

NOTE

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SJS/MKS

Final meeting of the Flagship Project “To lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries”

The Danish Maritime Authority represented by Bjarke W. Bøtcher and Malte K. Søndergaard attended the final meeting of the EUSBSR PA Safe Flagship Project “*To lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries*”, which is led by the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council (BSRAC) and jointly financed by PA Safe and the Swedish Institute. The meeting took place on 25 March 2014 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

DANISH MARITIME AUTHORITY

Carl Jacobsens Vej 31

DK-2500 Valby

The meeting was attended by representatives of various national authorities and organisations dealing with fisheries and occupational safety and health from the Baltic Sea region as well as the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) and the Fishing Industry’s Safety and Health Platform. All countries from the Baltic Sea region including Russia were represented with the exception of Finland, Germany and Poland.

Tel. +45 91 37 60 00

Fax +45 91 37 60 01

CVR-no. 29 83 16 10

EAN-nr. 5798000023000

dma@dma.dk

www.dma.dk

Since the EUSBSR was adopted in 2009, a requirement for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries has been listed in the Action Plan accompanying the Strategy. The task was however not addressed before 2013, when the BSRAC undertook the assignment and initiated a Flagship Project in close dialogue with PA Safe and DG Mare. The BSRAC chose to restrict its task to develop the groundwork for a plan to reduce the number of accidents in the fisheries sector instead of a complete plan.

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS AND GROWTH

Since the initiation of the project in early 2013, the BSRAC has carried out a number of fact-finding visits to the Baltic Sea states, where the delegation met with representatives of fisheries administrations, educational institutions as well as fishermen and fisheries organisations. The aim of the visits was to gather information on safety practices in the fisheries sector in the Baltic Sea states and to learn about best-practices and note down recommendations for improvements or further work. These efforts have resulted in a preliminary report, from which the results and recommendations were presented during the final meeting.

As a result of the project findings, a number of new potential projects were identified:

- The fisheries fleet in the Baltic Sea region is in general old, challenged by difficulties in creating jobs as well as attracting new and younger labour. One of the challenges is the image that is

sometimes attributed to the sector. It was proposed to set up a new project that promotes the fisheries more positively, which can attract new labour and in a long term perspective will hopefully improve the health and safety in the fisheries sector.

- Another finding was that the low number of accidents and incidents in the Baltic fisheries sector was disguised by the fact that many accidents, incidents and near-misses go unreported. Moreover, the comparability of the accidents statistics was also a challenge due to the fact that the Baltic Sea states use different methods for determining accidents. A project addressing these issues was also proposed.
- The problem with accident reporting could mainly be attributed to the safety culture in the fisheries sector. Thus a project that addresses the safety culture on board fishing vessels was proposed. The Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Services expressed a clear interest in leading such a project, which can engage directly with the fishermen by means of education.

No decision on which projects to proceed with was formally taken, but it was agreed among the participants to further evaluate the results of the project and keep the relevant stakeholders informed about new project opportunities and proposals.