



*Pilot project "Support measures for small-scale fishing"  
Agreement number MARE/2014/04 - SI.723954*

*"Actions aimed to enhance the participatory role of  
Mediterranean small-scale fishing in the decision making and  
advisory processes at national and EU level"*



## **Summary report on the Case Studies Events**

On the 18th, 19th and 20th of October 2016, three final seminars/events were held with the participation of the fishermen from the ArtFishMed project in the three Case Study areas: Venice in Italy, Izola in Slovenia and Poreč in Croatia.

To each event, the fishermen from the neighbouring areas who had been contacted and informed in the preceding months by the facilitators of each Case Study were invited; in many cases, the fishermen had already been interviewed by them. In all the three meetings, the participation of representatives from the other countries involved was also encouraged. The result was that for the event that took place in Venice, in addition to the fishermen of Chioggia, representatives from the fishing communities of Izola (Slovenia) and Poreč (Croatia) would also be present. The same happened for the meetings of Izola and Poreč where, in addition to the local fishermen, some Italian fishermen from Chioggia and Caorle and from northern Croatia were also in attendance.

The events had the main purpose of getting the workers from these sectors to look deeper at the key subject matter of the project (the participation in the management and representation of workers involved in the sector) at a local level and above all, to foster dialogue and the exchange of experiences and opinions among the fishing workers from the areas involved, who was especially chosen during the planning process, as neighbouring each other. During the individual meetings, the intention was to facilitate and then to have a joint discussion on the many issues and problems arising from the project general matter. A precise aim was also to encourage the exchange of experiences and opinions among the fishermen from the countries involved (to ensure this, a simultaneous translation between the languages of the involved countries was ensured).

After the registration of the participants and welcome greetings from the respective local authorities, each event was introduced by a presentation of the project coordinator Simone Serra, showing the main objectives of the project and the different tasks scheduled in the following four phases:

1. mapping of the representative organisations
2. analysis of the MEDAC activity within small-scale fishing
3. the Case Studies, aimed at deepening the knowledge and involvement at a local level of the fishermen and their organisations
4. building a network of small-scale fisheries (mainly through the web portal).

In each workshop, the project coordinator showed the findings from the survey carried out via the questionnaires that had been issued directly to the fishermen in their places of work (fishing ports and fish landing sites) by the Case Study facilitators. The questionnaire was in fact initially aimed at

investigating the perception of the participants on the various aspects and implications arising from the main theme of the project.

The analysis of the responses provided by the fishers in the involved locations were explained via graphs that showed the percentage of the individual responses to the questions of greatest significance (refer to the relevant graphs published in the various sections of the website). The results from the answers provided by the workers also formed the starting point for the discussions that took place during the second part of the meetings within **working groups** that were made up mainly mostly of the participating fishermen.

A presentation was then given at all three locations by the MEDAC General Secretary Rosa Caggiano showing the features of the work done by the Advisory Council that, in addition to being partners in the project, aims to ensure the representation of industry workers. It is therefore a body that has a strategic importance in enhance the representation of the fishing workers. The structure of this regional institution and its priority tasks were briefly summarised, as was its composition with regards to the associated members. This was done to highlight the role that MEDAC should fulfil in representing the small-scale fisheries sector to the EU institutions that have encouraged and ensured its establishment.

In addition, the representatives of MEDAC also described the work undertaken in the ArtFishMed project with specific reference to the issue of small-scale fisheries. Marzia Piron, an experienced associate specifically responsible for the project, examined all the documents produced by the Council to understand how much the specific interests of small-scale fisheries had been considered and represented in both the discussions from the meetings and the officially produced opinions and letters, analyzing the specific issues addressed and brought to light during the work done by MEDAC.

Following this, the presentations were concluded and a short coffee break was taken allowing the chairs in the room to be arranged in a semicircle to allow the attendees to speak more easily among themselves. The working group, which was the key part of the meeting, was carried out according to specific *mutual learning* methods. The aim of the group work was to encourage real discussion among the workers and to create the first network among the industry workers in the Northern Adriatic region.

