

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES AND BLUE GROWTH

IDENTIFYING THE PERSPECTIVES OF FISHERIES AND STIMULATING THE BLUE GROWTH IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

Summary Proceedings

1. The International Conference on Fisheries and Blue Growth was held in Istanbul on 31 October – 1 November 2017. It was jointly organized by the Sariyer municipality of Istanbul and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Permanent International Secretariat (BSEC PERMIS).
2. The aim of the Conference was to consider the main issues affecting fisheries management, assess the environmental and socio-economic impact on fisheries and aquaculture and encourage the cooperation between the private and public sectors in the Black Sea area. The Program of the Conference is attached as Annex I.
3. The Conference was attended by the representatives of the BSEC Member States (Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine), BSEC Related Bodies (PABSEC), BSEC Observers and Special Dialogue Partners (Black Sea Commission and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions - CPMR) and International Organizations (European Commission, FAO and EUROFISH). The representatives from the Black Sea municipalities, academic communities, NGOs and private sector also participated in the Conference. The List of participants is attached as Annex II.
4. The Conference was opened by Mr. Şükrü Genç, Mayor of Sariyer municipality, who made a welcoming address to the participants. In his address Mr. Genç highlighted that the sector of fishing is important to Sariyer and described the activities of the municipality aimed at assisting the fishing sector. He also mentioned the required actions in support of fishery and aquaculture sectors, like the need for institutionalized research, the management mechanisms and the technical equipment. Mr. Genç mentioned the necessity of enhancing the international cooperation in implementing the fishing policy in the Black Sea area and the indispensable role of local governments for the mentioned sectors. The text of the address is attached as Annex III.
5. Ambassador Michael B. Christides, the Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS made a welcoming statement. He pointed out that the BSEC Organization attaches special importance to the promotion of joint activities in the field of fisheries in the Black Sea region. A great number of the people in the Member States, especially those with a coastline on the Black Sea, make their

living from their labours connected one way or the other with the Black Sea. Fishing and fisheries shaped the society and culture of the coastal towns and communities along the shores of the Black Sea. The Secretary General also touched upon a serious issue of unreported and unregulated fishing in the Black Sea area, stating that the national experts believe that BSEC Member States should consider joining the “FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing”. The text of the statement is attached as Annex IV.

6. In the opening session of the Conference, Ms. Veronica Veits, Director for Fisheries Policy, Mediterranean and Black Sea, European Commission, delivered a statement. She stated that the Black Sea is an important sea for the Commission and the EU neighboring countries. Ms. Veits indicated that the blue economy of the Black Sea shall not be in isolation, suggesting that the cooperation among the countries of the Black Sea and other stakeholders shall be enhanced. The EU is developing a maritime strategy for the Black Sea similar to the other strategies already implemented in the Baltic Sea and other areas. Director Veits pointed out that the stocks in the Black Sea are overexploited and depleted due to the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and therefore she suggested to strengthen the fisheries management in the area and proposed to take collective actions to curb IUU. The text of Ms. Veits statement is attached as Annex V.

7. Mr. Atilla Özdemir, International Consultant, FAO sub-regional office in Ankara, stated that FAO is promoting the sustainable fisheries and responsible management of fishery resources according to the adopted FAO documents. He also informed the participants about the FAO Blue Growth initiative launched by FAO in 2013 which builds on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and advocates ways to balance economic growth, social development, food security, and sustainable use of aquatic living resources.

8. Ms. Aina Afanasjeva, Director of EUROFISH, mentioned the importance of the Black Sea Region in terms of available fish stocks and their effective management. She stated that the Bucharest Conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea Fisheries and Aquaculture called upon the enhanced cooperation of the Black Sea countries in the areas of fisheries and aquaculture. Ms. Afanasjeva presented the activities of EUROFISH related to improving market access and data collection in the ports of Europe, including Black Sea ports. The statement of Ms. Afanasjeva is attached as Annex VI.

9. On behalf of Ukrainian BSEC Chairmanship in office, Mr. Sergii Kravchenko, Consul, Consulate General of Ukraine in Istanbul, made a short statement. He welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the BSEC region. Mr. Kravchenko informed the Conference on the on-going activities in the BSEC under the Ukrainian Chairmanship in office.

