

## **Eighth Annual Report of the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council April 2014**

### **Introduction**

The Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council (BSRAC) has been running since 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006, after the EU decided to create the Regional Advisory Councils in the fisheries sector (Council Decision 2004/585/EC).

The main aim of the BSRAC is to prepare and provide advice on the management of Baltic Sea fisheries, so as to contribute to the successful running of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy.

The members of the BSRAC comprise representatives from the fishing sector and other interest groups affected by the Common Fisheries Policy. Representatives include fisheries associations, producer organisations, processors, market organisations, environmental NGOs, aquaculture producers, consumers, women's networks and recreational and sports fishermen.

The structure of the BSRAC has not changed. It has a General Assembly, an Executive Committee and 3 Working Groups (for demersal fisheries, pelagic fisheries, and salmon and sea trout). The demersal and pelagic working groups have been holding quite a few meetings together in recent years. The salmon and sea trout working group has been inactive during the year reported on.

This annual report tells about the activities of the BSRAC's eighth year from 16th March 2013 -15th March 2014.

### **Main results achieved by the BSRAC during the year 2013 – 2014**

The BSRAC work programme for 2013-2014 stated that the main focus of the year's work was to be a continuation of the year before: multi-annual management of Baltic fish stocks, taking into account multi-species interactions, as well as the implementation of a ban on discards.

Also referred to was the reform of the CFP and the expected adoption of the revised Basic Regulation and the European Maritime Fisheries Fund and what this will mean for the future role, functioning and composition of the RACs. The BSRAC stated that it will focus

on these issues within its planned meetings and working groups. It will also maintain close collaboration with relevant organisations, institutions and fora (Commission, European Parliament, BALTFISH, ICES, STECF, HELCOM, scientific institutes), to the extent that human resources and budget allow. Collaboration has taken two forms: representatives have come to BSRAC meetings. BSRAC participants have also gone to relevant meetings hosted and arranged by those organisations.

- **Multi-species management plan**

The BSRAC has waited for a proposal from DG Mare for a multi-species multi-annual management plan. However, there has been no progress made on the negotiations on multi-annual management plans between the European Parliament and the Council, so the Commission has not put forward its proposal for such a plan for the Baltic. So the BSRAC has not dealt with this.

- **Selectivity in the demersal fishery and discards**

Selectivity of the cod fishery, as well as the introduction of a discard ban, would be key issues for the BSRAC, which stated that it would continue to be pro-active in putting forward its strategy of a roadmap towards discards and seeking close cooperation with science in the collaborative project on the minimisation of discards. BSRAC members took part at a Commission meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to conclude the work of the LOT1 project on selectivity in the demersal fishery and identified several steps in further work to improve selectivity in the fishery. With respect to discards the BSRAC has maintained cooperation and dialogue with BALTFISH on the development of a landing obligation in the Baltic. The final joint working group of the year was devoted to a discussion of the draft discard plan drafted by BALTFISH and the formulation of a response.

- **Salmon management plan**

This has not been an issue during the year as the implementation of the salmon plan has not begun.

### **The meetings held by the BSRAC**

The work programme anticipated 1 General Assembly, 3 Executive Committee meetings (and one more if budget allowed), 3/4 Working Groups, 1 Seminar/workshop to replace one of the working groups and 2 management meetings. The BSRAC actually held a General Assembly, 4 Executive Committees, 2 Joint working groups and one management meeting.

The flagship project under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) PA Safe "To lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries", has also generated a number of bilateral visits in the Baltic Sea States to learn about current practices to deal with health and safety in the fisheries sector.

## **The meetings held by the BSRAC:**

### **Joint Demersal and Pelagic Working Group Copenhagen 6<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

An ICES representative gave the WG preliminary information on the status of most of the Baltic stocks after the ICES Baltic assessment WG meetings which took place in April 2013. The WG had a discussion and asked questions. The WG took note of a report from the recent meeting of BALTFISH which discussed the discards ban, multi-species management in the Baltic and EU-Russian fisheries negotiations. The meeting was also informed of how the landing obligation operates in Estonia. The WG had an initial discussion on the elaboration of measures to make the discard ban in the Baltic Sea workable and after the meeting produced a set of draft bullet points to be dealt with at a subsequent meeting.

