

Mediterranean Advisory Council

Advice and Letters (2010-2021)



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INTRODUCTION

The European fisheries advisory system can, without doubt, be considered the meeting point between civil society and the EC institutions involved in the decision-making process in the different ways envisaged under EU law. The stakeholders who participate in the system represent a wide range of interests and concerns, and their involvement gives rise to opinions, advice and requests which can sometimes prove difficult to reconcile, but which together give voice to the citizens affected in various ways and make it possible to take the pulse of the sector with regard to the issues being dealt with at any one moment by decision-makers.

It is clear that, for a multitude of reasons, the participating stakeholders take different views of the advisory system and the contributions it provides. Some regard the results of the mediations achieved by the Advisory Councils (ACs), including the MEDAC, and presented to the EC and the Member States as useful, some less so. Whether the substance of the advice submitted is entirely or partially accepted, or rejected in full, this relationship between stakeholders and institutions has become an integral part of the European legislative process, it represents a democratic mechanism which, while there is still room for improvement, must be acknowledged and given due value.

This is why it is important that a record is kept of the work carried out by the Advisory Councils, and that the advice produced by the MEDAC in a multitude of documents issued in over a decade of activities is periodically brought together. Publications, such as this one, bear witness to the extensive amount of work that is accomplished, while at the same time providing an archive that can be consulted easily by any interested parties, highlighting the importance of the joint work carried out with dedication and enthusiasm by all the participants in the various panels.

This exchange of views, willingness to engage in discussion and mediation, mutual understanding among stakeholders and constant dialogue with the institutions together represent an invaluable asset, and fertile ground on which to develop the capacity of the large European fisheries community for progress.

Giampaolo Buonfiglio
Chairman

This publication gathers together all the main advice and letters produced over the years by the MEDAC (formerly RAC MED) from 2010 to October 2021. The advice and letters have been subdivided according to the topics dealt with in the five Working Groups and three Focus Groups:

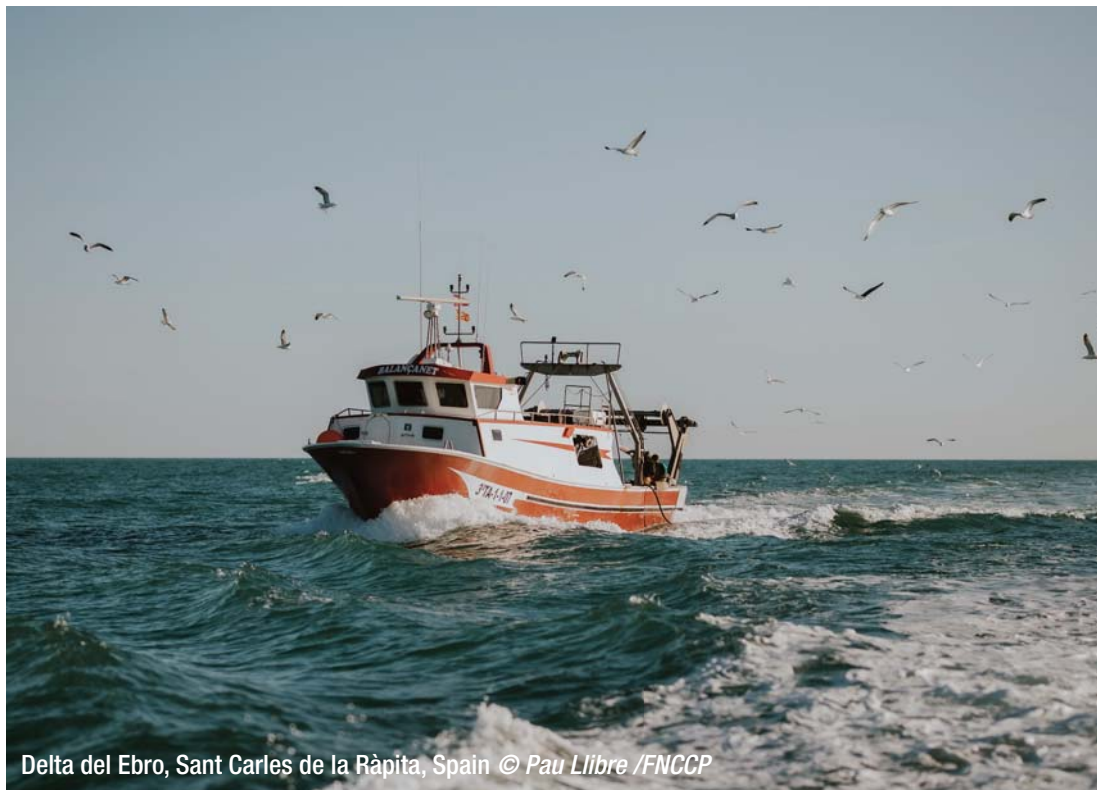
- *Working Group 1 - Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (Regionalisation, discard management plans, multiannual management plans)*
- *Working Group 2 - Large Pelagics (BFT-E - SWO-MED and other species managed by ICCAT)*
- *Working Group 3 - Green Deal*
- *Working Group 4 - Recreational Fisheries*
- *Working Group 5 -Small-Scale Fisheries and Socio-Economic Impact*
- *Focus Group on the Adriatic Sea*
- *Focus Group on Western Mediterranean*
- *Focus Group on the Strait of Sicily*

It should be noted that another two Focus Groups have recently been created, one on Equal Opportunities and one on the Eastern Mediterranean.

The original chronological order has been maintained within each of the various subject areas and, to facilitate consultation of this compendium, each document containing advice or a letter has been assigned a sequential number. Some of the advice is provided in the form of an extract from the original document; all the documents are also available for consultation on the website www.med-ac.eu.