Due to the efforts of the Case Study facilitators who supported the organization of the events, the number of workers involved in all three seminars exceeded the predicted number of 20 attendants, a figure 50% higher than the total participants in the individual seminars (that, considering the representatives from authorities and the industry researchers involved, were respectively 36 in Venice, 44 in Izola, 36 in Poreč), making it possible to achieve a real and participated discussion between the fishermen.

The group discussion was initiated in all the three seminars by a facilitator who had the task of stimulating the discussion and keeping the debate on the specific issue of the project whenever the issue being discussed by the workers focused on indirectly related topics. The debate, however, followed a very open plan and the floor was left for all the reflections that were made by the workers starting from the issues and questions addressed and analyzed via the questionnaires.

At the event in **Venice (Italy)** on October 18th, the working group discussion began with the early questions of the questionnaire which aimed to collect the opinions and perceptions of the suitability of cooperatives enterprise to support the professional needs of workers in the sector. Also covered were opinions on the ability of industry associations, both local and national, to better represent the interests of the sector workers.

The question raised regarding the type of cooperative enterprise was in fact found to be an exclusively Italian experience almost completely absent with the same features in the other countries involved. It also served as a prompt to draw out the different positions and the perception of the fishermen on the issues addressed by the project. Attention was given to the different ideas that could exist because of the various countries of origin.

For example, a fisherman from Caorle intervened to declare that within the associations it is not very easy to deal with the issues of small-scale fisheries management because this sector has less economic power than the other sectors of professional fishing. However, he then added that among the fishermen of many fishing communities, there is sometimes a lack of interest in working together.

A Croatian fisherman spoke about the differences in management between the different neighbouring countries. He then referred to the Croatian situation, comparing the current situation with the past, arguing that in his father's time, laws in Croatia were being formulated at a regional level and not at a central level. He concluded that this level would be even more appropriate today to really represent the issues of the sector.

This theme, regarding the best geographical and institutional level of representation for small-scale fishing operations, which was one of the central themes of the project objectives, was also taken up by many other fishermen.

In each case, all the interventions indicated a strong need for common rules and an equal need for initiatives ensuring their effective compliance. It also came to light throughout the discussions that there is a growing awareness among workers about the need for and the benefits of regulation of resource harvesting activities based on shared and common rules, at least for the entire geographical area of the Northern Adriatic. From this point of view, the attitude of the workers towards the rules seems to be characterised by a strong awareness of the problems linked to the management of the sector. It followed that considerable attention was given to the question of participation and representation, and therefore a widespread attention given to the subject matter of the entire project as well as of the individual meetings.

Repeatedly evident during the discussion was the awareness of the workers about the importance of participation for the purposes of access to locations and to management mechanisms. There was also a widespread awareness of the usefulness of being able to directly present and explain everyday problems related to their activities, to effectively influence decision-making. There was therefore a general focus at all levels on how to be able to participate and influence the decision-making process as industry workers.

The other topics and the particular issues seen by the participants as being important, in terms of the representation and management of small-scale fisheries are as follows: the lesser importance placed on small-scale fishing than on other segments of the industry, the identification of the most appropriate institutional level, the need for common rules and enforcing of said rules, the existence of a large conflict with recreational fishing, the excessive bureaucracy to be dealt with to meet the increasingly complex rules, the usefulness of the possible establishment of a regional or local consortium that could make the most of the shared rules among fishermen, and opportunities for workers to engage in self-management processes.

Whilst discussing more specific topics and more pressing problems, on several occasions, a growing awareness was evident that MEDAC could, just by its nature as an EU advisory body, collect stakeholders' impressions on regulations and management measures. It was however pointed out by several parties that there is still a shortage in relation to the representation of small-scale fisheries.

Finally, it was highlighted throughout the various discussions that representation is a two-way process, if properly implemented, that can not only gather information from the sector workers but also provide those workers with information from the decision makers.

