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EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

Mondsee, Austria, 14 – 21 June 2006

PROGRESS REPORT SUB-COMMISSION IV – Social and Economic Issues

Chairperson: I.G. Cowx (UK)
Vice-Chairperson: R. Marini (Italy)
Rapporteur: M.J. Collares-Pereira (Portugal)
Technical Secretary: R. van Anrooy (FAO)

The Chairperson of the Sub-Commission, Mr I. Cowx (UK), presented the activities and achievements of the Sub-Commission since the 23rd Session of EIFAC in Wierzbica (June 2004).

Ad hoc Working Party on Recreational Fisheries

Convener: B. Breton / R. Arlinghaus

Progress within this Working Party has been largely limited to organizational procedures, with little action towards the proposed refocus for this Working Party developed in the 23rd Session of EIFAC. At that time the Working Party decided to concentrate on 'Formulation of a Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries' an exercise that was to be run in collaboration with the European Anglers Alliance (EAA). The following steps were proposed:

- To collect the contact details of experts at national level during the 23rd Session;
- To circulate a questionnaire relating to the general principles for a Code in September 2004 for discussion at the General Assembly of the EAA in March 2005 and to provide final documentation on the Code to the 24th Session.

Unfortunately progress on the Code of Practice has been slow and the EAA is now only beginning to draft guidelines. One of the reasons for the weak progress is lack of funding. Submissions were made to the FAO FishCode programme and to a few national level anglers associations to fund the drafting of the Code of Practice but these were unsuccessful.

In further attempts to raise the profile for the Code of Conduct, the Chairperson Sub-Commission IV presented a paper at the 4th World Recreational Fisheries Congress in Trondheim (Norway) in June 2005, and used the opportunity to promote the proposed Code. The presentation raised considerable interest both within Europe and elsewhere, especially Australia and North America, and this has widened the framework of collaborators for drafting the Code.

In the inter-sessional period, the Convenor of the Working party was elected President of the EAA and it was agreed that he pass on his responsibilities to Mr R. Arlinghaus. Mr Arlinghaus will collaborate with Mr Breton on developing the EAA Code. This Code would fit not only the EIFAC objective of inland fisheries, but would include both marine and freshwater fisheries for the European region. To this effect the code needs to move towards a framework for world-wide technical guidelines for angling and recreational fisheries.

Further efforts will be made over the next 12 months to secure funds to complete the Code. The importance of the Code has now become critical because of the recognition that recreational fisheries have an significant impact on fish stocks in general and growing concerns over fish welfare.

Ad hoc Working Party on Socio-Economic Aspects of Inland-Fisheries

Convenor: M. Sipponen

The Convenor of this Working Party, Mr Matti Sipponen (Finland), has made considerable progress. He has prepared a draft report which was circulated to a few key persons. The report analyses results from a questionnaire about the social and economic benefits recreational fishing that was circulated to national experts and EIFAC correspondents. The questions included: definition of recreational fishers, numbers of recreational fishers, on-going research and an assessment of the economic value of inland recreational fisheries. The study showed the high economic and social value of recreational fisheries. It also provided a bibliography of references relating to the valuation of inland fisheries in Europe. Suggestions for improving the report have been provided to the author and it is anticipated these will be incorporated and a draft be circulated to EIFAC correspondents for checking of accuracy. Through circulation of the draft report the WP tries to encourage those countries that have not contributed yet to participate in the output. A copy of the report will be posted on the EIFAC website. Efforts will also be made to address the socio-economic importance of the commercial fisheries sector. Aquaculture will only be included at a later stage.

The Technical Secretary of the Sub-Commission attended the Seminar on “The Economics of Aquaculture with respect to Fishery”, which was organized by the European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE) in Civitavecchia, 9 – 10 December 2005. In this seminar he presented a paper in which he tried to increase awareness on EIFAC in general and the activities of the two WPs of Sub-commission IV in particular. A number of participants in the seminar expressed their interest in attending an EIFAC symposium on socio-economic aspects of inland fisheries and aquaculture in 2008.

In order to promote activities of the Ad hoc Working Party on Socio-Economic Aspects of Inland-Fisheries, and considering the interest in attending and EIFAC symposium shown at the EAAE seminar, it is recommended that the Working Party develop a proposal for the symposium to be associated with the 25th Session of EIFAC.

Other Activities

It is proposed that Sub-commission IV organize the 2008 EIFAC symposium, preliminary entitled ‘Interactions between the socio-economic and ecological objectives of inland capture fisheries and aquaculture’. It is proposed the symposium will be held in close collaboration with EAA, EAFE, EAAE, NACEE, EAS, FEAP and fisheries agencies within Europe. The subject of the symposium would be highly relevant as it would address issues over the EU Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive, as well as organic aquaculture, risk assessment and management in inland fisheries and aquaculture, and future policy regulations in the pipeline.