

## **PESCAVET - Professionals' innovation for pesca-tourism activities**

Erasmus+, KA202 - Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training

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### **IO1: Benchmark Synthesis Report on new processes and marketing techniques for designing, promoting and review of products/services in pesca-tourism**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
1. Key findings about pesca-tourism in partner countries: a comparative analysis .....	6
1.1. Demographics.....	6
1.2. Education and training level .....	7
1.3. Previous experience in tourism and fisheries .....	8
1.4. Communication and marketing activities in pesca-tourism .....	10
1.5. Fishing - an established tourist activity in partner countries.....	10
1.6. Local maritime natural heritage and traditional fishing culture in partner countries.....	11
1.7. Ideas/perception on entrepreneurship and innovation .....	12
1.8. Supporting tools for pesca-tourism operators.....	14
1.9. Needs in education/lifelong learning.....	16
2. Key topics for the development of the training chapters/modules in IO2 and IO3 .....	18
3. Baseline for knowledge on new processes and marketing techniques for products/services in pesca-tourism: compared analysis of best practices from all partner countries.....	18
4. Conclusion / key points of the Benchmarking Report.....	23

## Introduction

Professionals' innovation training for pesca-tourism activities – PESCAVET project is co-funded by the European Commission under Erasmus + Programme – KA2 Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Education and Training. The overall objective is the development of quality and innovative training courses for professionals related to pesca-tourism. The target groups of the project are professionals working in the pesca-tourism sector and/or unemployed professionals who are interested in entering the sector.

The project promotes the implementation of innovative training courses to increase opportunities for sustainable entrepreneurship and develop the expertise of professionals to address the challenges identified in this area. The project will target professionals in order to raise awareness for career opportunities in the fisheries related tourism and the improvement of their skills via the implementation of a Benchmark exercise on new processes and marketing techniques for designing, promoting and review of products or services in pesca-tourism (IO1).

More specifically, under IO1, the partnership aims to develop 4 National Reports in Latvia, Italy, Cyprus and Bulgaria in order to collect information on the current situation of pesca-tourism in each partner country. The present report analyses the national data and results retrieved in all partner countries from the questionnaires answered by professionals who work in the maritime and marine sectors. The partners underline the idea that a certain set of minimum standards should always be maintained, regardless of the differences among the pesca-tourism situation in their countries and developed the questionnaire supporting PRISM as the leader of IO1 of the project. It was difficult to collect questionnaires due to the COVID pandemic and the stop of the pesca-tourism activities in the last 18 months.

This report is actually a product of joint efforts of all partner countries with the results of 45-50 questionnaires in each partner country in order to collect and present the best practices for pesca-tourism at each national level.

The main objectives of the National Reports are to:

- establish a baseline for knowledge on new processes and marketing techniques for products and services in pesca-tourism;
- provide an optimal knowledge framework for the development and enhancement of pesca-tourism entrepreneurship, to be used not only during the project duration, but more importantly beyond its completion;
- gain a comprehensive identification and understanding of the challenges, strengths and opportunities related to the design, development and promotion of products and services in pesca-tourism in each partner country;
- check for good practices already developed in the participating countries and compare also with other EU countries;
- identify and analyse techniques used to design, promote, and evaluate products and services in the partner countries, at the same time, provide the information needed to successfully design and develop concrete and complementary training tools in the participating countries addressed both to learners and trainers;
- assess existing knowledge levels about pesca-tourism and evaluate best practices with an emphasis on how benchmark data can be used in the training courses of the project;

This final “Benchmark Synthesis Report on new processes and marketing techniques for designing, promoting and review of products or services in pesca-tourism” contains the identified best practices and their associated performance on pesca-tourism development across Europe.