10. Due to the impossibility of participation in the Conference, the address of Prof. Halil Ibrahim SUR, Executive Director of the Permanent Secretariat to the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) to the Conference has been distributed to the participants. The text of the address is attached as Annex VII.

11. The first session of the Conference was dedicated to the evaluation of the progress in the implementation of the Bucharest Declaration and was moderated by Mr. Voilin Raykov, Institute

of Oceanology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Mr. Raykov also made a presentation on the state of the Black Sea marine living resources and their ecosystems. He made an overview of the Black Sea fisheries and the state of the stocks and their efficient management. Mr. Raykov pointed out the methods of stocks assessment through the scientific and technical project (the BlackSea4Fish Project) initiated by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and financed by the European Commission. The presentation of Mr. Raykov is attached as Annex VIII.

12. Mr. Ilhan Aydin, Director of Trabzon Fisheries Research Institute, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Turkey, made a presentation on the current state and future prospective development of aquaculture in the Black Sea. He described the situation with aquaculture in the Black Sea, specifically he indicated that aquaculture it is an increase in production in all Black Sea countries. He predicted an expansion in aquaculture in the future taking into account the interest of the private sector to invest in this sector. Mr. Aydin mentioned the cooperation of his research institute with Kocaeli municipality to start growing certain species of fish as well as the interest of other municipalities to cooperate with his institution.

The presentation of Mr. Aydin is attached as Annex IX.

13. The presentation “International Day for IUU Fishing in the Black Sea – some consideration” was made by Prof. Dr. Bayram Öztürk, Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV). Dr. Öztürk described the ways and means of fighting the IUU in the Black Sea, preferably with zero tolerance, as well as the state of affairs with the IUU which is estimated between 9 to 26 billions of USD in the whole world. He proposed to declare a date as the International Black Sea day against IUU. Dr. Öztürk also pointed out to the alarming depletion of the turbot stock in the Black Sea and the necessity of elaboration of a management plan for turbot. He stated the need for international cooperation in the field of IUU with the participation of GFCM, BSEC, countries, NGOs and other stakeholders. The presentation of Prof. Dr. Bayram Öztürk is attached as Annex X.

14. The last panellist in the first session was Dr. Ejbel Çıra Duruer, Turkish Coast Guard Command, Plans and Policy Division, who made a presentation on IUU and fisheries control in the Turkish part of the Black Sea. She quantified the impact of IUU on the social and economic life of the communities and on the activities of Turkish Coast Guard. She stated that although it is difficult to combat IUU, there are some suggestions and recommendations to fight against the illegal practices in the Black Sea. The presentation of Dr. Duruer is attached as Annex XI.

15. Session two of the Conference was devoted to the consideration of the prospects of fisheries in the Black Sea region and was moderated by Prof. Dr. Ertug Düzgüneş. The first panellist on this session was Mr. Ramazan Özkaya head of Turkish Central Fisheries Cooperatives Association. He stated that the fisheries cooperatives have to obey the regulations in Turkey and that the small cooperatives can not compete with big fishing companies. In this sense he proposed to introduce the system of quotas to be elaborated and implemented by the government. Mr. Özkaya warned against the overfishing of Black Sea stocks and highlighted the necessity to apply the rules of honest competition in the sector. The presentation of Mr. Ramazan Özkaya is attached as Annex XII.

16. Prof. Dr. Cengiz Deval from the Mediterranean University made a presentation on fishing capacity and management of the baby clam in the Black Sea. He described the periods of exploration, the prices and total catch per period and per country. He compared the monitoring mechanisms and the control systems of Turkey and Italy and showed the methods of catch employed for this specific kind of fish. He also resented some recommendations in order to protect the baby clam. The presentation is attached as Annex XIII.