The meeting in Venice was concluded with a series of short presentations by representatives of the institutions and the researchers present, who also tried to respond to some of the questions and doubts raised by the fishermen. We refer directly to the presentation by Sasa Raicevich (ISPRA researcher) who added some important insights that were then taken up in the subsequent meetings. He summarised the contents of the regional conference on small-scale fisheries by the FAO (GFCM - General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean) held in Algiers from 7 to 9 March 2016. At this meeting, the characteristics of the co-management process were emphasised. These characteristics are specifically based on the nature of a collaborative and participatory process open to the different realities and the stakeholders involved (e.g. research institutes). In this regard, it was stressed that the simple consultations are not considered co-management, but they serve to define the management of what is entrusted to whom, in the sight of the establishment of territorial use rights. This means that fishermen who take up a right to manage the resources in a specific area also take on responsibilities (e.g. monitoring, control, etc.).

This discussion introduced some further reflection on how to participate in the decision-making processes, namely that a structured itinerary should be highlighted for the development of effective partnerships with authorities and research bodies at various levels (local, regional, national, European and international).

Finally, there was a closing speech by the representative of DG MARE, Evangelia Georgitsi, who reiterated that: ArtFISHMed is one of eight EU-funded projects for small-scale fisheries in Europe's seas. Is a particular project aimed to try to inform fishermen of the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, including through MEDAC. The European Commission needs to know the needs, requests and ideas of the small-scale fishery workers on how to make this work. The opinions that MEDAC gave on this subject are available on their website, which also provides a channel for the fishermen to protect their projects, allowing the Commission to take them into consideration.

The meeting outline from Venice as described above was then repeated for the other two meetings (Izola in Slovenia and Poreč in Croatia).

The meeting held in **Izola (Slovenia)** on October 19th was opened by the facilitator of the Slovenian Case Study who then handed the floor over for a welcome speech from the representative of the Slovenian Ministry. She underlined that coastal fishing is a fundamental reality of the Slovenian economy, both from a numerical point of view and by its very nature of being based on the individual fisherman and his family. It is a sector that therefore retains a wealth of techniques handed down from generation to generation that are embodied in the use of traditional tools which are mainly sustainable.

Next, there were the two presentations on the work done and the results achieved in the first phase of the project. As carried out in the meeting of Venice and described above in summary, they gave an opportunity for dialogue between workers within the discussion and work groups, which were formatted according to the same methodology. In this case however, it was decided to start the discussion with a question different to that of the questionnaire administered to the fishermen in the first phase of the project.

The discussion between the fishermen, in this case, started off from the question about the locations and the best means by which to be heard by the institutions and by those who make the decisions.

The first participant explained that the problems affecting the industry are born from having formulated legislation without including fishermen in the legislative process. Again however, it is clear from the various discussions that there are definitely common problems to all three states, and therefore greater links between the workers from the different fishing communities could help to address and resolve these issues.

On this occasion, a very active discussion was held and whilst often growing from specific individual problems, it intertwined with and addressed the issue of representation and its various possible forms and locations. Also due to the intervention of the facilitators, different aspects of the general topic of participation as a means to influence decision-making processes were also discussed including how participation is vital to ensure the provision of appropriate rules to regulate fishing activities that are also based on the actual needs of small-scale fishery workers.

On this occasion, the discussion between workers and their national representatives became quite animated at times, but anyway the dialogue was still constructive and thanks to the presence and discussions of the fishermen from the two neighbouring countries, soon got back on track to the topics tabled for discussion. It needs to be reiterated that there is still much to be done and that we must do it together, both among workers from the fishing communities of different countries whilst at the same time involving the institutions and other stakeholders.

Discussions were held also on this occasion about the importance of determining the levels of representation to which to refer. In this regard, the need to improve those different levels of representation was shared. Levels referred to are both European, since many of the decisions are taken in Brussels, and intermediate, as in many cases daily management problems are addressed directly by the responsible national Ministries. Finally, there was a widespread belief about how it would be useful to think in terms of Adriatic district as well as the importance of contextualising the issues on a Mediterranean level so that adaption can be made for specific situations. The point was also made about how adequate representation also ensures that you have the right information at the right time.

