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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-second Session

Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 5-7 May 2020

**Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 30th Session of the European
Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)**

Executive Summary

This document presents the Final Report¹ of the Thirtieth Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), held in Dresden, Germany, from 11 to 13 September 2019.

- The Commission reviewed the recommendations from the EIFAAC International Symposium on “Food Safety and Conservation in Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture”, held in Dresden, Germany, from 9 to 11 September 2019, and attended by 91 participants from 15 countries.
- The Commission adopted a five-year EIFAAC Strategy for 2020-2024 (including a new communication strategy) and a Workplan for the intersessional period 2020-2021 that reflect EIFAAC’s key objectives, goals, priority issues and specific action plan.
- The Commission reconfirmed its commitment to better disseminate advice within its technical area to the European Union and national policy-makers by providing more timely scientific data and research findings and by identifying the priority needs of Members when planning new EIFAAC projects, especially those that can contribute to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.

It was highlighted that the active engagement of the operational focal points (OFPs) representing the Members of the Commission is crucial to the effective development of the only pan-European network on inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture in the region.

Suggested action by the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference for Europe is invited to review the EIFAAC report and:

¹ The full report with annexes on the approved EIFAAC Strategy Plan 2020-2024 can be found on the FAO EIFAAC Website: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7495en/ca7495en.pdf>

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- Discuss priorities of work for inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture development in the region in line with achieving the SDGs and the FAO Regional Initiatives; and
- Call upon Members to nominate and support their OFPs to EIFAAC, as the only pan-European commission on inland fisheries and aquaculture, and to encourage other countries and non-governmental organizations in the region to participate in EIFAAC sessions as observers. Encourage Members through their OFPs to submit project proposals of a regional interest for consideration by the Technical and Scientific Committee of EIFAAC.

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EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Report of the

**THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION**

Dresden, Germany, 11–13 September 2019

EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ADVISORY
COMMISSION

Report of the

THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ADVISORY
COMMISSION

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the Thirtieth Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), which was held in Dresden, Germany, on 11–13 September 2019.

The material in the appendices is reproduced as submitted.

ABSTRACT

The Thirtieth Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) was held in Dresden, Germany, from 11 to 13 September 2019. The Session presented and discussed the results achieved by EIFAAC, by its Management Committee as well as its Technical and Scientific Committee since the 29th Session of EIFAAC and reviewed the recommendations from the EIFAAC International Symposium on “Food Safety and Conservation in Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture”, held in Dresden, Germany, from 9 to 11 September 2019. At this Session, new items such as Member & Observer Presentations on their inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture sector and Open Discussion on the role of EIFAAC have been successfully introduced as a way to stimulate discussion and interaction on the country and observer organization level. The Session reviewed and adopted the EIFAAC Strategy 2020-2024, including the newly formulated Communication Strategy, and the EIFAAC Workplan for the next intersessional period of 2020-2021. Ireland offered to host the Thirty-first session to be held in 2021.

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I. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Thirtieth session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) was held in Dresden, Germany, 11-13 September 2019 with Mr Petri Heinimaa (Finland) as Chair. The session was attended by representatives from Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and EU. The session was also attended by six observers: five international organizations (Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), European Anglers Alliance (EAA), EUROFISH International Organization, Network of Aquaculture Centres in Central-Eastern Europe (NACEE) and European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (EATiP)) and one observer state (Georgia). The list of participants is provided in Annex 3.

2. The Chair opened the session and invited the delegate from Germany, Mr Reinhold Hanel, to speak on behalf of the host Government, represented by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Free State of Saxony.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The Agenda was approved with no changes. Although there was no quorum present at the session, the Commission decided to proceed with approval of the report pending correspondence with other members.

III. MAIN DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF REGIONAL FAO CONFERENCES AND FISHERIES BODIES

4. The Secretariat referred the Commission to the meeting document EIFAAC/XXX/2019/4. Additional information was provided on the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture that took place in Trondheim, Norway in August 2019.

IV. MAIN DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 29TH SESSION OF EIFAAC

5. The Chair presented the key findings of the 29th Session in Stare Jablonki, Poland (EIFAAC/XXX/2019/INF/2), focusing on social economic aspects of inland fisheries, citizen science, climate change, communication and financial support for long term assessment, impact and mitigation measures.

V. RESULTS ACHIEVED SINCE THE 29TH SESSION OF EIFAAC

A. REPORT FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

6. The Chair informed the Commission on ongoing problems with identifying the operational focal points (OFP) to EIFAAC namely only 22 OFPs out of 34 members were nominated for the 30th Session. He also informed on problems of funding projects and proposed the solution of multi-donor trust fund as well as increased cooperation with other FAO Commissions (GFCM, CACFish, EuFMD).

7. This was followed by discussions among members on the important role of operational focal points and ways to address the problem of engaging OFPs. Members commended Secretariat and Management Committee for efforts taken since the 29th Session in identifying and reaching OFPs. Members proposed other measures to be taken such as sending a list of unidentified focal points to OFPs for follow-up through their networks.