## 1. Key findings about pesca-tourism in partner countries: a comparative analysis

### 1.1 Demographics

From a demographic point of view, in Italy (I), Bulgaria (BG), Cyprus (CY) and Latvia (LV) **the majority of respondents are male**: 85% (I), 78% (BG), 68,3% (CY) and 89% (LV). The **age of pesca-tourism professionals is similar** in partner countries: 45% (I), 48% (BG) and 31.7% (CY) are **41-55 years old**. In Latvia the 70% is aged 56-65. The youngest group is 30-40 is only 4% of respondents.

The professionals mostly involved with fisheries and work in maritime and marine sectors in Italy are mostly from Palermo for the 30% of the responders and others from minor islands of Sicily and different cities on the sea coast, from a wide geographical area across Sicily. The professionals mostly involved with fisheries and work in maritime and marine sectors in Cyprus are mostly from Limassol for almost up to 70% of the responders and others from Nicosia. Only few who responded are from Larnaca and a small percentage of them didn't specify the city of their residence.

The professionals mostly involved with fisheries and work in maritime and marine sectors in Bulgaria are mostly from the big cities Burgas and Varna. There are representatives from smaller towns by the sea like Kavarna, Primorsko, Nesebar and Shabla. In Latvia, the professionals mostly involved with fisheries and work in maritime and marine sectors in Latvia are from the Jurmala and Engure regions of Latvia, due to the geographical close to the sea area, close to Riga area and population distribution aspects.

As it concerns the profession of the responders **in Italy**, the biggest percentage of the responders are experts and professionals in fisheries and tourism (45%). With a percentage of 22.5% they are business specialised in tourism. **Only 10% are a business in the pesca-tourism sector** and 7.5% are a business specialised in fisheries.

**In Bulgaria, the biggest percentage** are the ones that have a **business specialised in fisheries** (44%). With a percentage of 36% are the experts and professionals in

fisheries.

**In Cyprus, the biggest percentage** the responders are **experts and professionals in fisheries and tourism** (22%). With a percentage of 17.1% they are education providers in the departments of maritime and fisheries studies, 7,3% are Marine Superintendents.

**In Latvia**, as it concerns the profession of the responders it can be seen that with **the highest respondent group is experts and professionals in fisheries or tourism** 80%. With a 10% are from businesses specialized fisheries. Other groups are negligible.

## 1.2 Education and training level

Concerning the level of education **in Italy**, the respondents answered that their **highest level of education is a High school Degree** (37,5%) and Bachelor Degree (25%). 17,5% has a Master Degree and a Trade School/college education. Only 2,5%, one the respondent has not finished high school. In Bulgaria, Regarding the level of education **in Bulgaria**, the respondents have stated that their highest level of education is a **High school Degree** (56%) and Master Degree (18%). Around 16% of respondents have a PhD. **In Cyprus**, the responders have responded that their highest level of education is a **Master Degree** (61%) and Bachelor Degree (22%). 9,8% have PhD and Doctorate or Higher. With 4,9% the responders have finished Trade School and College and with the smallest percentage their highest level of education is high school degree. **In Latvia**, regarding the level of education, the respondents have stated that **their highest level of education is** a High school Degree (16%), School (30%) and **College** (44%). Only 10% of respondents have a BSc or MSc degrees.

In a question if they have been trained on fishing, the responders **in Italy** answered **NO** with 50% and **YES with the same percentage**. **In Bulgaria 68%** of respondents admit that they **have no previous training in fishing**. Around  $\frac{1}{3}$  have answered that they have (32%). **In Cyprus** the responders answered **NO with 65,9%** and YES with the percentage of 34,1%, so **similar answers in Bulgaria and Cyprus**. **100% of Latvia respondents** admit that they have **no previous training in fishing**.