### **Executive Committee Copenhagen 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

A Danish government representative said a few words of welcome to the meeting. The Secretariat and chairman presented the accounts and draft final report for the year 2012 – 2013 for approval, as well as the draft work programme and draft budget for the year 2013 –2014 for approval. These were all approved for recommendation to the General Assembly. The ExCom had a discussion on re-organising the WGs within the BSRAC, but no decision was taken. The WG chairs gave information on the May WG to deal with discards and there were reports from various meetings. There was also an update on the EUSBSR Flagship project to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries and a report on the WWF project on ghost fishing.

### **General Assembly Copenhagen 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

The ExCom chair presented the draft annual report for the year 2012- 2013. The General Assembly approved the draft annual report and the draft annual accounts for 2012 – 2013, as well as the proposed work programme and draft estimated budget for 2013 –2014. It approved the continuation of the current certified auditor for the 2013-2014 accounts. It welcomed the membership of the Polish Association of Fish Processors and Baltic 2020 and the participation of the Bornholm FLAG as observer and noted the departure of the European Association of Fishing Ports and Auctions. The meeting took note of a presentation by SIF of the Danish traceability solution.

### **Joint Working Group Copenhagen 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

The WG was given a presentation of the scientific advice from ICES for the Baltic fisheries for 2014. The WG had a discussion and exchange of views and positions. The WG chair agreed to produce a draft for further discussion and adoption at the forthcoming ExCom. The WG also dealt with discards and the development of a discard plan on the basis of questions produced by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries on behalf of BALTFISH. It produced by consensus a set of answers to be conveyed to the BALTFISH Technical Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013 on the Practical Implementation of the Discard Ban in the Baltic Sea and at which the BSRAC participated.

### **Executive Committee Copenhagen 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

The ExCom discussed and finalised its recommendations for the fishery in the Baltic for 2014. The recommendations were sent to Member States, Commission and other usual recipients. It had a discussion on activities within HELCOM, including the planning of a workshop later in the year on maritime spatial planning. The ExCom took note of reports from various meetings which members had taken part in. There was an update of the GAP 2 Project dealing with communication of science and a presentation by a BSRAC fisheries representative of a project to develop the Baltic fisheries towards a length optimised fishery. Information was received on meetings planned for the autumn. The Secretariat gave an update on expenditure and on the EUSBSR Flagship project to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries

### **Management meeting Copenhagen 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

The meeting agreed to propose to the ExCom the idea of holding a seminar on environmental issues on the work programme for 2015 -2016 (in April 2015) and to investigate securing funding for it. There was a discussion about BALTFISH and the BSRAC work in connection with that. The forthcoming year 2014-2015 was discussed and agreement was reached to propose to the ExCom to go towards a seamless transition from regional advisory council to advisory council, following on from the adoption of the new Basic Regulation and the new provisions that apply to the Advisory Councils. The lack of progress with Salmon and multi-species management plans was noted.

### **Executive Committee Copenhagen 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

The ExCom had a discussion about the follow-up to the October 17<sup>th</sup> Fisheries Council (when the TACs/quota decisions for the Baltic were adopted), in particular on the management of the cod fishery by means of days at sea. There were reports from various meetings which the BSRAC had attended (BALTFISH meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013 on discards, Commission LOT1 meeting on selectivity 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013, meetings on Spatial planning/Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Natura 2000, the meetings with the Commission 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013: INTER-RACs meeting and seminar on regionalisation and landing obligations). In preparation for the year 2014-2015, the ExCom discussed the administrative and organizational changes necessary. It was presented with and adopted the draft budget and work programme for 2014-2015. There was a discussion on BSRAC cooperation with BALTFISH and it was agreed to write a letter calling for the BSRAC to be represented on the high level group of BALTFISH. A representative from Nord Stream gave information on an extended project in the Baltic, and a representative from the International Fur Trade Federation came to talk about possible seal management plans. EU-Russia was raised, and the agreement to invite a Russian scientist to come and present and discuss scientific material in connection with allocation keys for the Baltic. Finally, there was a discussion of the Commission's public consultation on driftnets.