Finally, after the end of the debate, the representative of DG MARE delivered a short closing speech. The speech reiterated that from the objectives that the DG had set for this project, there was a real need to make comparisons between the small-scale fishery workers on a regional level since they share common issues with regional distinctions that need to find a way to be communicated to the appropriate management institutions. Starting from the various topics discussed during the debate (which included for example, co-financing, fair trading, VAT registered fishermen, illegal fishing in protected areas and moorings costs), she concluded the presentation by reiterating that these problems aren't just related to the EU or in many cases to the central government. However, they should nevertheless be put on a list of priorities for which it is the fishermen who must first find common ground: this could, or rather should, take place first and foremost within MEDAC to enable communication with the responsible institutions in a structured way.

The third and final event, as reported above, was held in **Poreč (Croatia)** on the 20th of October.

This event, as well, began with a greeting from the Croatian Administration representative who thanked the participants for coming to the ArtFISHMed project meeting. The greeting was followed by a presentation of the project discussions, also already described above in reference to the other

meetings. In this case, the presentation was translated simultaneously from Italian to Croatian and English.

On this occasion however, there was also a detailed presentation on the work done during the first phase, particularly in Croatia, by the Case Study facilitator Sanja Matić-Skoko. The speaker illustrated and retraced the steps that led to the carrying out of this final event, beginning in May 2016 when the project goals were identified and the first phase of identification of the fishing communities on which to concentrate the activities.

On this occasion, space was given for discussion and group work among the fishermen present who started from the question, asked via the questionnaires, on the willingness of the fishermen to work together to propose common projects. With regards to this topic, the facilitator asked the participants if they felt that there is a more suitable level for discussing about the participation and representation of fishermen.

Also in this case, the interventions took cue from the problems and limitations that the workers themselves believed to be more difficult to overcome to gain effective sector representation and participation in decisions about fisheries related activities. The discussion progressed on the opportunities that can be taken up by the fishers as a result of EU policies, e.g. funds that make the launch of supplementary activities more viable such as pesca-tourism, on which there was a real exchange of experiences and information between the fishermen of the different countries represented.

To summarise the entire meeting, it's worth to highlight some important points:

- the importance of tailoring European regulations on the specific local issues, e.g. on the Adriatic level, whilst seizing on the importance that the Commission is giving to small-scale fishing and to local situations;
- the existence of regulatory differences between the various countries regarding supplementary activities such as pesca-tourism, that could effectively be overcome;
- the usefulness of meeting and discussion between fishers from neighbouring countries who could collectively focus on what are the common issues to be pursued together;
- the persistence of the problem of conflicts with other activities, that can be overcome through to fundamental support of representation.

Again, just before the meeting concluded, there was a short presentation by the European Commission representative, who reiterated that even when there is a decision-making process on an objective within which it is difficult for a small-scale fisherman to participate compared for example to the large ship-owners, it should be small-scale fishery workers themselves who how and where to make their voices heard, because they are the only ones with a proper knowledge of their problems. The representative also added that unfortunately the people within the relative EU offices are few, it is opportune to find the best way to effectively present the problems and correctly convey the information. In order to advance their position in Europe, it is also necessary to find the time to dedicate to this process, though being aware that this is a considerable undertaking for those who already face many difficulties in the course of their daily work. The speaker concluded by recalling that small-scale fishermen have been recognised as sustainable fishermen and that this is also important for their survival.

Finally, Simone Serra concluded underlining that in the EU legislative framework small-scale fishing is increasingly mentioned, even in the context of potential funding. He reiterated the call to the

fishermen to gather and to come to agreement, finding common positions on shared topics. Small-scale coastal fishing in the Mediterranean makes up 80% of the fishing fleet. These days of meetings have been important for both the representatives of the ministry and the representatives of the Commission who have been able to hear about the everyday issues directly from the fishermen.