In a similar question if the respondents have been **trained on pesca-tourism, in Italy the answer was NO with 87,5%** percentage. **Only 16% of the Bulgarian**

respondents have indicated to have previous training in pesca- tourism. **84% do not have such experience. In Cyprus the answer was NO with 92,7% percentage. 100% of Latvia respondents responded that they have no previous training on pesca-tourism!**

**In Italy, respondents seem not to have a previous training on entrepreneurship, innovation and business with 62,5%** and 37,5% have been trained on those domains. In Bulgaria 36% of respondents share that they had no previous training in those areas. In Cyprus responders 34,1% didn't have been trained on those domains. **So, the answers were quite similar in all three partner countries. In Latvia, 10% of respondents share that they have had some previous training in entrepreneurship, innovation and business areas. 90% reported negatively.**



### 1.3 Previous experience in tourism and fisheries

**In Italy**, respondents have **work experience in the pesca-tourism business in the past with a high percentage of 75%** and 25% had no previous work experience in the sector.

**In Bulgaria**, only 4% of respondents say that they have worked in the field of **pesca-tourism in the past**. **In Cyprus**, respondents seem that they didn't have any work experience **in the pesca-tourism business in the past with a high percentage of 95,1%** and 4,9% had previous work experience in the sector.

**In Italy**, **54,5% of the respondents have 1-3 years' experience in the sector**. 21,2% has 8-10 years' experience, 18,2% has 4-7 years' experience and only the 6,1% has more than 10 years' experience in pesca-tourism, being this activity a quite young one in Italy.

**In Bulgaria**, since **only 4% of respondents have answered they have experience in the field of pesca-tourism**, the answers provided here are two and no sufficient information can be systemized. One respondent has stated that he has between 4-7 years of experience and one has indicated that he has over 10 years of experience. **The same applies to Cyprus where few respondents declared they have pesca-tourism experience**. **In Latvia**, nobody of respondents responded that he has worked in the field of pesca-tourism in the past.

**The main product/service offered by professionals in Italy is the local gastronomy, equalling the 75% of the respondents** with 30 answers. Visits to natural assets scored 27 answers, representing the 67,5% of the services offered by pesca-tourism operators. Fishing lessons represent the 60% of the services/products offered with 24 answers, Visits to fishermen's villages scored 6 answers equalling the 15% of the total. **In Bulgaria**, **two respondents have answered that they offer visits to natural assets, and two more have answered that they provide trips to fishermen villages**. According to the services and products related to pesca-tourism **in Cyprus**, **most of the respondents are not 100% involved with pesca-tourism**: the answer of 80,5% of them is that this question is not applicable for them. 7,3% responders provide fisheries related advice to the fisheries sector and with 2,4% the responders provide fishing lessons, visits to villages, promotion of fish products, visits

to natural assets and to fishermen villages and local gastronomy. **In Latvia the main service offered by respondents is the local gastronomy (60%) and natural assets (24%).** 16% of respondents chosen “not applicable” option.

## 1.4 Communication and marketing activities in pesca-tourism

**In Italy communication and marketing activities** that the responders perform in their pesca-tourism activity **are mainly connected with social media** and the internet, together with **hotels and restaurants** from the local area and tourism professionals such as **tour operators and travel agencies**. Respondents **from Bulgaria** have stated that **only the internet and the phone** work well for them and provide results when it comes to communication and marketing activities. In Cyprus the answers are NOT APPLICABLE for the most of respondents with a percentage of up to 60%. Others are involved in social media and Marine Superintendent channels of communication. Majority of the respondents revealed that only **personal network and connection are the main communication and marketing activities in pesca-tourism in Latvia.**

## 1.5 Fishing - an established tourist activity in partner countries

In a question about fishing as an established tourist activity **in Italy**, respondents agree with **87,5%** that in Italy in the areas of their residences **fishing is a custom and tradition** while 12,5% do not consider fishing as a tradition in their areas. **In Bulgaria 100% of respondents have indicated that fishing is an established tourist activity in the country.** **In Cyprus** respondents agree with **56,1%** that in the areas of their residences **fishing is a custom and tradition** while 43,9% do not consider fishing as a tradition in their areas.