### **Joint Working Group Copenhagen 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

The main subject dealt with by the WG was the landing obligation and the draft paper from BALTFISH on the discard ban. The paper was dealt with section by section. After the meeting, the demersal WG chair and the Secretariat drafted a reply to BALTFISH and distributed it in a written procedure. A Commission representative gave a presentation of the Commission proposal 2013/0436 (COD) (the so-called Omnibus Regulation) as regards the landing obligation and the Commission's consultation document on the development of a new technical measures framework. There were questions and answers and discussions after these presentations. BSRAC members gave reports: from the European Control Agency meeting on landing obligation 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and from the STEFC WG (III) on the landing obligation 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Finally, a scientist from the Institute of Marine Research at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences gave a presentation of the research findings from a demonstration project to develop the Baltic cod fisheries towards a length optimized fishery and there were discussions on that.

### **Executive Committee Copenhagen 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

The ExCom took note of the report from the Demersal WG chair on the discussions at the Joint Working Group 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014 on the landings obligation, the Commission presentations that were made and the preparation of a response from the BSRAC to the BALTFISH draft discards plan. The ExCom agreed on the timescale for dealing with the response by the BSRAC to the BALTFISH discards plan. The BSRAC response was sent to BALTFISH just after the current year ended. The ExCom took note of reports from various meetings: MIRAC: ICES - RACs meeting 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Commission's Data collection meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014, ICES Benchmark for dab and flounder 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014. The Secretariat gave information on expenditure, on status on the draft budget and work programme for 2014-2015 and the transition and future of the BSRAC post CFP-reform. It gave an update on the work going on in the flagship project on a plan to reduce accidents in fisheries. The ExCom took note of the application for membership of OCEANA and agreed to invite them to the next ExCom, as well as to invite a representative from the RSPB to inform on a project dealing with birds bycatch. Finally, two project proposals were tabled (MYFISH/SOCIOEC and HORIZON 2020: INVOLVED and CETMAR) and agreement from the ExCom for the BSRAC to take part in them.

All the reports from the BSRAC meetings are in the archives of meetings for 2013 on the website. [www.bsrac.org](http://www.bsrac.org)

The recommendations and letters sent from the BSRAC during the year are in the section Statements and recommendations.

### **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security "PA Safe" Flagship Project to lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries –**

During the year, the BSRAC has been arranging, planning and assisting in the carrying out of the bilateral visits under the project to: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, October, Poland, Kaliningrad and Sweden. This has led to reports from each of these visits, drafted and sent back to those who were visited for comments. The ExCom has received

regular updates on the project at the ExCom meetings. The help and time provided by fisheries representatives in arranging meetings and providing information is acknowledged and appreciated.

**External meetings where BSRAC members took part and represented the BSRAC:**

As usual, the BSRAC has continued to be represented at a seemingly increasing number of other fisheries related meetings, conferences, workshops etc. not all the costs for meetings have been borne by the BSRAC. All of the meetings are listed below:

**ICES/HELCOM (Baltfimpa)/EUSBSR Stakeholder Conference: Sustainable fisheries for a healthier Sea: How can fisheries management contribute to achieving conservation objectives of marine protected areas? Copenhagen 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

Alex Olsen and Krzysztof Stanuch as speakers. Piotr Gruszka from the other interest group.

