, was attended by Jerry Percy, LIFE’s Executive Director, and covered a range of topics including the UK Government's recent unwelcome decision to impose a cap on the fishing licences of vessels of 10 metres and less that had caught less than 350 kgs of quota species during a reference period, to deal with the perceived latent capacity within this sector, the future management of Bass with regard to the effects of the additional controls recently implemented, the range and extent of the quota uplifts provided by the

Fisheries Minister as a result of pleadings by NUTFA and the unnecessary use of catch composition rules on the inshore fleet.

Whilst remaining deeply unhappy with regard to the latent capacity issue, the meeting was otherwise most positive and the Minister evinced specific support for the Coastal Producer Organisation initiative currently being driven forward by all the organisations concerned in the meeting.

Apart from providing support to a member organisation, LIFE’s presence at the meeting also helped us to understand more clearly the view of a member state administration with regard to the formation of a coastal Producer Organisation. This initiative is potentially of benefit to other member organisations across Europe.

OTHER EVENTS AROUND THE EU

- ✚ LIFE's Executive Director was invited by Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the Irish Sea Fisheries Board, to present on LIFE and his wide experience of fisheries stakeholder engagement processes to the Irish Inshore Networking Forum which took place Thursday the 3rd in Galway, Ireland. Following a successful meeting where he was asked to chair the closing session, he also took the opportunity whilst in Ireland to have a formal meeting with an Irish member organisation of LIFE, the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO - www.iimro.org)
- ✚ That same day, LIFE staff attended the event "Smart farming: Harvesting the digital dividends across the EU" at Digital Europe premises, in Brussels. It has been an occasion to raise awareness among the ICT sector on the importance of developing tools and services for small-scale producers, in particular by improving the access to broadband and developing production, data and market-oriented phone applications.
- ✚ Whilst most production from small scale fishers is sold directly as whole fresh fish, there are potential opportunities for adding value to some species in some areas. This is why Jerry Percy, LIFE's Executive Director, on the 8th of March met with a fish processor in Devon who is dedicated to dealing only with sustainably caught fish from the small scale sector, together with the largest organic Veg box scheme suppliers in the UK to find out more regarding alternative products and supply chains. The lessons learned will be of equal value to member organisations wherever they are based.
- ✚ LIFE's Executive Director attended the event "Blue New Deal" which took place Wednesday 9th of March in London and focused on improving the resilience of coastal communities. The Blue New Deal is an initiative promoted by the New Economics Foundation which aims to deliver stronger economies for UK coastal communities through a healthier marine environment. (www.bluenewdeal.org). This is another example of LIFE learning from best practice to replicate across Europe.
- ✚ On March 10, LIFE's Executive Director attended the C-Bass Project meeting in London. C-Bass is a collaborative project between French and English fisheries scientists to determine more clearly the biology, movements and spawning activities related to the species. This is of particular importance to smaller scale operators, many of whom, in the UK, Netherlands and France rely on this species for a significant element of their income.
- ✚ LIFE participated in two Working Group meetings (on Discards and Pelagic Fishes) of the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MedAC) on the 15th and 16th of March. The delegation included representatives of Pescartes, a member organization of LIFE from Spain's Mediterranean coast. The main topics discussed have been the closure periods for the swordfish fishery and the implementation of the landing obligation for demersal species in 2017. It gave LIFE the opportunity to present itself to the members of the MedAC.
- ✚ LIFE attended the hearing "New Framework for Technical Measures" held in the European Parliament on March 21. The event, organised by the PECH Committee (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/pech/members.html>), was probably the first public discussion on the new proposal for a Technical Measures Regulation. It highlighted

a general consensus among the stakeholders for a more regionalized approach in the definition and implementation of conservation measures. The EU should set the general targets but specific measures should be decided at local level as a one size fits all approach has not worked. Panellists were from the industrial sector, with the exception of a Professor from Croatia. Although he was the only panellist to defend small-scale fishers, several Euro-deputies also highlighted the need for a differentiated approach for sscf in the regulations.

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Asoar Armega succeeded against the aquaculture bill!