WG 1 - Working Group

about the Reform of the Common Fisheries
Policy (Regionalisation, Discard Management
Plans, Multiannual Management Plans)



Delta del Ebro, Sant Carles de la Ràpita, Spain © Pau Llibre /FNCCP



Marine National Park of Zakynthos, Greece © Claudia Amico / WWF Mediterranean / FishMPABlue

WG 1 - Working Group about the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (Regionalisation, Discard Management Plans, Multiannual Management Plans)

TOPIC: Jurisdiction of waters

RAC-MED OPINION ON THE QUESTION OF JURISDICTION OF WATERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

1

Thessaloniki, 20th September 2010

The RAC-MED, meeting at Thessaloniki on 20 September, 2010, considering

- The complex situation of the jurisdiction of waters in the Mediterranean in terms both of the exploitation of fisheries resources and the protection of the environment;
- The various initiatives taken unilaterally in this area by Mediterranean coastal states;
- The national fisheries management policies pursued by coastal States, the directions of which differ greatly in different areas of the Mediterranean;
- The lack of harmonization of technical and fisheries management measures, which undermines the efforts of the European Union to conserve fisheries resources;
- Recurring incidents due to the presence of fishing vessels in real or presumed territorial water boundaries that are not internationally recognized;
- The obvious inconsistency between the inherently conflictual and litigious situation in the field of jurisdiction of waters and of international law of the sea and the prospects of creating a free trade area in the Mediterranean;

CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- 1) To promote a Mediterranean Conference to open a new process to more clearly define the jurisdiction of waters by coastal States in accordance with the rules of international law of the sea, by encouraging negotiations to settle disputes and hitherto unresolved situations and with the aim of establishing a framework that can guarantee the right of the community fishing fleet community to go about its business;
- 2) To support a process of harmonization of technical and resource management measures by the GFCM, by reviving and continuing the efforts already made by the European Commission with the creation of Medisamak.

In this context, the RAC Med believes that the experiences in areas of Fisheries Conservation Zones are positive, especially when these are established with the support of professional organizations. However, in the absence of the above-mentioned initiatives, the RAC cannot support the widespread tendency for Mediterranean coastal states to declare EEZs - as foreseen in the Action Plan for the Mediterranean - which, in the absence of a Mediterranean-wide fisheries policy and with the definition of equidistant median lines between the coasts, can only result in a fragmentation of fishing rights and policies without any guarantee for the European fleet, or for the effective management of fisheries resources.

2 LETTER: STOP THE MASSACRE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Rome, 8th May 2015

The MEDAC, which met in Marseilles on 22nd and 23rd April 2015, expresses its condolences for the tragedy that takes place on a daily basis in the Mediterranean, it challenges our conscience and calls for every effort to be made to end this carnage, it is a situation which must be dealt with responsibly and with discernment. In the last fifteen years, at least fifteen thousand migrants have been swallowed up by the sea in the hope of reaching European shores. The last few days have seen hundreds of deaths which now force us to act. Over the years, Europe's fishermen have made countless heroic efforts to save migrants desperately seeking a future for themselves and their families. They have maintained their commitment to the principle that no one should be left in the sea, following the unwritten rules that distinguish the spirit of fishermen.

The insurgence of armed conflicts, inequality in access to basic necessities such as water or food, the deterioration of the environment, the stalling of democratic processes and the infringement of inalienable rights are just some of the factors that drive men, women and children to attempt the ultimate solution: crossing the Mediterranean. However harsh and repressive the laws or measures can be, the number of people willing attempt the crossing between North African and the European coasts is not going to decrease, and consequently neither will the rescue efforts by European fishermen. The MEDAC, on behalf of European fishermen and of the other interest groups in the AC, asks the European Community as a whole to make a real commitment to finding a solution to this problem. Immigration policies cannot be put in place without considering the issue from a European Community perspective, it should not be seen just as a Mediterranean issue.

Any EC initiative to patrol the Mediterranean must be anchored to strong humanitarian values; saving lives is a fundamental duty that must always come before any other consideration. If we do not acknowledge this inevitable fact, we will only strengthen the human traffickers' ability to infiltrate the management of migrant flows, and we are all aware of the potential results. We risk turning the Mediterranean Sea into one of the largest mass graves in human history.

3 LETTER ON FISHING COMPLIANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Rome, 20th March 2015

To Cécile Bigot-Dekeyzer (Directorate of Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture – France); José Miguel Corvinos Lafuente (Director General Recursos Pesqueros y Acuicultura – Spain); Lowri Evans (Director-General, EC – DG MARE); Pascal Savouret (Executive Director – EFCA)

In the exercise of its functions, MEDAC normally deals with all matters concerning compliance with legislation regulating fishing in the Mediterranean and related control activities.

Regarding this, during the General Meeting which took place on 12 March, the case was addressed of the vessel MACA (3-BA-6238) flying the Spanish flag, which was stopped by the French Coastguard on 14 January 2015 in an area with the coordinates 42° 49' N 004° 6' 45" E (GFCM rectangle in the Gulf of Lion).

After the inspection, the Coastguard challenged the failure to transmit the catch log and required the vessel to follow their patrol to Port-de-Bouc in order to formalise their statement and apply the penalties. After returning to El Port de la Selva, the same vessel was again sanctioned by the Spanish Coastguard (who had been informed by their French colleagues) for the same violation. Without going into the substance of the dispute, and respecting the competences of all parties,

MEDAC nevertheless has doubts about this event, which clearly highlights issues of jurisdiction and the penalties system.

The MEDAC members attending the Meeting unanimously fear that these events could reoccur and could negatively affect the relationship between European fishermen and the Maritime Authorities of the various Member States, at a time when it is particularly important to ensure compliance with the rules and the effectiveness of control activities, with penalties proportionate to the violation and not doubled as in this case.

We hope that this letter will be given your attention. Do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Yours faithfully.

LETTER OF MEDAC ON WG JURISDICTION OF WATERS

Rome, 25th February 2016

4

Dear Director General,

Considering the issues that have recently arisen concerning the jurisdiction of waters between Italy and France as well as the possible declaration of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by Greece in the Ionian Sea, the MEDAC considers the creation of an ad hoc Working Group to be useful in order to gather knowledge and provide the stakeholders' opinions in the different cases.