In a similar question and to what extent pesca-tourism is a practiced activity in their territory, respondents have the following answers:

- **In Italy** with a percentage of **70%** they agree that **pesca-tourism is a growing activity**, 15% responded it is not much practiced in the territory and 15% responded that it is known but businesses are not ready to face the market.
- **In Bulgaria there is a lack of awareness about the practice of pesca-**

**tourism activities on a local level. 56% of the respondents don't know if such activities are practiced on their territories.** 4% of the people that answered find pesca-tourism an important activity and another 4% agree that it has growing activity.

- **In Cyprus with a percentage of 39% they agree that pesca-tourism is a growing activity**, 22% do not really know, 14,6% agree that pesca-tourism is known but the businesses are not ready to face the market, 12,2% agree that pesca-tourism is an important activity and some, that it is not practiced in their territory;
- **Majority of respondents have revealed that fishing is an established tourist activity in Latvia. Majority (80%) of respondents have answered that pesca-tourism is not practiced in Latvia.** While others (20%) responded "I do not know"

## 1.6 Local maritime natural heritage and traditional fishing culture in partner countries

In a question if the respondents want to promote a local maritime natural heritage or traditional fishing culture that they like, these were the answers in Italy:

- Smaller islands (6)
- Local culture and traditions (3)
- Knowledge of the coastal area (3)
- Fishing techniques of the minor islands of the past (2)
- Tourist attractions like small fishermen villages, famous sightseeings (2)
- Local fish

When asked the question "Which local maritime natural heritage and traditional fishing culture would you like to promote in your area?", respondents from Bulgaria answered that the natural heritage on the Black Sea Coast - protected nature areas, nature and archaeological reserves, deltas, birds habitats etc., fishermen villages, mussels farms, fishing of traditional fishes such as jack mackerel, zargan, gobiidae are considered by them as the things that should be promoted in their territories. In a question if the responders want to promote a local maritime natural heritage or traditional fishing culture that they like **in Cyprus their responses are with up to 80% they do not**

**really know or NOT APPLICABLE.** Some of them want to promote artisanal fishing, diving fishing, eco-friendly sustainable fishing, fishermen protect the environment to increase fish population, fishing invasive species with tourists, fishing knowledge in general. Some other want to promote Limassol for fisheries and fishing activities, shellfish, seabass, small scale coastal fishing or small scale related-fishing tourism to support small scale fishers with alternatives and economic incentives that will allow them to raise awareness for pesca-tourism in Cyprus. Others want to strengthen the area of maritime and would like to adopt the article of the EU on fishing tours. Traditional net fishing/practices/small scale fisheries are some of the other responses. Also in Cyprus Zygi area is the most well-known area of fishers and fishing activities and practices. Zygi is the most common area for fishing. **In Latvia**, for the question “Which local maritime natural heritage and traditional fishing culture would you like to promote in your area?”, respondents answered that fishing of flounder and herring should be continued herein. All of respondents answered that **fishing with the boat or from the coast are the most common practice** in Latvia.

## 1.7 Ideas/perception on entrepreneurship and innovation

**In Italy respondents agree that fishing is a tradition in their areas with 95% positively and 5% negatively. 100% of respondents in Bulgaria have answered that they consider fishing a tradition in the region where they live. In Cyprus respondents agree that fishing is a tradition in their areas with 82,9% positively and 17,1% negatively. In Latvia, all respondents agreed that fishing is a tradition in the country.**

When talking about innovation, **in Italy respondents agree that they adopt innovative strategies of any kind in their day-to-day business (57,5%)** while 42,5% declared they don't. **In Bulgaria 55% of respondents share that they don't use innovation in their daily business.** However, 45% have answered that they apply innovative strategies of any kind in their daily business operations. **In Cyprus respondents do not agree that they adopt innovative strategies of any kind in their day-to-day business (68,3%)** while 31,7% agree that they do. **100%** of respondents have answered that they consider Latvia fishing tradition is a heritage to be protected and did not consider innovation in the field.