Asoar Armega, a LIFE member organisation from Galicia (<http://asoararmega.es>) , was part of a regional platform demanding the rejection of a controversial aquaculture bill. As a result of their protests, the bill was withdrawn by the Galician President, “until it has the backing of the sector” !

In December last year Galician authorities drafted an aquaculture bill designed to transform the traditional shellfish harvesting sector into a modern aquaculture sector, and to privatize coastal areas through granting 20 year concessions for industrial aquaculture! After several months of battle, protests and strikes, in February this year the Galician community succeeded in convincing authorities to withdraw the draft bill, which would have destroyed the traditional livelihoods of local fishing communities. (<http://www.efegro.com/noticia/galicia-anula-su-proyecto-de-ley-para-la-acuicultura/>) . Thanks to the work and commitment of the local community, in March, Galician authorities decided to redirect investments totalling 18 million Euros to the artisanal fishing and shellfish harvesting sectors.

The French Platform for Artisanal Fisheries held its General Assembly

LIFE attended the General Assembly of the French Platform for Artisanal Fisheries (PPPAF - Plateforme de la Petite Pêche Artisanale Française) held on the 1st of March in Paris at the Aquarium of the Porte Dorée. The Assembly has been an occasion to review the important work done on the Sea Bass at the end of last year which enabled small-scale fishers from France, the UK and the Netherlands to obtain a number of benefits agreed to by the December Council of Ministers’ Meeting. In particular:

- The Council decided on a 6-month closure for the bass fishery from January to June, with a derogation for liners and fixed netters, who were limited to a two-month tie up from February to March.
- Liners and fixed netters were granted a monthly catch limit of 1.3 tonnes. Trawlers and other mobile gear users are restricted to 1 tonne per month in the open season and up to 1% of the total biomass landed as bycatch of bass in the closed season.

Given the positive outcome of the collaboration, the two organisations will continue to work together during the year on a number of policy and communications initiatives.

LIFE’s Director from France member of the jury in the Olivier Roelinger Contest

Gwen Pennarun, LIFE's Director from France and Chair of the Cape Brittany Liners Association, participated in the jury in the Olivier Roelinger Contest for the Preservation of Marine Resources, organised by SeaWeb Europe on 23rd of March. Catering students from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, UK and Switzerland competed in Dinard, France, presenting their own recipes using fish from sustainable sources. The contest encourages awareness amongst young chefs of the continued depletion of marine resources - the next generation of chefs have a vital role to play in preserving resources by promoting sustainable, and often lesser known species. (http://www.seaweb-europe.org/IMG/pdf/gb_2016_web.pdf)

WELCOME ON BOARD!

In addition to the members who joined since the beginning of 2016 (Pescartes (SPAIN), FSK (DENMARK), Fishers of Freest (GERMANY), IIMRO (Ireland), Fishers of Pantelleria (ITALY), NetVISwerk (THE NETHERLANDS), the following organisations officially became part of LIFE this month:

Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation (Scotland)



SCFF is the national trade association for the creel fishing industry. This traditional and sustainable form of coastal fishing for shell fish is vital for the communities living around the coastline of Scotland. LIFE welcomes its 1200 members and is looking forward to start a fruitful cooperation!

Syndicat Professionnel des Pêcheurs Petits Métiers du Languedoc Roussillon (SPMLR – France)



Representing the low impact small-scale fishers of the Languedoc Roussillon region, SPMLR is a strong and independent trade union working in cooperation with a number of institutions and professional organisations. It successfully manages the Golion labelling project (www.golion.fr), which allows to inform the public on the importance of artisanal fisheries and its great local and fresh products. LIFE is delighted to welcome its 150 members, all committed and dedicated artisanal fishers who deserve to see their hard work recognized at EU level.

This March Newsletter is a simple snapshot of our external activities. In addition, the LIFE staff in the UK, Brussels and Spain respond to a vast range of queries related to our sector and continuously develop and promulgate policies related to small scale, low impact fishing and fisheries.

Our Regional Directors, all working small scale fishers also promote the values and benefits of coastal fishing.

Would you like some additional information on a specific event, project or initiative? Don't hesitate to contact us at communications@lifeplatform.eu