

Recommendation n°21:

Protection of artisanal fisheries of benthic and demersal species.

The Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) is concerned with the fact that there are several resolutions of the European Union that are aimed to control recreational fishing, but that are never effectively implemented.

The fact that the benthic and demersal artisanal fleet is asking for help of the European Union, isn't a specific event or a whim of the sector. The artisanal fleet is disappearing, and we can ascertain this by looking at the data on the existing recreational fishing licenses in the Outermost Regions (ORs). The artisanal vessels are decreasing, while the recreational are increasing without limits, due to the lack of control. We emphasize the data from the Canary Islands: 110.000 recreational licenses without absolute control and only 650 artisanal fishing vessels. In the Azores, it is estimated that there are around 1.500 recreational fishing vessels and 670 professional fishing vessels, with the recreational increasing and the professional decreasing. This means that the fisheries data which the European Commission manages, and which are intended for monitoring species and fishing effort are ineffective, if the Member State is not obliged to monitor landings from recreational fishing, thereby harming the artisanal fleet.

It's alarming the fact that this recommendation, is not only defended by the artisanal fleet, but also by the scientists that are the ones calling for its control now, reporting to several factors:

- Several authors distinguish between direct impacts (on target species) and indirect impacts (those affecting other components of the ecosystem derived from fishing activity);

- On the other hand, as the European Commission points out, around 20% of the fishing gear used by fishermen is lost at sea, potentially causing serious damage to marine ecosystems. Unfortunately, in the case of recreational fishing gear (line, nets, hooks, sinkers, etc.), the legal framework has not dealt with regulating the materials that must be used, nor what type of action should be taken about the effects of their loss at sea;

- Another extremely sensitive issue for the protection of marine habitats and related to the loss of biodiversity, is the possibility of using of non-native species as bait, for recreational fishing;

- Recreational fishing is considered one of the touristic activities that generate a parallel economy, undeclared and competitive with artisanal fisheries, promoting the illegal sale of fish;

- Uncontrolled, intensive recreational fishing may have a negative impact on fish stocks;

- But without a doubt, one of the most damaging indirect impacts for marine ecosystems is produced when anchoring the vessels;

- As a result of the concern for the constant deterioration of the seabed, an effective management of recreational boating has been called, especially when it takes place in marine protected areas or in border zones.

Thereby, we did find the following problems in the artisanal fleet ports dedicated to demersal and benthic fisheries:

a) Poaching.

b) Professional boats are disappearing in favor of recreational vessels, due to the lack of control of the latter. The fact is that this lack of control, does artisanal fishermen sell and slaughter their boats and buy recreational vessels, tired of the impunity that the recreational fisheries benefits, without paying the taxes or charges to which artisanal fishermen are obliged.

c) Decrease in landings by the professional artisanal fleet.

d) Decrease in the price and volume of the sales of fish from professional fisheries, due to the excess of supply in the market.

e) Real sanitary risk, since the species fished by recreational fisheries do not pass through the required sanitary controls and may cause diseases (*ciguatera*, *anisaki*, etc).

Hence, if there is a common denominator between the absolutely artisanal fleet of the ORs, the scientists and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) it is that exhaustive control and regulation of recreational fishing is essential. With the increased legislative capacity of the European Union agreed in the Treaty of Lisbon, we would like to:

Recommend that the European Commission to effectively regulate this undeclared recreational fishery and defend the artisanal demersal and benthic fleet.

and

Recommend that the European Union oblige the Member States to effectively control this excess of unreported fisheries.

The President of the Executive Committee of CCRUP

(David Pavón)