



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-ORDINATION

Brussels,

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Subject: **Final Minutes of the 8th meeting of the Expert group on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Brussels, 2 March 2016, 9.30 – 17:15**

Attendance

Chairperson

Frangiscos NIKOLIAN, Head of Unit MARE A3, "Structural policy and economic analysis".

Member States

With the exception of EL and LU all the MS' delegations were present at the meeting.

COMMISSION

DG MARE

EASME, ENRD for their agenda points respectively.

Secretariat:

S. Efentzoglou, S. Lamprianidou (MARE A3).

1. Adoption of the agenda.

Point 7 of the draft agenda was shifted to point 2 in the morning and a new sub point "Complementarity EFSI – ESIF" was added to agenda point 5. The final agenda was adopted.

2. State of play of implementation of DG MARE work programmes (direct management)

Mark Johnston (Director Resources) presented the state of play of implementation of DG MARE work programme for 2015. The 2016 work programme was not covered as it had only been adopted at the last EMFF Committee Group meeting.

DK thanked for the opportunity given in November to provide input to the Commission on the work programme in the March meeting. It raised three issues for discussion: First, they asked whether the COM had taken into account the recommendations from the liaison meetings of the DCF national correspondents when setting up the data calls. It especially referred to recommendation 22 as well as on recommendations for specific studies. Second, it stressed to consider DCF liaison recommendations to the COM, on proposals to further develop regional databases. Special attention should be given to the very specific ICES recommendation under action 1.2.2.1.b. Finally, DK proposed that the group could have a similar opportunity for discussion/input on the work programmes of the future years.

DKs position was supported by FR, DE, NL, UK, PT, IE, EE, FI, LV, LT and SE.

Furthermore, FR stressed the importance of a common tool and of MS using the same references. It regretted that results of studies come too late to be useful as discussion on the EMFF. FR called on the close monitoring in expert group meetings and the setting up of ad-hoc groups.

NL requested a clarification concerning the use of EUMOFA. It appreciated the transparency on the first price sales ensured by EUMOFA but questioned whether the take up by the sector was such that it justified the yearly budget allocated to it.

EE asked whether results of the midterm evaluation and studies would be made available to MS. It also asked the COM to clarify what the difference between EMODNET and CISE was.

COM responded that the work programmers presented fall under direct management and that although proactive recommendations from MS and other stake holders are welcomed and taken on board, final decisions on tasks budget allocation was responsibility of COM applying sound financial management principles.

On EUMOFA, the COM stated that an independent cost-benefit analysis would be conducted under the midterm evaluation due in 2017. From the feedback it had received so far it was however under the impression that stakeholders appreciate and use the service and that EUMOFA is the right instrument for the current situation. On studies COM reiterated, all final reports were to be published on EUROPA. Draft or midterm reports are however for internal use only. On the difference between EMODNET and CISE COM pointed out that while both are interoperability projects, EMODNET is sector specific and focusses on environmental CISE serves coastguard functions and is target group specific but covering different sectors such as transport, border control, fisheries control, defense, customs etc.

Isabelle Garzon (HoU, C3) appreciated MS support for regional data bases and the calls launched to set up respectively develop these further. She informed that two regional grants were already ongoing, and that all MS were involved. The objective of these grants was to establish common data collection methodologies by summer 2016. In addition, a feasibility

study had identified in 2014 challenges especially with regards to the absence of a centralised data system in the EU, and a new study will be launched in 2016 to identify the way forward.”

COM informed that it envisaged presenting the multi-annual plans to MS in May and that implementing acts for the template of the work plans were planned to be presented to the EMFF Committee in June.

3. FARNET

FARNET presented the annual work programme for 2016. It informed that the new programming period foresees 10 new national networks. As of 29 February 76 FLAGS of the almost 300 foreseen had been selected and that in general process was faster than in the previous funding period.

A presentation of a database on local action groups set up by AGRI and hosted on the rural development network followed. On proposal of MS this data base is now being extended to the other ESIF DGs.

FR responded it appreciated the database and recommended that support to multi-fund initiatives should be strengthened. It considered the role of the private sector in CLLD too small and expects multi-fund initiatives e.g. in processing to have the potential to boost public private partnerships.

COM confirmed that the proposal would be taken up and that FARNET is currently producing a guidance document on multi-funding which will be published on the FARNET in the coming weeks. It also informed that it would look at the potential contribution of CLLD to the integration of migrants/refugees.

SE informed that the Swedish FLAGS follow a multi-fund approach in CLLD. SE generally supports the multi-fund approach and is looking forward to its evaluation and inviting MS interested in experience exchange to come forward.

4. FAME

FAME presented the annual work programme for 2016.

SE welcomed the foreseen best practice study on evaluation, as it would like to learn from other MS's methods and approaches to evaluation and asked how the results would be disseminated (COM replied that the report would be shared with MS).

With regards a question of the UK on the template for the reporting on the implementation of the EMFF COM clarified that it was for internal use, i.e. the reporting of COM to Council and Parliament as foreseen under Article 53 CPR.

BE identified evaluation plans and communication as potentially challenging topics that could also be covered in a future workshop. It proposed that more input and analysis of what already exists and what is being implemented should be provided as good practice examples.