Furthermore, in 2010, the MEDAC (then RACMED) prepared an opinion that was sent to DG MARE (ref.122/2010, 20 September 2010) with a letter that is attached for convenience. The MEDAC General Assembly, held in Rome on 18th February, discussed the possibility of requesting authorisation to establish a new WG that was not foreseen in the 2016 work programme, substituting the one on the GFCM that had already been effectively taken over by the Focus Groups on the management plans.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any clarification. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely.

LETTER ON SAFETY AT WORK FOR FISHERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Rome, 14th May 2021

5

To Charlina Vitcheva (Director General, EC-DG MARE); Lena Andersson Pench; Valerie Tankink; Pascale Colson (EC- DG MARE)

Dear Director General,

The Mediterranean Advisory Council, during the Working Group 1 meeting, held on 7th of May, deep regret was expressed for the aggression occurred on 6th of May to the Italian fishing vessel "Aliseo" by a Libyan military patrol boat.

A clarification is needed on the jurisdiction in place in this "dangerous area" in order to guarantee the respect of national fishing grounds and ensure the safety of fishing vessels and crews. In fact, this event follows a series of critical and dangerous situations already occurred in the previous years in the area, making really urgent to address this matter. This would contribute to prevent that EU fishing vessels and fishery workers engage in such serious hazards.

Furthermore, the MEDAC wish to call once more (see MEDAC advice ref.122/2010, attached) the EC to promote a Mediterranean Conference on the expanded jurisdiction of waters by coastal States in accordance with the rules of international law of the sea and to address unsettled claims.

Kind regard.



Bari, Italy © Paolo Pettrignani

TOPIC: Control Regulation 1224/09 and IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Regulation 1005/2008

MED RAC POSITION ON THE CONTROL REGULATION AND ITS IMPLEMENTING RULES

6

Rimini, 22nd February 2011

On the basis of what was discussed by the working group meeting held in Rome on 30th November 2010 on Control Regulation 1224/09 concerning the fishing activity, landing, and first sale of the product, the MED RAC, during its Executive Committee meeting in Rimini on 22nd February 2011, expresses its great concern over the upcoming approval of the implementation regulation, which does not appear to resolve in any way the problems pointed out by many with regard to the applicability of various parts of Regulation 1224/09.

In this sense the MED RAC, confirming its firm belief in the necessity to fight all forms of illegal fishing and to implement a control system that is real, effective, and simple to apply in both sea fishing and the distribution and commercialisation activities on land, for the protection of the interests of producers and consumers and for guaranteeing the renewability of the sea resources, points out to the Commission what it believes are the key points of the regulation:

- 1) Lack of infrastructure on land for handling the large quantity of electronic data required of the vessels (electronic logbook);
- 2) Duplication of duties, coupling the Automatic Identification System (AIS) with the satellite control system (Blue Box), with an increase of unjustified financial burdens for the enterprises;
- 3) New duties, such as the marking of gear even within 12 miles;
- 4) Multiplication of duties and notification obligations referring to the same information given with regard to the same parties (logbook for vessels >12m every day);
- 5) A surveillance and inspection system which, by virtue of the powers that would be granted to control observers operating without any mandate from judicial authorities and not subject to police control, would damage the right to confidentiality, domicile, private and personal life, and defence of the operators. In fact, the envisaged provisions would give the control observers the total discretionary power to interfere with the property and fundamental rights of fishermen and anyone on the vessels;
- 6) Impossibility of harmonisation of the penalty system, which is the responsibility of the individual Member States, with each having different systems and sensitivities with regard to the subject;
- 7) Liability of the skipper or the vessel owner, onto whom the responsibility for violations committed by others would be transferred, in violation of fundamental principles such as the personal nature of liability;
- 8) Increase of charges and costs for the surveillance activity which, at the discretion of the Member States, could be charged to the enterprises, being added to others which already exist (blue box traffic);
- 9) Effects on the operators due to the non-fulfilment by the Member States of the requirements of Regulation 1224/09, for example with the suspension of the financial assistance under EFF 1198/2006 and 861/2006, in violation of the principle of the personal nature of the penalty and the principle of proportionality;
- 10) With regard to recreational fisheries, the possibility to prohibit this type of fisheries in relation to sampling plans (Art. 64, par. 6) is not acceptable.

The points above demonstrate the application difficulty or impossibility of various provisions contained in the control regulation, which risks achieving the opposite effect of that sought, with a spread of a general situation of illegality.

The MED RAC thus requests that the Commission and the Council, on the occasion of the upcoming discussion of the implementation Regulation, re-examine the measure for the purpose of maximum simplification and full applicability of the provisions.

7 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION ABOUT THE EVALUATION OF THE FISHERIES CONTROL REGULATION ON THE CFP

11th April 2016

To Fabrizio Donatella (EC- DG MARE); Manuela Musella

Following the request of DG MARE during the Workshop on evaluation of Regulation (EC) 1224/2009 on Fisheries Control, held in Brussels on 18th March 2016 and the nature of the questions in the consultation, MEDAC deemed necessary to reply only to the two last questions, as already pointed out by the Executive Secretary, R. Caggiano, during the workshop.

On the basis of the RACMED Advice (Ref. 48/AV 22 February 2011) in which was asked to the EC and to the Council to re-examine the measure for the purpose of maximum simplification and full applicability of the provisions, and the contributions received by MEDAC members, please find here below the MEDAC contribution, approved by the Executive Committee members by written procedure.

Question 37: In your opinion, what are the main weaknesses of the fisheries control regime? MEDAC believes that:

- too many obligations and difficult compilation of logbooks and other bureaucratic burdens related to traceability;
- the increase of charges and costs for the surveillance activity;
- the duplication of duties coupling the AIS with the satellite control system with an increase of financial burdens for the enterprises, and a surveillance and inspection system which would damage the right of confidentiality, domicile, private and personal life;
- lack of vocational training on the regulation and its implementation to fishermen;
- positive discrimination of 'small scale fisheries' is detrimental to other sectors, recreational fisheries (RF) in particular, when the two sectors fish for the same species and/or the same waters;

Overall, the lack of enforcement and implementation of Regulation (EC) 1224/2009 in a transversal way among all EU MSs and having MSs implementing the objectives of the regulation at different levels and ways has led to disparities in the enforcement at EU level as a whole.