**B. REPORT ON MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE
FAO/EIFAAC/EUROFISH CONFERENCE ON HABITAT RESTORATION**

8. The Secretary of the Commission, Ms Victoria Chomo, presented the recommendations from the FAO Regional Conference on river habitat restoration for inland fisheries in the Danube river basin and adjacent Black Sea areas. Members discussed the value of having EIFAAC regional events that culminate into FAO publications, including collaboration with regional partners. This event was a good starting point and can serve as the blueprint for future EIFAAC regional activities. EUROFISH announced their plans to deliver a regional workshop in the Baltic states, based on the model of the Danube river conference in Romania. EIFAAC agreed to support this initiative.

C. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (TSC)

9. The Chair of the Technical and Scientific Committee, Mr Teppo Vehanen, presented an overview of the EIFAAC projects. He reported on the ongoing projects (EIFAAC/XXX/INF/2019/4), for example, the recent publication on the Welfare of Fishes in Aquaculture. One of the project managers, namely Ms Marina Piria, gave detailed information to the Commission on the ongoing project on invasive aquatic species. Members discussed how to disseminate information from EIFAAC projects to a wider audience, for example to non-governmental organizations and the European Union.

**D. REPORT ON MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EIFAAC
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

10. Mr Reinhold Hanel gave a short report and recommendations from the EIFAAC international symposium on “Food Safety and Conservation in Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture”, Dresden, Germany, 9-11 September 2019. He informed the Session that the Symposium was very successful with positive feedback received from the 91 participants from 15 countries. Mr Hanel briefed the session about the contents and final recommendations of the Symposium.

11. The main recommendations from the Symposium:

- In relation to inland aquaculture EIFAAC should collate knowledge relating to effective and efficient environmentally sustainable production, while adhering to food safety standards equivalent to marine species food safety programs. The participants identified deviations between risk assessment and risk management approaches in food safety for fish and fisheries products. Results require better integration, validation. New knowledge needs to be timely published for both the scientific community and the public.
- Surveys among anglers and other inland waterbody stakeholders should be standardized on a European level to better allow comparisons, while current practice is at national or sub-national level and allows for wide variation in data collection and methodologies for analysis. Angler surveys should also include social and economic queries to support enhanced evidence-based management decisions.
- The participants acknowledge the progress made in the establishment of aquaculture certification schemes and guidelines at a global level. However, especially for small scale producers in inland fisheries and aquaculture, the cost-effectiveness of existing certification

schemes needs to be assessed. To support small scale freshwater fish farmers it is recommended that regional or national certification labels should be developed, including labels of origin to help producers of locally-sourced species to compete with generic international imports.

- The symposium participants identified the need for the development of transdisciplinary, integrative, systematic and evidence-based management approaches creating win-win solutions for involved stakeholders with regard to conservation conflicts and other conflicts of interest arising from multiple uses of water resources and different perceptions on targets
- The participants identified a need for better coordination in the assessment and monitoring of fisheries and fish stocks between marine and inland waters, especially with regard to diadromous species. Where these result in management and conservation programs, they need to be coordinated in a comprehensive way.

12. The Chair expressed his appreciation for all the efforts extended for a successful EIFAAC international symposium. He congratulated participants for an excellent symposium. The Chair thanked the host country Germany, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Free State of Saxony for their support.

VI. MEMBER PRESENTATIONS ON ACTIVITIES AT COUNTRY LEVEL

13. The Agenda item on country presentations was moved by the Commission before the Agenda Item on EIFAAC Strategy and Workplan, as Members anticipated that findings of these national presentations would be useful in developing the EIFAAC strategy 2020-2024. For the first time in recent years, the Members were invited to present their inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture sector to the 30th Session. Ten delegations presented, some using the EIFAAC Guidelines for Session Presentations on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis), developed by the Management Committee. Presentations were given by the following: Croatia, European Commission, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Sweden and Switzerland. Some PowerPoint presentations can be found in the [Web Annex](#). This was a pilot exercise and will continue in the next sessions.

VII. EIFAAC STRATEGY 2020-2024 AND WORKPLAN FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD 2020-2021

14. The Chair reviewed the EIFAAC objectives as related to overarching UN and FAO objectives and regional initiatives per meeting document EIFAAC/XXX/2019/5, as an Article VI statutory body of FAO. He reminded the Session of the structural change of the Commission in 2012 from working groups to a project orientation. He stressed the need to identify how best to obtain results from EIFAAC projects, as a critical issue for development of future work and relevance of EIFAAC as the only pan-European organization focusing on inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture research and evidence-based policy recommendations.

15. Members identified the need to enhance the Strategy by having a more streamlined list of strategic priorities identified through the five-year period 2020-2024 and a roadmap to guide prioritization and to focus EIFAAC work in a way that we can achieve and measure the regional objectives. These priorities can assist EIFAAC projects to be developed, based on linking their project to priority areas identified by EIFAAC as a regional fisheries body.