17. Mr. Ramiz Hacizade, attaché of the General Consulate of Azerbaijan in Istanbul made a statement about the Azeri program for international economic cooperation in the Black and Azov seas. He stated that his government is fighting IUU in the Black and Azov seas as an important task to preserve the eco-system and curb the unauthorised catches of fish. He mentioned the important cooperation of his country with FAO, in particular in preserving the sturgeon in the Caspian sea. Mr. Hacizade informed the participants concerning the chairmanship of his country in the Commission on water bio-resources of the Caspian sea and the regional Commission on fisheries and aquaculture in Central Asia and Caucasus under the auspices of FAO.

19. During the discussions at this session Mr. Erdogan Kartal, Head of Istanbul Fisheries Cooperatives Association, Mr. Mehmet Rifat Akyüz, Istinye Fisheries Cooperatives and Mr. Hüseyin Güler, Black Sea Foundation took the floor and informed the participants on the activities of their institutions related to fisheries and aquaculture. In particular they mentioned the problems of small-scale fisheries and of fishermen, the issues of investment in the fishery sector from the small companies, the redtape and the number of permissions from the government for the small-scale fisheries, the pollution of the Black Sea, training possibilities for small fisheries companies.

20. Blue Growth in the Black Sea was the main topic of the third session of the Conference. The session was moderated by Mr. Alexei Nistean, Executive Manager of the Permanent International Secretariat of the BSEC. The first panellist at this session was Mr. Svetoslav Stoyanov, Policy Officer, Directorate-General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) of the European Commission. He talked about the prospects and reality of blue growth in the Black Sea. He mentioned the Blue Growth initiative of the EU and the EU interest towards the Black Sea. The presentation of Mr. Stoyanov is attached as Annex XIV.

21. Mr. Stavros Kalognomos, Policy Officer at the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) made a presentation on “The sustainable aquaculture as a component of blue growth: the regional strategic perspective”. Mr. Kalognomos shared the experience of CPMR regions in dealing with aquaculture and suggested to increase the cooperation among and between the Black Sea regions. His presentation is attached as Annex XV.

22. Dr. Hayri Deniz, General Secretary of the Mugla Fish Farmers Association made a presentation on “Blue growth aquaculture in Turkey: the best model for the Black sea region”. He informed the participants of the experience of aquaculture in Turkey, specifically the case of Mugla. Dr. Deniz presented concrete figures of the activities of the Turkish and local (Mugla) farmers in growing the fish products in the designated areas. He also informed of the export potential of aquaculture and the main countries of its destination. The presentation of Dr. Hayri Deniz is attached as Annex XVI.

23. The panellist in session three was Dr. Nazli Demirel from Istanbul University who made a presentation on research activities for fisheries and aquaculture in Black sea area of Turkey. She pointed out to the alarming situation with the Black sea fish stocks that are being depleted as a result of activities in the area. Dr. Demirel described the prospects in scientific terms for the development of aquaculture in Turkey and suggested some recommendations for the improvement of the sector. The presentation of Dr. Demirel is attached as [Annex XVII](#).

24. The fourth session of the Conference dealt with the role of local authorities and their cooperation with the fishing sector. The session was moderated by Dr. Benal Gül from Istanbul University. The first speaker at this session was Mr. Ahmet Dokumaci from Giresun Foundation. Mr. Dokumaci informed the participants about the aquaculture and fisheries in the waters of Giresun, pointing out that these sectors are contributing to the economy of the city. Mr. Dokumaci described the possibilities of the city in terms of developing the tourism sector and the transformation of an island close to Giresun in a place to attract for tourists. For that reason he stated that the city needed a well-defined project.

25. Mr. Mehmet Akif Özdemir, Director of Department at the Samsun municipality presented an overview of Samsun fisheries in terms of local authorities. He described the activities of Samsun municipality related to fisheries and aquaculture, the increase in the production of these sectors. Mr. Özdemir talked about the facilities created by the municipality to help and assist the local farmers to grow their fish products. He mentioned the active processing sector in the municipality which helps the economy of the city. The presentation is attached as [Annex XVIII](#).

