



PRESS RELEASE - FEBRUARY 10th 2014

Kick off meeting of new FP7 project DIVERSIFY

On 29-30 January 2014, the European Commission project DIVERSIFY had its kickoff meeting at the Hellenic Center for Marine Research (HCMR) in Iraklion, Crete, Greece. The title of the project is «**Enhancing the European aquaculture production by removing production bottlenecks of emerging species, producing new products and accessing new markets**».

This 5-year-long project is coordinated by Dr. Constantinos C Mylonas of the Institute of Marine Biology, Biotechnology and Aquaculture (IMBBC), one of the three institutes of the HCMR, and has a total budget of 11,8 million euro for its 5 year duration. DIVERSIFY is perhaps the largest research project in the area of aquaculture that has been funded by the European Commission to date. Participating in the project are a total of 38 partners from Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Israel, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Germany and Hungary.

The project DIVERSIFY has identified a number of new/emerging finfish species, with a great potential for the expansion of the EU aquaculture industry. These new/emerging species are fast growing and/or large finfishes marketed at a large size and can be processed into a range of products to provide the consumer with both a greater diversity of fish species and new value-added products. The fish species to be studied include **meagre** (*Argyrosomus regius*) and **greater amberjack**

(*Seriola dumeril*), **wreckfish** (*Polyprion americanus*), **Atlantic halibut** (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*), **grey mullet** (*Mugil cephalus*), and **pikeperch** (*Sander lucioperca*).

These **species** were selected based both on their biological and economical potential, and to cover the entire European geographic area and to stimulate different aquaculture types. In collaboration with the 12 participating SMEs and/or Large Enterprises, DIVERSIFY will build on recent/current national initiatives for species diversification in aquaculture, in order to overcome the documented bottlenecks in the production of these species. Research will be carried out in the scientific disciplines of Reproduction and Genetics, Nutrition, Larval and Grow out husbandry, Fish health, Final product quality and Socioeconomics. The combination of biological, technological and socioeconomic research planned in DIVERSIFY are expected to support the diversification of the aquaculture industry and help in expanding production, increasing aquaculture products and development of new markets. Besides the technical improvement of the selected species, the socio-economic research in DIVERSIFY includes an applied market development approach solutions on perception of aquaculture products, market demand, buyer preferences, new product development, value adding and market development. These outcomes will help the EU aquaculture sector and the supply industry in targeted marketing and improvement of its international competitive position.

The project DIVERSIFY is funded under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission (7FP-KBBE-2013). More information can be found in the website of the project “diversify-eu.weebly.com” (soon to be hosted at www.diversifyfish.eu) or can be obtained from the coordinator at the address below.

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The greater amberjack (*Seriola dumerilii*), a species with great potential for the Mediterranean aquaculture. Copyright HCMR