**Marine Strategy Framework Directive: 2nd meeting on the Descriptor 3+ regarding all commercial exploited fish and shellfish stock in relation to the Good Environmental Status Brussels 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

Chairman Reine J. Johansson

**International Conference on Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in European Seas Berlin 10<sup>th</sup>-12th April 2013**

Ewa Milewska (with a talk on the WWF project on ghost fishery)

**Annual General Assembly Danish Fishermen's Association Vejle, 13<sup>th</sup> April**

Reine J. Johansson BSRAC chair

**SAMBAH (a project to find out how many harbour porpoises there are in the Baltic) workshop Gothenburg 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

Henrik Loveby and Nils Höglund

**Hearing at European Parliament Tools to improve a Culture of Compliance in European Fisheries" Brussels 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013**

Reine J. Johansson, Sally Clink

**Baltic Sea regional participatory ComFish (Strengthening the impact of fisheries related research through dissemination, communication and technology transfer) meeting Gdynia 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

Michael Andersen

**HELCOM Fisheries/Environment Forum and Baltfish Tallinn 29th -30th April 2013**

Reine J. Johansson, Mart Undrest, Sally Clink

**Meeting of the international Steering Committee for the Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in Helsinki 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

Sally Clink

**Commission Workshop on Seabirds Brussels 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

Michael Andersen

**BENTHIS (on the effects that fishing has on the sea bed in connection with an EU FP7 project) meeting Copenhagen 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

Kim Kær Hansen

**First International Maritime Congress in Szczecin 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Sally Clink (presentation on CFP reform and regionalisation)

**BALTFISH Technical Meeting on discards Copenhagen 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Reine J. Johansson, Michael Andersen, Christian Tsangarides (FISH)

**GAP2 project meeting Amsterdam 24th June 2013**

Reine J. Johansson

**Seminar on small scale fisheries Amsterdam 25th June 2013**

Reine J. Johansson

**European Fisheries Control Agency Advisory board and seminar Vigo 26th -27th June 2013**

Sally Clink

**EU-Russia Joint Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission Brussels 7th -8th July 2013**

Reine J. Johansson

**ASCOBANS 20th meeting of the Advisory Committee Warsaw 27<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

Ewa Milewska

**BALTFISH Forum meeting Riga 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

Reine J Johansson Christian Tsangarides, Kim Kær Hansen, Sally Clink

**COFASP (TOWARDS A FUTURE LAYOUT OF THE POSITIONING, ORGANIZATION AND FINANCING OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS ON FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND SEA FOOD PROCESSING). Imares, EFARO, Ijmuiden 3rd -5th September 2013**

Sally Clink

**LOT1 project on improving selectivity in the cod fisheries, Brussels 4th September 2013**

Michael Andersen, Henrik Loveby, Alex Olsen, Staffan Larsson, Kim Kær, Thomas Thomsen, Krzysztof Stanuch

**STECF working group on landing obligation in EU fisheries Ispra (Italy) 9<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>**

**September 2013**

Michael Andersen

**Commission meeting on State of the stocks Brussels 17th September 2013**

Michael Andersen

**Nordic Marine Think Tank: Decision-making management procedures in environment and fisheries decision-making Copenhagen 22nd -23rd October 2013**

Alex Olsen

**RACs-Commission meeting Brussels 24th October 2013**

Reine J. Johansson, Niki Sporrang, Sally Clink

**DG Mare Seminar on implementation of CFP Reform Brussels 25th October**

Reine Johansson, Niki Sporrang, Michael Andersen, Kim Kær Hansen

**ODEMM (ODEMM WP7: Future governance options to best implement Ecosystem-Based Management) meeting Helsinki 29th October 2013**

Vesa Karttunen

**MAITRE media and communications course Copenhagen 29th -30th October 2013**

Sally Clink, Alex Olsen

**DG Environment meeting on Natura 2000 Brussels 7th November 2013**

Peter Breckling

**EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Priority Area Safe Steering Committee meeting Vilnius 13th november 2013**