Question 38: In your opinion, how could the identified weaknesses be addressed?

In order to address the weaknesses identified in the Control Regulation, MEDAC suggests to:

- Improve and encourage the exchange of information and experiences on control implementation between MS and operators;
- Harmonize and simplify the electronic tools (AIS, VMS, ERS, etc.);
- Review the penalty system in order to focalize it on serious infractions and non fulfilment and implementing a harmonized and homogeneous system of sanctions;

- Regulate the access of the use of the AIS data in order to better guarantee the right to confidentiality;
- Encourage a more regionalized approach with the bottom-up consultation procedure to achieve greater compliance;
- Make a distinction in the control activities between the various type of recreational fisheries segments.

JOINT OPINION of Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) Market Advisory Council (MAC) Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC)

8

IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) 1005/2008 TO PREVENT, DETER AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

20th June 2017

BACKGROUND

The Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 (hereafter, “EU IUU Regulation”) has been in force since 2010. It is unique in its kind and has made the EU the worldwide front-runner in the fight against IUU fishing. After seven years of implementation its positive contributions to improving fisheries management and governance in third countries have become visible and the LDAC/MAC/MEDAC welcome the Commission’s efforts to prevent IUU catches from entering the EU market.

While the EU IUU Regulation is having a positive impact there is still room for improvement in certain areas of its implementation, which would further strengthen the regulation’s effectiveness. In an Opinion dated 24 November 2016, the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) requested the European Commission to implement four specific measures in order to guarantee the harmonised, uniform and effective application of the EU IUU Regulation (from here on “LDAC Opinion”).¹

In a response dated 21 December 2016, the European Commission (EC) addressed some of the LDAC’s concerns and recommendations (from here on “EC’s response”).²

In the interim, a new Market Advisory Council (MAC) has been established, which aims to provide a voice to stakeholders engaged in the EU’s seafood market sector.

The LDAC and the MAC, with the support of the MEDAC, have therefore agreed to produce this Opinion to provide a joint view on the EC’s response and to suggest ways in which we believe further improvement could be made to the implementation of the EU IUU Regulation, including in relation to points already raised.

KEY POINTS

- The EC states in its response that it has “set up a concrete project to develop an IT system and a database to support Member States in their implementation of the catch documentation scheme” and that it is “currently visiting Member States in order to prepare the future implementation of this IT project in view of the finalisation of the business requirements for the planned system”. The LDAC, the MAC and the MEDAC welcome this progress, but would highlight the following:

- The EC made a commitment to deliver the IT system in 2015/2016 in its communication published in October 2015³. Delivery of the system is therefore significantly delayed. We would reiterate that the establishment of this IT system should be an priority for the EC, and we would urge that additional human resources be secured to ensure a more rapid and effective delivery of the system.
- With regards to the finalisation of business requirements for the planned system, we would bring to the EC's attention that many LDAC, MAC and MEDAC members not only have specific expertise in this regard, but in many cases, will be eventually directly, operationally impacted by this system. Accordingly, we would like to formally request the inclusion of a balanced representation of the LDAC, the MAC and the MEDAC members, as well as national fisheries stakeholders of concerned MS, in the discussions around the business requirements of the system, and any discussions leading up to the establishment of the system, so it can be effective and properly implemented from an operational point of view.
- In the EC's response, it is stated that Mutual Assistance under the IUU Regulation "is already well-established and functioning". This is not consistent with the information obtained by some members of the LDAC/MAC/MEDAC, which suggest that Member States are not effectively sharing information, and are failing to respond to alerts, which could potentially allow non-compliant consignments to pass through imports controls.⁴
 - The EC needs to ensure that Member States reply to Mutual Assistance requests in a timely and appropriate manner. The EC should also encourage Member States to make proactive use of the system of Mutual Assistance to share intelligence and information on IUU fishing risks and verified cases of IUU fishing, and to incorporate this information into their national risk assessments. In this regard, we recommend that the EC establishes a mechanism within the new IT system for the proactive sharing of intelligence and results of verifications and inspections, to ensure a steady flow of relevant information between Member States.
- The EC also states in its response that it has "started discussions with Member States on the implementation issues" and that "Member States biennial compliance reports foreseen under the Regulation, will be addressed and further used to assess the state of play of implementation and improvements towards uniform and harmonised application of the IUU Regulation and its catch certification scheme".
 - The LDAC, the MAC and the MEDAC welcome this approach and would recommend that such assessments carried out by the EC take the form of a routine audit programme of Member State control procedures.⁵
 - We would furthermore recommend improving the biennial reporting format to ensure detailed and standardised responses by Member States, which are of sufficient quality to allow for the comprehensive assessment of IUU Regulation implementation and to serve as benchmark in terms of compliance between EU MS.
 - Additionally, and in order to increase transparency, we would recommend that the Member State biennial compliance reports are made publicly available, as well as the results the EC's audits of Member State implementation of the IUU Regulation, as is currently standard practice in the context of the EU hygiene legislative package.⁶
- We take note of the fact outlined in the EC response that "the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) has developed guidance for Member States such as the Common Methodology for IUU catch certificates verification and cross-checks" and welcome the cooperation between

DG MARE and EFCA on a “Common Methodology to Facilitate the Implementation of an IUU Risk Management Approach by Member State Authorities”.

- However, we note that certain Articles of the IUU Regulation relating to core elements of the catch certificate scheme are subject to crucial differences in interpretation between Member States. This includes the application of the risk criteria set out in Article 31 of Regulation (EC) 1010/2009, as referenced in the EC’s response.