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**In Italy 92,5% agree that pesca-tourism can be an alternative option to support** their daily fishing business or in order to support fishing business in their areas. 7,5% do not agree with that statement. **In Bulgaria** a large number of respondents see the potential that pesca-tourism has as an alternative option to support their fishing business: **81.3%**. **In Cyprus, 85,4%** agree that pesca-tourism can be an alternative option to support their daily fishing business or in order to support fishing business in their areas. 14,6% do not agree with that statement. 96% respondents think that pesca-tourism could be an option to support their fishing activities. 4% of respondents could not provide an opinion.

**In Italy** the responders of PESCAVET questionnaires agree that **fishermen do have access to finance and regional or national funds with a percentage of 70%** and 30% do not agree with that statement. **In Bulgaria 76%** of professionals in the fishing industry say that fishermen have access to regional and/or national funds for their business. **In Cyprus** professionals' opinion, fishermen do have access to finance and regional or national funds with a percentage of **61%** and 39% do not agree with that statement. In a similar question people were asked if there is any access to government funding for various actions such as withdraw of boat, premature retirement etc. **In Italy the answer is yes for most of them with 67,5%** while 32,5% do not agree with the statement. In Bulgaria 72% The responders from Bulgaria share that they have access to funds from the government for different actions like premature retirement or withdrawal of a boat. **In Cyprus the answer is yes for most of them with 53,7%** while 46,3% do not agree with the statement.

## 1.8 Supporting tools for pesca-tourism operators

According to the supporting tools for pesca-tourism operators, in Italy respondents have mentioned the following:

- Fishing consortia (4)
- The European Fisheries Fund (4),
- Tour operators (3)
- Tourist information offices (2)
- Funds for boat adaptation, costs for marketing (websites), financing for fish

tourism (2)

- Consultants in the subsidized financing sector
- Relief on diesel
- Training courses
- Social media

In Bulgaria the main tools for supporting pesca-tourism operators are FLAG's projects, financing programmes of the EC as Maritime and Fisheries Programme. Those are the ones marked in the answers by the respondents of the PESCAVET questionnaire. Currently a National Fishermen Network is created, aimed at ensuring stakeholders representation, capacity building, dissemination of information on community-led local development and maritime and fisheries programme, sharing best practices and knowledge transfer, as well as supporting interterritorial and transnational cooperation. In Cyprus, according to the supporting tools for pesca-tourism operators the responders have mentioned the following:

- a. EMFF
- b. Alternative Income
- c. DFMR and the Department of Environment
- d. European Fisheries Fund
- e. New boat, tech equipment
- f. Subsidies from the government
- g. Support of the government tourism organisations, target market and good marketing and sales and promotion of country's fishing activities
- h. Tourism development funds and local funding
- i. Training, certificates, infrastructure, target of Fisheries Local Actions

The majority of the respondents **in Italy** agrees that there is a **need for training to convert fishing activity to pesca-tourism (77,5%)** and 22,5% do not agree with the statement. **In Bulgaria** almost  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all people that filled out the questionnaires indicate that **they will need training and support to convert fishing activity to pesca-tourism - 64%**. On the other hand, 36% don't consider they will need additional training for the process. **In Cyprus** the majority of the respondents agrees that **there is a need for training to convert fishing activity to pesca-tourism (82,9%)** and



17,1% do not agree with the statement.

**As it concerns VET courses on pesca-tourism, respondents do not know if there are VET courses in Italy for pesca-tourism (95%)** although 5% support that there are VET courses in their local and regional area. Respondents who said “Yes” left these answers:

- Legacoop, Federpesca, trade associations training courses
- Training courses organised by the Sicilian Region

**92% percent of people in Bulgaria answered that there are no VET courses on pesca-tourism in Bulgaria.** The 8% that filled in the answer “Yes”, stated that such good practices can be found in EU and FLAG’s projects. **In Cyprus respondents do not know if there are VET courses in Cyprus for Pesca-tourism (95,1%)** although 4,9% support that there are VET Courses in their local and regional area. For the ones who answered “Yes” in the abovementioned question the responses are that they know VET Courses in Innovation, trainings provided by EMFF through development agencies, there are specialized courses for sustainable pesca-tourism and trainings provided by Fisheries Local Action Groups and the department of fisheries and marine research under the Ministry of Environment in Cyprus. **In Latvia, almost 50% of the respondents agree that fishermen could have access to regional and national funds for their business.** Respondents have only mentioned that the main supporting tool is regional development and national funding for agriculture.

