



Atlantic Arc Commission *ad-hoc* Fisheries Working Group

Proposed terms of reference

I. CONTEXT

Fisheries is a key activity for the Atlantic Regions. It creates wealth and provides a livelihood for men and women - fishermen and crew members -, in addition to a whole sector of industry derived directly from extractive fishing (product processing, marketing, shipbuilding, aquaculture, etc.). Furthermore, the historic importance of fishing in the Atlantic area has shaped a true cultural identity. It therefore constitutes a part of this territory's heritage that needs to be preserved.

The survival of this sector must go hand in hand with the conservation of stocks and the marine and coastal environment. A balance needs to be sought between a sustainable use of resources and a decent standard of living for people dependent on these activities.

Fisheries is an exclusive area of competence of the EU implemented through the Common Fisheries Policy, which was last reformed in 2002. The European Commission started its re-examination process on 29 September 2008 with an informal meeting of the Council, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), ensuring the economic viability of the European fishing fleet, preserving fish stocks, integrating the CFP into maritime policy and providing good quality foodstuffs to consumers. In this context, a public consultation is planned for 2009. After this consultation, the Commission will prepare a proposal for a review of the CFP that will be presented to the Council and European Parliament with a view to adopting a reform that will come into force in 2013.

II. MANDATE

At its meeting in Deauville (Basse-Normandie) in June 2008, the General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission voted a motion tabled by Galicia to set up an *ad hoc* Fisheries Group. Galicia was appointed to run this group.

The Fisheries group will be tasked with monitoring the implementation of the CFP and analysing and contributing towards its review by helping the Atlantic Regions to make their voice heard on these issues at European level.

The group will bring together member Regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission that are interested and willing to offer their expertise to provide input to the group's work content and actions, together with other Atlantic stakeholders that wish to join in this thought process (Economic & Social Committees, Regional Advisory Councils, etc.). The group will also be open to Atlantic stakeholders with an interest in fisheries.

It will maintain close relations with the CPMR's Fisheries Inter-Commissions Group and Aquamarina Group.

III. ACTIVITIES

Galicia shall undertake to coordinate and run the following activities:

- Organisation and leadership of regular working meetings;
- Monitoring of the policies, legislative provisions (either in force or in the process of being drawn up), consultations (especially the Green Paper), communications, recommendations, etc. of the EU institutions; analysis and decision-making in order to establish a joint position of the Atlantic Arc Commission;
- Drafting of Atlantic Arc Commission reports, conclusions and policy positions on the CFP in coordination with the working group's member Regions;
- Positions defined in the framework of this activity will be tabled for approval by the Political Bureau and/or General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission;
- Actions to be undertaken on this basis targeted at EU institutions and national governments will also be discussed by the Atlantic Arc Commission Political Bureau.
- Galicia's commitment to coordinating and implementing the activities described in this paper will be subject to sufficient involvement by the Regions joining the Fisheries Group. Galicia reserves the right to cease coordinating this group if it is unable to rely on the necessary support.

IV. AREAS FOR ACTION

Areas to be addressed by the Atlantic Arc Commission Fisheries Group:

- **Organisation of the CFP and how it works:** the CFP covers numerous and sometimes contradictory issues: preservation of fish stocks, protection of the marine environment, economic viability of European fishing fleets and a supply of good quality food to consumers. Measures have been taken to address these different issues and a number of instruments have been set up (notably the European Fisheries Fund). The reform of the CFP should be an opportunity to look at their effectiveness and to make proposals accordingly.
- **Environment and conservation of resources:** this is a key issue to limit the environmental impacts of fishing activities and prevent over-fishing.
- **Finding the right balance between fleet management** to adjust the fishing capacity of the European fishing fleet so that it corresponds to the available stocks, and ***maintaining an active and responsible fishing industry.***
- **Governance and the position of the Regions:** there needs to be some thought given to clarifying the role of the different actors concerned in the decision-making process related to the CFP, namely:
 - The Regions, whose position is now officially recognised under EU maritime policy;
 - Consultative bodies, especially the Regional Advisory Councils;
 - Monitoring, especially the role of the Community Fisheries Control Agency.
- **Relations with third countries:** international agreements give European fisheries the possibility to access surplus stocks in third country fishing grounds. Control systems for fish imports.
- **Aquaculture:** this is an essential complementary sector to extractive fishing and a major source of employment. However, the rise of this industry needs to be in line with a sustainable approach and respectful of ecosystems. Thought needs to be given to the means that the future CFP should promote (research, development of new species, etc.) to support the sustainable development of aquaculture.
- **Markets:** an analysis needs to be made of the details of the fisheries produce market, with special focus on the control systems that apply to imports from third countries.

V. ORGANISATION

- The Galician Government will lead and coordinate the group by providing the appropriate human resources and political and technical support. The Executive Secretariat will work together with the Presidency to organise meetings, making available the offices of the CPMR delegation in Brussels to hold meetings.
- Minimum working languages will be French and Spanish. If necessary, the cost of simultaneous interpreting will be covered by the Region hosting the meeting and the Executive Secretariat of the Atlantic Arc Commission.
- The Executive Secretariat of the Atlantic Arc Commission will act as secretariat for the group and help to prepare the meetings. It will cover the cost of translating documents for submission to the Political Bureau and General Assembly, together with any background documents and meeting reports.
- Where appropriate, experts will be commissioned. These are to be selected together by Galicia and the Executive Secretariat of the Atlantic Arc Commission in consultation with the participating Regions. The experts' travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the Atlantic Arc Commission and limited to 3 per year. If it is felt necessary to commission more sources of expertise requiring remuneration, the issue will be examined by the lead Region and the Executive Secretariat of the Atlantic Arc Commission.
- Members of the group shall cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.

VI. WORK SCHEDULE

2 to 3 meetings a year depending on the EU agenda and the willingness of the Regions.

- **12 February, Caen:** Executive Bureau - Setting-up of the working group - Adoption of the terms of reference.
- **April:** first meeting of the group.
- **14-15 May 2009:** General Assembly: discussion and presentation of the progress on the Atlantic Arc Commission's contribution to the Green Paper on the CFP reform.
- In the event of the FAR-NET project led by the CPMR (Axis 4 of the EFF - European Fisheries Fund) being approved by the European Commission, the CPMR will call on the Atlantic Arc Commission Fisheries Group to help carry out the necessary actions, depending on the interest of the participating Regions.