- We therefore urge the EC to provide further precision to Member States, by way of guidelines, particularly with regard to the content and scope of obligations to check and verify catch certificates on the basis of risk management⁷, including in relation to consignments in transit. Clarification of these core obligations is a precondition to the harmonised and effective implementation of the IUU Regulation catch certification scheme.

- We furthermore recommend that the EC and EFCA continue their collaboration to encourage harmonized application of a risk management approach across the Member States, through these guidelines

- We acknowledge and agree with the need to conduct dialogues on implementation of the IUU Regulation with third countries “in the spirit of trust and confidentiality”. However, in order to address uncertainties faced by the industry (namely fleet operators, processors, traders and importers) during the IUU dialogue and to improve transparency, we would recommend disclosure of the action plans provided to third countries during the carding process, following publication of the pre-identification decision in the EU’s Official Journal. Additionally, we would recommend periodic publication of the specific steps taken by third countries that have resulted in the maintenance/withdrawal of the card. These would greatly facilitate the monitoring of said procedures by the industry when assessing the potential risks to their businesses.
- In the context of the IUU dialogues with third countries, we feel that more efforts need to be focused to ensure the data provided by third countries on catch certificates are accurate, reliable and verifiable. Indeed, traceability starts on board fishing vessels. Any system or database set up to improve the implementation of the IUU Regulation will only be as good as the quality of the primary data provided. We would therefore recommend that the EC requires, as a matter of best practice, the submission of up-to- date lists of licensed vessels by third countries, and endeavours to ensure these lists remain up-to-date, and in the interest of transparency and in view of ongoing legislative processes such as the new Fishing Authorisation Regulation (FAR), are made publicly available⁸. These lists would enhance control efficiency, including through the Mutual Assistance system and, eventually, via the planned IT system.
- Finally, the Commission will be invited to provide regular updates on the state of play of the developments and improvements made regarding the implementation of the IUU Regulation at relevant LDAC/MAC/MEDAC meetings.

In summary, the LDAC, the MAC and the MEDAC request from the European Commission:

1. To secure additional human resources in order to ensure a more rapid and effective delivery of the aforementioned IT system.
2. To include a balanced representation of the LDAC, MAC and MEDAC members, as well as national fisheries stakeholders of concerned MS, in the discussions around the business

requirements of the IT system, and any discussions leading up to the establishment of the system, so it can be effective and properly implemented from an operational point of view.

3. To establish a mechanism within the new IT system for the proactive sharing of intelligence and results of verifications and inspections, to ensure a steady flow of relevant information between Member States.
4. To ensure that the assessments carried out by the EC with Member States on implementation issues take the form of a routine audit programme of Member State control procedures.
5. To improve the biennial reporting format to ensure detailed and standardised responses by Member States.
6. To make these biennial compliance reports publicly available, as well as the results of the EC's audits of Member State implementation of the IUU Regulation, as is currently standard practice in the context of the EU hygiene legislative package.
7. To provide further precision to Member States, by way of guidelines, particularly with regard to the content and scope of obligations to check and verify catch certificates on the basis of risk management, including in relation to consignments in transit.
8. To continue collaboration with EFCA to encourage harmonized application of a risk management approach across the Member States, through these guidelines.
9. To disclose the action plans provided to third countries during the carding process, following publication of the pre-identification decision in the EU's Official Journal. Additionally, we would recommend periodic publication on the specific steps taken by third countries that have resulted in the maintenance/withdrawal of the card.
10. To require, as a matter of best practice, the submission of up-to-date lists of licensed vessels by third countries, and endeavours to ensure these lists remain up-to-date, and in the interest of transparency and in view of ongoing legislative processes such as the new Fishing Authorisation Regulation (FAR), are made publicly available.

¹ <http://ldac.chil.me/download-doc/125741>

² <http://ldac.chil.me/download-doc/127494>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0480&from=EN>

⁴ <http://www.iuuwatch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MOD-CASE-STUDY-Revised-7.pdf>

⁵ The full analysis of Member State implementation of the IUU Regulation carried out by some members of the LDAC/MAC, and presented to the LDAC in October 2016 and the MAC in January 2017, has since been published at: http://www.iuuwatch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/IUU_Import-controls_report_ENG.pdf

⁶ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513968/IPOLPECH_ET\(2013\)513968_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513968/IPOLPECH_ET(2013)513968_EN.pdf)

⁷ Articles 16 and 17 of the IUU Regulation.

⁸ Also to be noted current initiatives such as the Fisheries Industry Transparency Initiative, or the website Whofishesfar.org, calling for such transparency.

9 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON THE REVISION OF CONTROL REGULATION

Brussels, 16th November 2017

This document has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission. The information transmitted is intended only for consultation with Member States and stakeholders in the context of the revision of the EU Fisheries Control System.

Stakeholder consultation on the policy options proposed in the inception impact assessment¹ in order to tackle the shortcomings identified by the evaluation of the EU fisheries control system. Stakeholders should express their views on the 3 proposed policy options. Stakeholders are also invited to express their opinion on certain specific actions that could be envisaged in Options 2 and 3 as outlined in this document.

Option 1: No policy change. Continue current policy and focus on implementation and enforcement of existing framework

The continuation of the current situation is taken as baseline to assess the impacts of the other proposed policy options.

MEDAC considers that the change of the current EU's Control Regulation (CR) is necessary. The reasons are going to be expressed throughout this document in option 2.

Oceana, WWF and CNPMEM express serious concerns regarding the proposed fast-track revision process of the CR and particularly the Commission's intention to skip a standard and open stakeholder consultation and substitute it instead by "targeted consultation", in clear contradiction with the European Commission's own Better Regulation Guidelines.