26. The Deputy Governor of Attica region of Greece, Mr. Athanasios Anagnostopoulaos, made a presentation on “Blue Growth: the case of region of Attica”. In his presentation Mr. Anagnostopoulaos referred to communication between the private companies dealing with fisheries and aquaculture and the officials of his municipality. The region of Attica is working hard to implement the waste management program. He described the objectives, goals and outcomes of the Piraeus Blue Growth Innovation hub which is hosted by the municipality and the intention to organize on an yearly basis the blue economy week in the region of Attica. The presentation of Mr. Anagnostopoulaos is attached as [Annex XIX](#).

27. The presentation “Sea Food Sustainability” was made by Ms. Zekiye Sari Kuzu from METRO group. She highlighted the status of fisheries in Turkey and in the world, indicated the demand for up to 2050, described the fish consumption per country and the steps undertaken by her company towards the sustainability of fishery resources. She also informed the participants about the projects launched of METRO group to trace the fish from the sea to the market. The presentation of Ms. Kuzu is attached as [Annex XX](#).

28. Ms. Irem Köse Reis, Fisheries engineer at the Sariyer municipality made a statement on the role of local authorities in promoting sustainable fishing sector. In her statement Ms. Reis informed the participants about the export potential of Turkey in general and of Sariyer municipality in particular as well as the importance the municipality is attaching to fisheries and aquaculture. She referred to the research that is being carried out in close collaboration with the Universities and the necessary actions to help the fishery and aquaculture sectors.

29. Mr. Nur Çapa from the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies talked about the need to help and assist the fishermen in their everyday activities. He suggested that implementing a quota system may ease the work of fishermen and might be a solution to help the small scale fisheries cooperatives. He highlighted the good experience of Greece in that regard.

30. Dr. Hayri Deniz made a presentation “Supporting investments in the Black Sea Fisheries” in which he described the increasing consumption of fish and fish products, the markets for this products and the necessary investments for the sector in order to ensure its growth. He stated the European perspective of the sectors of fisheries and aquaculture and the possible investment from the EU in the Black sea area. His presentation is attached as Annex XXI.

31. Prof. Sevim Köse from Black Sea Technical University made a presentation “Black Sea food: developments, trends, problems and solutions”. She presented the figures of Turkish sea food export and import in terms of quantity and value, the state of fresh fish market in Trabzon during 2003-2015-2017. Prof. Köse talked about the processing industry, the export of frozen fish products and fish oil products. She made some suggestions and recommendations.

32. The last speaker at the Conference was Mr. Melih İşliel, Aegean aqua and animal products exporters’ association board member. He made a presentation on aquaculture and exports of Turkey. In his presentation Mr. İşliel related about the cultivation of different species of fish in the Black Sea coast and the problems of fishery cooperatives in growing fish and fish products. He revealed the contribution of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to the economy of coastal municipalities. The presentation is attached as Annex XXII.

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

- In the Black Sea region, fisheries have always been an important economic activity that has provided the occupation and employment opportunities for many people.
- Fisheries and aquaculture sector brings direct and indirect benefits to people, families, communities and littoral towns and villages.
- Institutionalization of the management system of aquaculture in Turkey as a country that is surrounded by the sea is indispensable.
- Black Sea stocks are depleted due to various kind of pollution, climate change, alien species and IUU fishing, a strategy is required for the sustainability of fish stocks.
- A acute lack of data on stocks is creating uncertainty for the fisheries sector.
- There is a necessity for an adequate regulatory framework and licencing in the sector.
- Only 2% of fish products are from aquaculture, there is a need to develop this brunch and support it at local level.
- Regional organizations, like GFCM, BSEC, have to work more closely with the local authorities, in this case with Sarıyer Municipality, in supporting the fishery sector for the long term sustainable development in the Black Sea area.

- There is an interest from the European Union towards the Black Sea area and EU's involvement and assistance in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are welcomed.
- International Cooperation is essential for the sustainable fisheries practices in the Black Sea
- There is a need for a follow up Conference to be organized next year.

The participants to the Conference expressed their deep gratitude to Sariyer municipality of Istanbul, in particular to Mr. Şükrü Genç, Mayor of Sariyer municipality, and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Permanent International Secretariat (BSEC PERMIS) for the organization of the Conference and for the warm hospitality extended to them during their stay in Istanbul.