Sally Clink

**HELCOM Seminar Fishing for Space Vilnius 14th November 2013**

Michael Andersen, Mart Undrest Sally Clink Christian Tsangarides

**DG Mare Maritime Spatial Planning workshop fisheries and aquaculture Vilnius 15th November 2013**

Michael Andersen, Christian Tsangarides, Sally Clink

**Primorskoe conference, Regionalisation in the next financial period: challenges and chances, Poland 22nd November 2013**

Ewa Milewska

**Aquafima (Integrating Aquaculture and Fisheries Management towards a sustainable regional development in the Baltic Sea Region) Brussels 26th November 2013**

Jan Kappel

**MIRAC meeting RACs meet ICES Copenhagen 15th -16th January 2014**

Michael Andersen, Sally Clink

**Commission Data Collection Regulation meeting Brussels 16th January 2014**

Michael Andersen

**European Fisheries Control Agency seminar on implementation of CFP Dubrovnik 16th January 2014**

Niki Sporrang

**COFASP Imares, EFARO, (TOWARDS A FUTURE LAYOUT OF THE POSITIONING, ORGANIZATION AND FINANCING OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS ON FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND SEA FOOD PROCESSING) Ijmuiden 27th – 29th January 2014**

Sally Clink

**ICES bench mark for flounder and dab Copenhagen 27th – 31st January 2014**

Michael Andersen, Kim Kær Hansen

**STECF working group on landing obligation Varese 10th -14th February 2014**

Kim Kær Hansen, Mart Undrest, Jacob Hagberg

**INSPIRE (INtegrating SPatial pRocesses into Ecosystem models for sustainable utilization of fish resources) Tallinn 25th – 28th Feb 2014**

Pehr Eriksson

**GAP2 meeting Brussels 26th February 2014**

Gustaf Almqvist

**GAP2 herring IIIa Copenhagen 27th February 2014**

Reine J. Johansson, Mart Undrest, Sally Clink

**European Fisheries Control Agency Advisory Board Meeting Brussels 28th February 2013**

Reine J. Johansson

**Membership**

The BSRAC has had 39 members during the year. This included the two new members the Polish Association of Fish Processors and Baltic 2020.

The ExCom has consisted of 23 (out of 24) members: 15 in the fisheries interest groups and 8 in the other interest group. So has been one vacant seat in the fisheries interest groups.

### **Changes within the membership**

Kołobrzeg Group of Producers Fish: Ryszard Malik became substitute for Marcin Raskowski on the General Assembly (Kołobrzeg Group of Producers Fish is General Assembly member).

The Association of Fishmeal and Fishoil Manufactures in Denmark (General Assembly member) changed its name to Marine Ingredients Denmark and got a new director, Anne Mette Bæk Jespersen (Frank Mink still the representative on the General Assembly).

The German Sportsfishermen's Association (Executive Committee member) changed its name to the German Angling Association (Deutscher Angelfischerverbande V. (DAFV), but with the same representatives Peter Mohnert and substitute Stefan Spahn.

The International Federation for Sport Sea Fishing, Louis Morvan vice president, became nominated representative on the General Assembly, replacing Hubert Waldheim.

Ewa Milewska's substitute on the ExCom - Jenny Fors WWF Sweden was replaced by Piotr Gruszka WWF Poland.

ASECO (Alliance of Social and Ecological Consumer Organizations) Kenneth Rasmussen became a representative on the Executive Committee.

### **Departures**

The Nordic Coastal and Fisherwoman (Anita Storm and Gunnel Edman-Blom) left the BSRAC at the end of the year 2013 - 2014. Their reason for leaving was the increase in the membership fee.

General Assembly member Swedish Coast and Lake Fishermen's Federation (Ingemar Olsson) also left the BSRAC at the end of the year. Their reason for leaving was also for financial reasons.

### **Applications**

OCEANA sent in an application for membership and this will be taken up in the year 2014 – 2015.

Membership lists (General Assembly and Executive Committee) are available on the BSRAC website and can also be obtained from the BSRAC Secretariat.

### **Keeping the BSRAC members informed**

The Secretariat has sent regular newsletters to the BSRAC a total of 22 newsletters during the year.