## 1.9 Needs in education/lifelong learning

Respondents to the question: “If you want to start a business in the pesca-tourism business, which are the areas you want to deepen?” answered as follows:

**In Italy “Tourism marketing “is by far the most requested topic for a new pesca-tourism start up,** followed by foreign languages (45%), planning (42,5%), business management (25%). It is interesting to note that human resources scored 0%. **In Bulgaria** when addressing the question: “If you want to start a business in pesca-tourism business, which are areas you want to deepen?”, responders have answered the following:

- **Tourism Marketing – 48%**
- Business management – 42%
- Foreign languages – 40%

- Culture and traditions – 32%
- Biology – 10%

The needs of the respondents are very clear and should be addressed with proper training, support and resources. **In Cyprus, for start-up businesses in pesca-tourism the responders want to deepen the areas of Tourism Marketing (24,4%), Finance (12,2%), Culture and Traditions (12,2%), Planning (22%) and Business Management (4,9%), Biology with 9,8%, Administration (4,9%), Hospitality and Human Resources, Planning for the industry's long-term sustainability, Informatics and Digital Technologies (2,4%).** None of them mentioned Foreign Languages. **Training programmes necessary at local level that are not yet available could be, according to the responders in Italy:**

- **Tourism marketing (9)**
- Business planning (6)
- Foreign language courses (3)
- Information technology (3)
- How to manage the European funds of the new EMFF programming (2)
- Fishing techniques and their application
- Attendance to winter courses
- All-round training on the sector
- History
- Fishing tourism is linked to the initiative of individuals, it would be useful to create consortia or multiservice companies

**In Bulgaria** respondents have stated that there is a need for training programmes at local level that are still not available in the areas of: pesca-tourism, **business management in pesca-tourism, marketing, entrepreneurship.** **In Cyprus,** training programmes necessary at local level that are not yet available could be, according to the responders:

- Trainings on how to be more hospitable, how to treat tourists
- **Business models, marketing, environmental awareness, administration**
- Education
- Informatics Digital Technologies
- Local government regulatory service to support local culture and create a sustainable business looking after our country
- Pesca-tourism and Sustainability
- Safety in the sea



- Tourism marketing, trainings on pesca-tourism and fishing activity.

**In Latvia**, all respondents indicated that they could attend training on pesca-tourism.

The responses to the question “If you want to start a business in pesca-tourism business, which are areas you want to deepen?”, provided the following answers:

- **Tourism Marketing 25 (50%)**
- **Foreign languages 24 (45%)**
- Planning 1 (2%)
- Business management 4 (8%)
- **Administration 22 (44%)**
- Hospitality 0 (0%)
- Finance 16 (32%)
- Culture and traditions 3 (6%)
- Biology 1 (2%)
- **Informatics Digital Technologies 17 (34%)**
- Human Resources 2 (4%)

Therefore, the responses to the necessity of the training programmes at regional level provided the following answers:

- Tourism Marketing
- Foreign languages
- Administration of the projects
- Informatics Digital Technologies

## 2 Key topics for the development of the training chapters / modules in IO2 and IO3

The needs of training and support for development of pesca-tourism in all partner countries are:

- **Training programmes for business development in pesca-tourism** (management, marketing, entrepreneurship, good practices, legal framework);
- **Training programmes for acquiring knowledge for enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of tourist products and services in pesca-tourism** (foreign languages, culture and traditions, biology);
- **Changes in legal framework in regard to certification and permissions for activities in pesca tourism, safety requirements and taxation;**
- **Specific measures and supporting projects** development under the National Programme Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, tailored for diversification of fishing activities with pesca-tourism and support in development of projects.

