

## **PREFACE**

### **THE DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN OF HERAKLION, CRETE (12-14 December 1994)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The European Community (EC) is currently promoting a Mediterranean fisheries management policy; and in this respect a new regulation dealing with the harmonisation of existing technical measures of the four EC Mediterranean Member States, has been implemented in 1994.

Simultaneously, the EC is promoting consultation among other countries currently participating in fishing operations in the Mediterranean, in order to implement policies of rational, responsible and sustainable fisheries practices. The diplomatic conference organised by the E.C. in Heraklion, Crete, in December 1994 on this related topic has led to the adoption of a solemn declaration by all participating countries (see Annex I).

This conference was composed of three working parties. The first party dealt with legal questions which led to the preparation of the solemn declaration. The second party dealt with Mediterranean resources, which reviewed the stock situation (demersals, small pelagics and large pelagics). Finally, the third working party dealt with the environmental impact of fisheries.

The solemn declaration together with the conclusions of the chairmen of both scientific working parties are appended as Annexes I, II and III, following the background documents (Caddy, Some Future Perspectives for Assessment and Management of Mediterranean Fisheries for Demersal and Shellfish Resources, and Small Pelagic Fish, 1995), on which the discussions of the latter two working parties were based.

The EC wishes to stress the important role played by the General Fisheries Council of the Mediterranean and hopes to become a full member of the Council in the near future, whereby the process of cooperation could lead to an effective and efficient fisheries management policy in the Mediterranean.

## **CONTEXT**

The increasingly poor state of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean has preoccupied various national and international bodies for a number of years. Increased risks of pollution, progressive degradation of the environment, chronic over-exploitation and excessive catches of small fish of

various species has given rise to serious fears for the future. All parties acting together must analyze the fundamental causes of this situation.

Implementation of a harmonized policy, for the conservation and management of Mediterranean fisheries resources, appears necessary, in order to preserve those resources and ensure their sustainable and rational use. To this end, the European Community has undertaken a degree of harmonization of technical fisheries measures in force in its Member States.

Being aware of the need to associate all States concerned in Mediterranean fisheries with this internal work, the Community has established contacts with a number of countries which have revealed a unanimous interest in fisheries management and an inclination to proceed on the basis of multilateral discussions.

## **DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

The European Community considered that the holding of a Diplomatic Conference was the most appropriate way to prepare the ground for cooperation between the Community, coastal States of the Mediterranean, and those States which fish Mediterranean waters. The said Diplomatic Conference was held in Heraklion (Crete) from 12 to 14 December 1994. The purpose of the Conference was to prepare the basis for consultation between the European Community, the coastal States of the Mediterranean and States whose nationals fish in that sea.

The level of participation was very high given that most EC Member States<sup>1/</sup>, Mediterranean coastal States, and States whose nationals are involved in fishing in the Mediterranean<sup>2/</sup> participated, together with the FAO, the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM), professional and non-governmental organisations<sup>3/</sup>, as well as various other scientific experts.

The Conference was arranged into three working parties, the first dealt with legal questions, the second with fisheries resources in the Mediterranean and, the third with environmental impacts of fisheries.

### **Legal questions**

The working party concerned with legal questions agreed on the text of the solemn declaration on conservation and management of fishery resources in the Mediterranean, which was adopted by the Conference. Under this declaration (Annex I) all States which benefit, in whatever capacity, from the biological wealth of the Mediterranean marine environment, share in the duty to ensure that its fishery resources are preserved and developed.

The objective of this collaboration is to set up a system of conservation and management, harmonized at Mediterranean level, on the basis of the best available scientific advice and the

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<sup>1/</sup>Greece, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria

<sup>2/</sup>Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Korea, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Slovenia, Turkey

<sup>3/</sup>European Bureau for Conservation and Development, Europêche, Greenpeace International, WordWideFund

most beneficial existing practices, with the purpose of ensuring effective protection for the fishery resources of the Mediterranean and their rational exploitation under the most favourable circumstances.

### **Fisheries resources**

The working group on fisheries resources successively reviewed the status of demersal, small pelagic and large pelagic resources in the Mediterranean. For this purpose, participants benefitted from two technical syntheses reprinted in the present volume:

- Fonteneau A. "Mediterranean tunas and associated species: fishing, research, research management. Present situation and perspectives."
- Caddy, J.F., P. Oliver. "Some future perspectives for assessment and management of Mediterranean fisheries for demersal and shellfish resources, and small pelagic fish."

In his report, the Chairman of this group underscored, in particular, that it was necessary to:

- delineate desirable management areas,
- coordinate/standardize basic statistics collection,
- reinforce scientific cooperation mechanisms (in particular, by setting up information networks between scientific research institutes),
- coordinate and reinforce monitoring and enforcement of management measures.

### **Fisheries environmental impact**

Participants of the working group on fisheries environmental impacts based their debate on the synthesis prepared by LLeonart J. et L. Recasens, entitled "Fisheries and the environment in the Mediterranean Sea." In his conclusions (Annexe III), the Chairman of this working group underscored the need for existing institutions :

- to identify and collect scientific information which who allow for the assessment of fisheries (likely or existing) impacts on marine ecosystems;
- to develop appropriate means (improvement of gear selectivity, reduction of damages to habitats) to mitigate these impacts;
- to improve the professional training of fishermen, not only regarding the environmental dimension of their activities, but also on the objectives of resource conservation and fisheries management.