Option 2: Amendment of the Fisheries Control Regulation

This option foresees amendment of the provisions of Control Regulation to: 1) increase effectiveness and coherence of rules, in particular as regards sanctions and point system, follow up of infringements, data exchange and data sharing, traceability, recreational fisheries, monitoring and catch reporting tools for vessels below 12 meters; 2) simplify the current legislative framework, including by clarifying provisions prone to different interpretations that resulted in problematic and uneven implementation and by addressing the numerous derogations and by addressing the numerous derogations; 3) bridge the gaps with CFP, in particular with the landing obligation; 4) promote the use of harmonised and/or interoperable (at national level) IT tools; 5) increasing synergies with other policies, notably the fight against IUU fishing, environment, markets and security, and 6) align the text with the Lisbon Treaty.

MEDAC is in favour of a simplification and harmonization of the current CR that contains generic rules and does not take into account the reality of the fishing sector in each area, and therefore, one of the most difficult aspects has been the application and the interpretation of the rules. So, MEDAC deems appropriate to adapt the rules to the activity of the fishermen, taking into account the state of stocks, the legality of ships and operations, and the safety of people. So, in order to proceed with the amendment of the current CR first of all it is essential a socio-economic impact study to foresee the consequences that the implementation of the rules could have on the fishing community, as well as the active participation of the stakeholders in the elaboration of the regulation to ensure that it will adapt to the reality of the fishing sector and therefore to guarantee the compliance. MEDAC, suggests that this new CR should have a common framework but then give the possibility to each MS to legislate in detail the rules that will be more appropriate to the reality of that basin.

Furthermore, the amendments to the aforementioned Regulation must prevent the costs of control from falling on the companies, however the same detail of information and effectiveness must be ensured. In this regard, it is proposed to eliminate for all the VMS system (blue box), which has maintenance and

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2017-4808152_en

subscription costs charged to fishing companies, leaving instead the AIS system, which does not have these problems and which also provides a continuous track over time of changes of position.

In order to do this it will also be necessary to align the dictates of the next structural funds (2021/2028), making them more usable and streamlined procedures.

Finally MEDAC considers important, for the purposes of verification of effectiveness, to carry out a careful evaluation of the results achieved through EC Regulations No 1224/09 and 404/2011, through the cost benefit analysis. Oceana, EAA and IFSUA don't share the position to eliminate VMS system.

Option 3: Amendment of the Fisheries Control System

This option includes all the elements indicated in option 2, any related amendments of specific provisions in relevant legislation, the alignment of EFCA's mission and tasks to the changed needs of the new CFP and of the revised Control Regulation and adaptation of EFCA procedures and working practices to take into account the Common Approach on decentralised agencies as adopted in the 2012 Joint Statement of the European Parliament the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

Oceana agrees with policy option 3, under the condition that a public consultation is held and the revision is not executed under an accelerated timeline. If such a strategy is not in place we would prefer to proceed with option 2 and add the revision of the EFCA mandate, without a targeted revision of the IUU Regulation.

POLICY OPTION 2: AMENDMENT OF THE FISHERIES CONTROL REGULATION

A. ENFORCEMENT

PROBLEM: *Lack of consistency and effectiveness of national sanctions for infringements of the CFP rules.*

The whole enforcement system is very complex with provisions scattered between the Control Regulation and the IUU Regulation, creating confusion for its application.

The levels of sanctions are very different from one Member State to another. The current point system for serious infringements is not applied by Member States with even criteria.

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem? **Yes, even if MEDAC firmly believes that the rules on sanctions should be established at Member State level.**

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives? **Amend the Control Regulation to clarify the current enforcement rules (Title VIII) and ease and improve the exchange of information among the Member States involved in case of infringements (Costal State, Flag State, Member States whom national committed infringement).**

1. Lay down unequivocal criteria to define the gravity of the infringements. **The serious infringements are already well defined by EC Regulation 2005/05, therefore no new criteria are required. Oceana and IFSUA agree with this action.**
2. Clarify and revise the current Control Regulation obligations to apply immediate enforcement measures (or preventive measures) in case of serious infringements.
3. Maintain the common list of points to be attributed for serious infringements (it already exists).
4. Clarify that points must apply in addition to the main sanction(s).

5. Establish common/minimum rules for the masters' point system.
6. Establish an EU system to exchange data on infringements and sanctions in cooperation with EFCA and the Member States (ECA request). *It is not clear what the final purpose is. Oceana agrees with this action.*
7. Digitalisation of inspection reports through use of an Electronic Inspection Report System (ECA request).

MEDAC reiterates what has been declared in option 2. A new CR becomes more effective in order to regain coherence and effectiveness in the fishing control system.

Oceana does not agree that the lack of an effective sanctioning system is due to a complex system. The problem is that Member States are not implementing the provisions. Oceana urges the EU to make sharing inspection reports with other Member States mandatory through an Electronic Inspection Report System.

B. DATA: AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND SHARING

1. Reporting and tracking for vessels < 12 m

PROBLEM: *Impossibility to monitor and control fishing activities and catches of vessels below 12 meters efficiently.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

The majority of MEDAC considers that there is the obligation of a paper register between 10 and 12 m LOA; the exclusion of vessels under 10 m LOA is justified by the disproportion of the control rules in relation to the actual impact of these vessels on the harvesting of resources. In any case, these vessels, in the MAPs for the protection of resources, are also obliged to checks and registrations (Fossa di Pomo, Swordfish, ...), moreover, they are often not structured to support electronic equipment.

For example, in GSA1 (Andalusia) all the vessels declare their catches through the auction at the fish market, which is mandatory for professional fishing. In addition, almost all the vessels below 12 m currently use green box (catch tracking system).

Oceana and EAA agree to remove the derogation for small scale vessels and to find a small and cheap localisation system for vessels of under 12 meters. Oceana and EAA agree with actions 1 and 2 below.

WWF suggests to treat all fleet segments and vessels equally, using equally effective monitoring and control methods throughout all fleet segments according to the fisheries operations and their characteristics.

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation and extend monitoring and reporting of catches to all vessels.

1. All vessels are monitored and report electronically their catches, irrespective of their size.
2. For vessels below 12m an easy and cost effective solution is applied (e.g. IOT, cellular/3G, application – as already in place and/or tested in several MS).