Training should be oriented to knowledge and skills needed for starting and developing pesca-tourism activities and business, in partnership with tourism businesses and in cooperation with stakeholders in local fishing and maritime sectors. **Initiatives of experts/professionals in fishing and tourism should be meetings, workshops and/or discussions about legal framework directly and indirectly related to pesca-tourism, financial opportunities for the development of pesca-tourism, including FLAG initiatives and programmes.** The meetings, workshops and/or discussions should allow the experts to develop strategies, plans, projects and supporting programmes for developing pesca-tourism, to elaborate propositions for legal framework (improvements, adjustment or creating new one), and submit them to policy makers. **Pesca-tourism should be promoted in all partner countries in specialised schools and universities, municipality administrations, tourist and fishing associations.**

### 3 Baseline for knowledge on new processes and marketing techniques for products/services in pesca-tourism: compared analysis of the best practices from all partner countries

It can be useful to review the best practices on pesca-tourism businesses in all partner countries. In Italy these are the collected best practices from the questionnaires:

- Offshore excursions with fishing trips, including final barbecue (5)
- Boat excursion and visit to the sea coves for a swim (4)
- Fleet of fishermen of Sant'Agata di Militello (2)
- Story of the territory to tourists by the fishermen
- Visit to the most evocative natural places and exemplary fishing trips
- Visit to the Zingaro reserve, swim break and explanation of the main fishing methods

For example, in Italy the best practice “Lo Squalo boat” is a well-established pesca-tourism operator thanks to its communication and presence on the web, so putting together the tradition of fishing with new communication channels for a new service, pesca-tourism which is a way to differentiate the income of the fishing sector. The tourist attractions near Castrignano al Capo such as Santa Maria di Leuca and other famous tourist destinations, are a fertile soil for the pesca-tourism activities. **The critical success factor is the communication that “Lo Squalo boat” started years ago and now assuring a constant visibility on the net. This stresses the importance of communication and marketing for the pesca-tourism sector.**

Since pesca-tourism is not practiced widely in **Bulgaria**, there are **very few good practice scenarios that can be shared**. Respondents answered that fishing with your boat or yacht and picnicking on the beach or the coast is the most common and recognised good practice in the country.

Best practices on pesca-tourism businesses in Cyprus:

- Development of artisanal fishing
- Charters fishing pelagic fish, touristic fishing with rods and nets
- EU regulations

- Entertainment in fishing villages, hotel apartments and educational groups from around the country
- Increase in income whilst decrease in fishing pressure
- Online fishing advertising
- Provision of information on the marine environment and the coastal biodiversity, watching the professional fishing activity
- Sustainable fishing
- The CHERISH Project – Flag Paphos Participation – a project for fishing tourism <https://www.interregeurope.eu/cherish/>
- Training fisheries

The promotion of fishing tourism, in addition to the economic and other benefits that will arise for Limassol and Cyprus in general, will contribute significantly to the conservation of marine wealth, as it will not cause permanent damage to the seabed, while at the same time it is expected to contribute significantly degree in the promotion of the Mediterranean cultural heritage of the sea, by promoting local products and traditions.

Although many of these fishing areas are now very close to popular tourist destinations, it is estimated that the benefits of tourism development usually do not reach the fishing communities. **Fishing tourism will enable tourists to connect with local communities**, offering unique experiences to both visitors and operators.

As it is emphasized, **the economic situation of the fishing communities can be significantly improved by the enrichment of the tourist offer**. At the same time, **it will create new sources of income for traditional fishermen** and will obviously lead to second thoughts the young professionals who, possibly frustrated, were planning or looking for ways to retire from this field.

Practices in Romania and Turkey are oriented mainly towards fishing as a hobby and favour leisure activity, as it is a main purpose of visits to places. In Bulgaria fishing tours are organised for tourists as a recreational activity which enhances the vacation experience and usually includes lunch, swimming, picnic, sunbathing.

