

Swedish Team Builds Consensus Among Polish Fisheries

Polish Roundtable

On May 6, representatives of Polish fishermen, scientists, environmental organisations, and the Polish government will meet for a round table meeting in Gdynia to discuss a joint memorandum of understanding regarding the sustainable exploitation of fish in the Baltic Sea.

This is a significant step forward, as the number of stakeholders in the Polish fisheries sector is high, the landscape of the organisations fragmented. In particular scientific issues have repeatedly been barriers to an effective dialogue.

The meeting in Gdynia is the result of an 18 months project carried out by a research group from Gothenburg Center for Public Learning and Understanding of Science (gcPLUS.org). The team has specifically worked with the processes through which the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council (RAC) works.

This project was developed in coordination with the chairman of the Baltic Sea RAC, Reine Johansson, and with the support of the Baltic Sea 2020 Foundation and the European Fisheries Fund.

The joint memorandum among the Polish representatives was initiated at a pilot workshop in Gdynia earlier this year, where the team of researchers worked with a group of people in Poland organized by Ryszard Malik and Ewa Milewska on question framing and joint fact finding processes, which are methods to identify areas in which consensus and mutual understanding can be reached. About 15 persons have registered for the meeting.

The timing of this work is fortunate; the idea is to target a common understanding towards the upcoming consultancy process regarding the revised "Common Fisheries Policy" from the European Union, expected to be adopted in 2012. A "green paper" on CFP reforms has been published and will be discussed during 2009 by the newly formed group.

Discussions will be moderated by professor Ilan Chabay of the Gothenburg Center for Public Learning and Understanding of Science, and facilitated by Dr. Peter Adler, who is the CEO of Keystone Center in the US, with extensive experience in working with governance of natural resources on a global scale.

Professor Ilan Chabay, Dr. Peter Adler, and members of the Baltic Sea RAC will be available for interviews and questions in Gdynia the 6 May.

Science Workshop

A Baltic Sea RAC Science Workshop will be arranged the following day, also in Gdynia. Over 50 people have registered –BS RAC members, researchers, NGO's, the European Commission and other stakeholders. This exceeds by far the expectations of the BS RAC and the team from Gothenburg.

In more detail, the aims of the workshop are:

1. To create a stronger and more accepted base of technical and scientific information related to fisheries.

2. To introduce and develop skills with a designed and facilitated dialogue process that supports a collaborative and open analytical effort, so it is possible to:
 - Identify issues of joint concern.
 - Discern the underlying interests of all stakeholders.
 - Bring the best information into the dialogue.
 - Discover, clarify or create the greatest common gains possible.
 - Make informed choices on what the stakeholders can and cannot agree on.

For more information regarding the meeting, please call Sally Clink, Executive Secretary of the Baltic Sea RAC, phone +45 33 93 50 00.

Ilan Chabay, Peter Adler, Ryszard Malik and Ewa Milewska will all be available for interviews, additional information or other questions in Gdynia, 6-8 May.

The Baltic Sea RAC was formed in 2006 as one of the pillars of the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy, CFP. The main aim is to prepare and provide advice on the governance of Baltic Sea Fisheries. Chairman is Reine J Johansson, former chairman of the Swedish Fishermen's Federation.

The Gothenburg Center for Public Learning and Understanding of Science is a research center at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden, working on issues regarding governance, inclusion and innovation related to developing a sustainable future for all.

This project, "Governance of Baltic Sea Fisheries", is funded and supported by the Baltic Sea 2020 Foundation in Sweden and the European Fisheries Fund. The project concerns all EU Member States with fisheries in the Baltic Sea: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden. The final report will be published in August 2009.

The "Green paper" mentioned above can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.html