2. Control of recreational fisheries

PROBLEM: *Lack of control measures for recreational fisheries despite their possible significant impact on fish resources.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation introducing fishing licenses, vessels registers and reporting of catches for certain types of recreational fisheries.

1. All stocks and species subject to recovery plans, multiannual management plans, and to the landing obligation (i. e. TACs/quotas and species listed in Annex III of the Med Regulation) are subject to a fishing licence and electronic reporting of the catches (easy and cost-effective system as for vessels <12m).

Most of the species listed in Annex III are commonly fished by recreational fishermen, and among recreational catches there is, at least, one of the species mentioned above. For this reason licence 'for species' is a non-sense. It would be useful a personal fishing licence for any fisherman which allows him/her to all the marine recreational fishing activities: from boat, from shore, underwater. As RF is a non-commercial activity it should be a low fee license to only cover the administrative expenses, or it should be tailored – at EU Mediterranean level – according the boat engine power (i.e the minimum applicable for shore, underwater and engines ≤ 40 hp, and a fixed amount for engines >40 hp)

2. All vessels used for recreational fishing are registered.
This is very difficult for almost all the RF vessel, due to the fact that the vessels have no name, are less than 4 m LOA, and have engines below 10 hp with no registration required. It is quite different by commercial vessels where the fishing license goes with the vessel. MEDAC suggests to include this kind of information in the personal fisherman fishing licence.
3. Further control measures can be applied at national/regional level.

MEDAC considers that the recreational fishing activities must also be subject to a control system similar to the professional one.

MEDAC considers that the recreational fishing activities must also be subject to catch reporting procedures that ensures that recreational fishermen are well aware of the legislation as well as the scientific rationale behind it, only about valuable species

3. Weighing, transport and sales

PROBLEM: *Existing provisions related to post landing activities do not ensure that each quantity of each species landed are correctly accounted for by weighing and that the results are always recorded in mandatory catch registration documents. This jeopardises quota uptake monitoring (thus the sustainability of the stock), undermining the legality of the fishing activities and subsequent data analysis.*

MEDAC considers that the main problems detected at the landing level, which should be solved, are:

- a) Sending the electronic fishing logbook "before entry into port", represents an important operational difficulty, because the crew is engaged in the docking operations and in maintaining

the safety of such operations, therefore the transmission should be postponed (most of all when we are talking about massive species such as small pelagic)

b) The difference between the estimated on board and the weighed at the time of disembarkation, currently 10%, is strongly limiting for fishermen. In addition to the pecuniary sanction and the points, this infraction is one of those that determines the inadmissibility of the EMFF. MEDAC therefore requests that this rule be deleted.

Oceana doesn't share this point of view. Currently, there are an important fraction of landings that are not registered, showing that the current system is not effective and should be improved.

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

The problem reported does not seem to MEDAC to be linked to a regulatory deficiency, on the contrary, the more complicated the rules and obligations, the greater the likelihood of non-compliance.

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to revoke exemptions that undermine the accurate weighing and registration of each quantity of each species landed and transported.

1. Each quantity of each species landed is weighed on approved systems, recorded in weighing records. *The rule must be simplified, with few but clear provisions*
2. All weighing activities are conducted by authorised/permited "registered weighers" and that the results of weighing are used to complete landing declaration and transport documents. *No, MEDAC is against it. Further figures would only exacerbate costs and bureaucratic aspects*
3. All quantities sold/dispensed for private consumption, to non-registered buyers, are recorded in landing declarations. *No, under the 10 m LOA there should not be any provision of this kind.*
4. Weighing of primary, bulk weighing of unsorted landings of small pelagic species for human consumption and industrial species can follow a two-step procedure. (Weighing of all unsorted catches immediately at landing followed by a secondary weighing to account for each quantity of each species of by-catch present. For small pelagic species this may entail weighing after transport and sorting at the receiving premises. For industrial landings this shall entail sample weighing, immediately at landing, according to a Commission approved sampling plan). *No the system is too complicated and would lengthen the times of auctions and markets damaging the product.*
5. Requiring that Member States conduct a documented annual review of weighing practices and shall, as necessary, introduce additional measures to ensure that each quantity of each species is accurately accounted for by weighing.
6. Clarify responsibilities and accountability of operators at all process stages.
7. Simplify the reporting procedure of documents from operators to competent authorities (flag state, state of landing, state of sale).
8. Impose registration of post-landing operators (same register used in the food law – thus also increasing synergies with food law and reducing the administrative burden).

Oceana wants to state that, in addition to problems with weighing of catches, there is also an issue with live-weight conversion factors, as the conversion factors that are used to back-calculate the

live weight of the fish products vary from country and region. This needs to be addressed in the future CR.

4. Monitoring of the fishing capacity

PROBLEM: *Current provisions on physical verification of the engine power are not effective to detect differences between the real and the certified engine power. As a result, there is the risk that vessels with manipulated engines may exceed the engine power specified in their fishing licences and that Member States may exceed their capacity ceilings as set in the CFP.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to mandate continuous monitoring and transmission of the maximum power developed by the engines when the vessels are active.

The majority of MEDAC does not support the possibility of demanding the continuous control and transmission of the maximum power developed by the engines when it is active. It is considered that the engine power is also directly linked to safety issues of navigation. Finally, engine power does not always have the same impact on resources and this should be taken into account.

IFSUA supports the continuous monitoring and transmission of the maximum power developed by engines. If there is a safety issue, it will easily be checked by reigning weather conditions.

WWF believes that additional actions to control engine power should be set in the CR especially for active gears. As per outcomes of the Special Report N° 058/2017 of the European Court of Auditors on fisheries control.

Oceana agrees with the problem as described above, as set out in the Court of Auditors report, and agree with the 3 proposals below.