In Romania there is a practice of visits to traditional fishing villages and experience of

local gastronomy, visits to natural heritage sites and observing birds in the Danube delta. The small company organising the trips employ knowledgeable, enthusiastic people, who have to tell tourists all they want to know about the Danube. The pesca-tourism company has motorboats especially outfitted to accommodate visitors and they seem to have some arrangement with local fishermen. The tourist boat approaches fishermen at work and the fishermen tell them about their work and show their catch.

In the Black Sea there are different conditions for fishing compared to the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. The main fishing season in Black Sea is from April to the middle of June and from September to the middle of November. But that is a good opportunity for pesca-tourism to contribute to the extension of the summer tourist season.

#### 4 Conclusion / key points of the Benchmarking Report

The fishing tourism sector is not a novelty in Italy. In the last years, there are many initiatives of entrepreneurs and fishing cooperatives. Nevertheless, the expected results have not been achieved yet because it was and still is hard to create enterprises paths within the professional tourist sector. **A main issue is to create an efficient network among receiving facilities, fishers and travel agencies to gain tourists from across the EU.**

**The fishing sector of Cyprus is currently facing significant sustainability problems,** due to various factors, such as overfishing of some bottom and pelagic species, low productivity of the region, the limitation of fishing fields in Cyprus due to the Turkish occupation, **the lack of professional training of fishermen in modern fishing and navigation methods** as well as consumers' preference for specific species of fish in combination with their difficulty in accepting new species. In addition, the growing presence of alien species exacerbates the negative effects on the ecosystem and fisheries. **There is also a need to improve the marketing system for fishery products.**

**Organizing and providing fishing tours by boat is considered to be equal to pesca-tourism or that is the main activity which can be connected with pesca-tourism in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. The tours are offered mainly by private companies in tourism and transport (travel agencies, marine transport operators).**

**There are good opportunities for development of pesca-tourism in Bulgaria.** There is a need for strong dialogue, aimed at adjustment and improvement of the legal framework linked with pesca-tourism development by involving relevant stakeholders - experts in fishing and tourism, including representatives of FLAGs, fishing associations or unions, institutions in maritime affairs and fisheries, policy makers, educational institutions with study courses in tourism, maritime affairs and fisheries.

**There is a need of training related to pesca-tourism development for professionals in fishing and tourism business.**

Initiatives for popularisation of pesca-tourism in Bulgaria can play important role for its development.

The opportunities for development of pesca-tourism in Bulgaria are in follow directions:

- Professionals (young and middle age) in fishing and tourism business are motivated and convinced that pesca-tourism is very good supporting activity for fishing business and can enhance the tourists' experience;
- Organising pesca-tourism tours with fishing activities (learning, observing, practice) and visits to places with natural and cultural heritage, incl. underwater, along the Black Sea coast;
- Visits to traditional fishing villages and experience of local gastronomy (Black Sea Cuisine), learning about the fishing traditions and work, shopping fresh catch fish from fishermen;
- Practice of pesca-tourism in low season - April, May, September and October for individual tourists, highly interested in local community life, traditions and culture, ecotourism, traditional fishing and in high season for tourists with recreational purpose;
- Practice of pesca-tourism in partnership with Romanian fishermen or business in pesca-tourism.

**The main problems for developing pesca-tourism is poaching (and the apparent lack**

of water police) and **lack of suitable legal framework determining or recognizing pesca-tourism as well related to permissions, certificates, safety standards, taxation.** Based on conversations with fishermen, additional certification of the boat to allow passengers/tourists presence on the board, investment in ensuring tourists' safety, lack of permission for night fishing, need of reporting departure could be considered as main obstacles for pesca-tourism.

**The same applies to Latvia where pesca-tourism is a known activity but it has big margins for improvement.** Local fishermen have to be involved in fish tours, supported to invest in equipment, certificate, and permission to take tourist on the board, including in the night. **A main issue is to create an efficient network among receiving facilities, fishers and travel agencies to gain tourists from across the EU.**