5. Reporting and indicators

a. ESIF Open Data Platform

COM (Andrea Weber, MARE A3) presented the ESIF Open Data Platform (<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>). The platform went online with the publication of the Article 16 and shows financing and achievement data for all ESI Funds. It will be regularly

updated for implementation data under Article 53 CPR (Annual Implementation Reports) and Article 98 EMFF Regulation. While the EMFF currently presents data on EU aggregate level for 18 of the common indicators a visualisation of MS level data is planned for June/December 2016.

b. Conclusion from workshop on EMFF common indicators

FAME then presented the outcome of the indicator workshop in form of a traffic light system identifying more indicators for which the definition has widely been clarified as well as those where individual aspects still need to be clarified. COM pointed to the unique role in the EMFF of the beneficiary as data supplier.

UK and NL thanked COM for what they considered to have been a very useful workshop on indicators. NL asked which topics future workshops would be on. COM answered that this would be discussed internally and decided also with regards findings from the upcoming peer review.

c. Commission Implementing Regulation 1243/2014, Article 3

COM (Jean-Pierre Vercruyse, A3) presented a proposal to delete Article 3 of Regulation 1243/2014 on reporting times, aiming at simplification of MS reporting obligations and aligning reporting with the AIR.

While MS responded positively to the proposal and its potential for simplification, BE, SE, FR raised concerns about potential implications for reporting on result indicators. ES agreed with the proposal as the reporting obligations in Annex I will need to be in line with the MS evaluation plan, but underscored that a new Code 4 for "operations partially implemented" should be added under Annex I point 9.

COM ensured MS that the proposal does not touch the reporting on result indicators and that a document showing an example would be sent to MS ahead of the next expert group meeting.

LV shared the conclusions of the FAME workshop that there are issues with the current CMES. In order to ensure compliance with the regulations, it suggested not using beneficiary data but statistical data. If not Table 1 where the linkage between context and result indicators is established, should be removed and measures should be listed for which result at beneficiary level is zero.

BE suggested that in the indicator descriptions "reference period" should be renamed to "reporting timeframe".

6. Presentation of the EMFF learning Network

NL presented an IT tool to foster interactive and pro-active cooperation set up by a network of 10 MS following a MS cooperation workshop in Tallinn September 2015. The network aims at facilitating exchange on the EMFF.

COM welcomed the initiative and recommended that the network would liaise with COM before disseminating common interpretations.

7. Implementation of EMFF 2014-2020

COM (Frangiskos Nikolian, MARE A3) reiterated MS obligations at the start of EMFF implementation as summarised in a DG MARE letter to MS earlier in the year.

With regards designation COM informed MS it had received one designation notification only and asked MS for information as to when they were expecting to notify COM. While AT, LV and NL expected to notify COM of designation within one month, UK, BE and DK plan to be ready until the summer, for PT and IT within 6 and for FR, ES, HR within 9 months. EE and LT envisaged notification before the first payment claim while DE and SE could not commit to timing, the former with reference to the federal structure. IE requested information with regards the minimum requirements.

COM informs MS that it is concerned about the delays in designation of authorities. It advises MS to use the flexibility provided in the legislation and guidelines. COM referred to the Q & A document it had sent to MAs and encourages MS to make use of the flexibility described herein.

COM (Andrea Weber, MARE A3) provided an overview on the implementation of ex-ante conditionality action plans. So far, none of the adopted action plans for EMFF specific ex ante conditionalities has been assessed as fulfilled by COM.

UK requested clarification on general ex ante conditionality 7 that was presented as unfulfilled; COM informed that the assessment presented for the general ex ante conditionalities was based on operational programmes and in this case refers to non EMFF OP(s). FR stressed that it needs to prioritise and cannot invest resources in all fields. IE informed COM that ex ante conditionalities have been discussed at recent Monitoring Committee. COM recommended MS to discuss any issues delaying the implementation of action plans with respective MARE geodesks.

COM (Gabriella Iglói, MARE A3) presented the procedure for amendments of operational programmes and explained the differences between the standard and the simplified procedures.

COM (Miguel Pena, MARE A3) presented a COM initiative to strengthen the complementarity of EFSI and ESIF. A dedicated website with a guidance document is available at <https://www.fi-compass.eu/publication/ec-regulatory-guidance/new-guidelines-combining-european-structural-and-investment-funds>.

8. Studies

COM (Miguel Pena, Gabriella Iglói, MARE A3) presented ongoing MARE studies as well as ESIF studies with the lead of DG REGIO to which DG MARE actively contributes.

FR stated that because of the different architecture of the EMFF, ESIF studies were only partly relevant for the EMFF and the drawing of conclusions therefore illegitimate.

COM emphasised that the FR remark may only be relevant to studies launched in 2014 due to the late adoption of the OPs. In case of studies launched in 2015, and in particular in those studies to which MARE actively contributes, EMFF specificities were fully taken into account.

9. Simplification

COM (Gabriella Iglói, MARE A3) presented the progress of the work of the High Level Group on Simplification as well as conclusions and recommendations concerning e-cohesion and the use of simplified cost options.

10. EFF Implementation Report

COM (Miguel Pena, MARE A3) presented the EFF implementation report.

FR concluded from the EFF implementation report that the EMFF must be implemented quickly and that delaying factors for the implementation of the funds need be identified as delays in legislation could not be the only one argument. BE stated that as OPs constantly needed to be adapted to moving goals and objectives it was difficult to conclude anything from the EFF implementation report. ES suggested to refer in the report to the budgetary constraints imposed by Article 24(2) of R(EC) 1198/2006 on temporary cessation. COM recalled that all language versions of the report are available on EUR-Lex (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2015:662:FIN>).



Ernesto PENAS LADO
Director