

Strengthening institutional cooperation among Black Sea riparian States

GFCM HQ, Rome, 24 January 2014 – The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized at its headquarters –palazzo Blumensthal in Rome – a brainstorming meeting which brought together the Permanent Representatives to the FAO of the six Black Sea Riparian States (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine), the FAO Assistant Director General for Fisheries and Aquaculture and a representative of the European Commission. This was the occasion to review ongoing cooperation activities and the role played by the GFCM in the Black Sea region, in particular through the Ad hoc Working Group on the Black Sea (third meeting to be held in Trabzon, Turkey, on 26–28 February 2014), and take stock of current challenges and opportunities. Participants discussed about possible ways and steps forward to strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the Black Sea towards an integrated management of the basin.

The fruitful discussions held have highlighted the need for enhanced institutional cooperation to face current challenges and opportunities and draw positive benefits for the whole region. In this respect, initiatives such as the first GFCM framework programme and the upcoming FAO BlackSeaFish regional project would offer potential opportunities to provide for an appropriate framework to better focus on scientific and technical issues and contribute to fisheries management and decision-making processes. Other consultation frameworks, such as bilateral meetings between representatives of the GFCM and the Black Sea riparian States, were also evoked as useful fora that could facilitate the exchange of views and promote further involvement in the work of the GFCM, in light of the ongoing amendment process which is expected to emphasize the specificities and needs of the Black Sea region.

All participants thanked the GFCM Secretariat for the valuable initiative and expressed great satisfaction and appreciation for the ideas emerged during the meeting. They concurred that it was important to seize the momentum and keep on moving towards institutionalized cooperation and continuous dialogue.