16. Thus, it is important for OFPs to distribute these priority lists of EIFAAC at national level, to guide research at country level that feeds into regional goals. Potential partners, such as international organizations and non-governmental organizations, could enhance the work of EIFAAC and its impact within the European region.

17. Members encourage EIFAAC to improve contact and interactions with other stakeholder groups, active in the sectors (such as Friends of Freshwater Fish, EAA, EATiP, NACEE, EUROFISH), e.g. by hosting joint symposia or workshops.

18. The Secretary presented the EIFAAC draft Communication Strategy based on FAO corporate Guidelines on communication. This was requested by the 29th Session of the Commission. The members discussed and adjusted the communication strategy, which was then approved by the 30th Session. The Communication Strategy is in Annex 1. Highlights of the communication plan:

- Members agreed to contribute articles on inland fisheries and aquaculture to the EIFAAC webpage, occasionally, and these will be uploaded to the webpage by EIFAAC Secretariat.
- Members formally request FAO to provide sufficient support for the update of the EIFAAC webpage.
- EIFAAC Twitter account needs to be supported and used more broadly, so that Members could easily put up information on the Twitter account.
- EUROFISH informed of its quarterly magazine, and offered to publish EIFAAC information to raise awareness of EIFAAC results, activities and events. Many countries are members of both EIFAAC and EUROFISH, which would benefit both organizations.

VIII. EIFAAC WORKPLAN 2020-2021

19. The Chair introduced the operational overview and TSC overview of the EIFAAC work plan since the structural reform in 2012. Three goals were presented to Members for discussion and revision of the results and work plan under each goal. The Commission discussed and approved the revised Workplan for the intersessional period 2020-2021. The approved Workplan is in Annex 2.

IX. OBSERVER PRESENTATIONS ON ACTIVITIES

20. The following observer organizations gave presentations on inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture sector: BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation), EAA (European Anglers Alliance), EATiP (European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform), EUROFISH, NACEE (Network of Aquaculture Centres in Central-Eastern Europe).

X. OPEN DISCUSSION ON HOW TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF EIFAAC

21. The Commission broke into three groups and discussed the following questions:

- a. How can EIFAAC provide more timely policy advice to Member Governments and the European Union as the only pan-European body specialized on inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture?
- b. What are the priority needs of Member Governments and the European Union to be proposed as future EIFAAC projects, especially those that contribute to SDG targets and Sustainable Development?
- c. How can EIFAAC more actively engage national focal points, private sector, and/or civil society to improve awareness and uptake of EIFAAC research findings?

22. The group findings were then presented in the plenary and are attached as Annex 4. The Thirtieth Session of the Commission requests the Management Committee to follow up on these recommendations.

XI. ELECTION OF EIFAAC OFFICERS

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (TSC)

- Marina Piria (CROATIA)
- Colin Bean (UNITED KINGDOM)
- Christian Skov (DENMARK)
- Robert Arlinghaus (GERMANY)
- Fiona Kelly (IRELAND)
- Jan Kubecka (CZECH REPUBLIC)
- Teppo Vehanen (FINLAND)

Alternates: (pending confirmation)

- Andreas Melcher (AUSTRIA)
- Russell Poole (IRELAND)

ELECTION OF THE CHAIR OF THE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (TSC)

- Teppo Vehanen (FINLAND)

ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MC)

- Chair – Petri Heinimaa (FINLAND)
- 1st Vice Chair – Reinhold Hanel (GERMANY)
- 2nd Vice Chair – Igor Wawrzyniak (POLAND)

ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MC)

- Ruta Medne (LATVIA)
- Gudni Magnus Eiriksson (ICELAND)
- Cathal Gallagher (IRELAND)

XII. ANY OTHER MATTERS

23. The following paragraph will be added to the Rules of Procedure of EIFAAC: “If the situation arises where membership of the MC and/or TSC is not complete by election at the Session, the Session may consider requesting sitting members of the MC and/or TSC to serve a further term.”

24. The Commission advises the member countries to reflect on their operational focal points at least every two years.

25. The Commission would like to acknowledge the excellent support currently received from the Secretary of EIFAAC and team. The stability, continuity of the expert support provided has enabled the EIFAAC to grow and deliver for its members. As an organisation we look forward to building on this support to ensure the delivery of the next 31st EIFAAC Session and Symposium.

XIII. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT EIFAAC SESSION

26. The delegate of Ireland invited EIFAAC for the 31st Session and International Symposium in 2021. The exact date and location are to be determined. The Chair thanked Ireland for the offer and the Session accepted the proposal.

XIV. REVIEW AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE REPORT BY THE COMMISSION AND CLOSING OF THE SESSION

27. The report was approved by the Members present at the 30th Session. The Chair thanked the MC and the members for their support. He thanked the TSC and the Secretariat for all their work. The re-elected Chair made a few comments to the members and thanked the members for his nomination.

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