1. For vessels >120 kW using active gears, mandate a continuous monitoring system and transmission of the maximum power developed by the engines when the vessels are active.
2. The information on engine power is stored in a black box and/or sent to the competent authorities by automatic means. The information must also be directly accessible to the authorities when they are conducting an inspection at sea.
3. Procedures should be developed that include how to act in case of system failures.

5. Data management and sharing at EU level

PROBLEM: *Major shortcomings in the exchange of fisheries data between Member States, and limited access of the Commission to disaggregated fisheries data (resulting in difficulties for the Commission to assess the accuracy of the Member States' catch reporting).*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to complete the digitalisation of the data system, and enhance availability and exchange of data. MEDAC agrees on the description of the problem, and fishing industry of the MEDAC thinks that it does not directly involve them.

1. Complete the digitalisation of the control data system (e.g. electronic reporting of the vessels <12m).
2. Establish an EU-Fisheries Control Data Centre (FCDC) for an *integrated European information system for fisheries management*.

MEDAC considers appropriate to establish an integrated European information system for fisheries management and available to all the MS. In this way it will be possible to have a transparent information system. Oceana also agrees on action point 1.

C. CONTROL OF THE LANDING OBLIGATION

PROBLEM: Conventional controls, such as inspections at sea are not effective to control and enforce compliance of the landing obligation.

MEDAC believes that, in the Mediterranean, the landing obligation has not so far achieved the desired effects, which is why it does not seem appropriate, also in light of the cost-benefit ratio, to further implement the system in this regard.

In the current system there is no legislative basis requiring the use of remote electronic monitoring tools (e.g. CCTV), widely recognised as the most effective means to promote compliance with and control and enforce the landing obligation at sea. Member States are un-willing to install those systems on-board of their fishing vessels in absence of any regional consensus on the harmonised use of CCTV across all Member States.

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to require the use of remote electronic monitoring tools, including CCTV, on individual vessels and fleet segments according to risk assessment.

The majority of the MEDAC is against it. It is believed that everything concerning the work and its control on board is very delicate and must also be seen in the context of the constitutional protections of each country.

1. 100% coverage of those vessels with an inherent highest risk of non-compliance and those with the potential to discard high quantities of fish in a short period of time (factory vessels, freezer vessels, refrigerated seawater tank vessels, vessels otherwise equipped to pump fish in bulk).
2. For the remaining vessels coverage levels should be determined per fleet segment in accordance with the regional risk assessment and in cooperation with EFCA.
3. Within the fleet segments determined as the highest risk, Member States should determine which individual vessels to be equipped with CCTV on a dynamic basis, according to risk. Member States should be required to annually compare reference data such as the catch composition reported from those vessels which are equipped and those which are unequipped with CCTV, within a certain fleet segment, and incorporate the results of such analyses into the risk assessment.

Oceana agrees on the description of the problem. Regarding CCTV, thinks that in the Mediterranean this tool should be implemented as much as possible. Finally, Oceana agrees on the 3 actions proposed below, and propose to include “bottom trawlers” in paragraph 1, as they are an important source of discards in the Mediterranean.

D. INCREASED SYNERGIES WITH OTHER POLICIES

1. Environment

PROBLEM: *Lack of synergies with environmental legislation resulting in an inefficient control system. MEDAC considers that the existing ones are more than enough.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to extend the control of fishing restricted areas to all marine protected areas (listed under RFMOs, Birds Directive, Habitat Directive).

1. Establishment of minimum requirements for the control of fishing restrictions due to environmental obligations, e.g. by extending the scope of existing Article 50.
2. Additional provisions would be defined at national or regional basis.

Oceana slightly disagrees with the description of the problem, in the sense that biggest issue is actually lack of implementation of environmental legislation in the first place. They also agree on the 2 actions proposed below. Regarding action 1, we think that it should be expanded to all types of Marine Protected Areas and possibly revised (e.g. paragraph 2 has not been implemented to our knowledge). Direct reference to MSFD could be made to align their scope adequately. Regarding action 2, several aspects could also be strengthened such as broader technical measures to reduce impacts on seabed or bycatch of species listed under environmental lists (like regional seas conventions). Finally alignment with the Mediterranean Reg (Art 4 on protected habitats) could be beneficial as we know these provisions are barely implemented/respected. In this line, detailed cartography on Sensitive Habitats and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems should be set up by Member States based in current evidences (via peer-reviewed publications).

2. Market control (and traceability)

PROBLEM: *Traceability of fishery products is not effective and the type and level of implementation is uneven across the Member States. In addition, the current system is exclusively designed for EU fishery products, and does not allow the use of certain data on imported fishery products from Third Countries.*

The 5 major causes of inefficient implementation of the rules are: 1) lack of clarity in the provisions and clear indication of the objectives of traceability; 2) paper based system; 3) lack of systematic, consistent and coherent collection of EU wide data , in particular from the catch event to landing/entry into the EU market; 3) different technical solutions applied by Member States for data collection and exchange, resulting in national systems which are not compatible nor interoperable; 4) current derogation for some information on imported products, available in the catch certificate, and lack of such information across the traceability chain for market related control purposes.

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

MEDAC shares the reflection on a greater control on the traceability of fish imported from Third Countries, which should be improved.

As far as traceability is concerned, a great deal of work is done at the level of primary production (until the first sale), but often information is lost along the commercial chain and does not reach the final consumer.

MEDAC points out the problem of the so-called "mixed", typical of Mediterranean multi-species fisheries: at present, applying the regulation to the letter, it is not possible to compose batches of mixed species. The mixture represents, at least in Italy, the culinary and gastronomic tradition of various coastal areas (brodetto, caciucco, frittura) and for this it should be safeguarded, allowing, under certain conditions, the possibility of selling also lots made up of different species. In addition, the mixed cassettes, typical of Mediterranean sea, would allow the fishermen to have a greater income, also exploiting less interesting species commercially, and consumers can use fresh products of high nutritional value that make up many traditional local dishes.

The possibility of considering the presence of three / four different species in the same box as a single batch could be studied during the revision of the CR. To reinforce this request, a list of species could be added, the only ones that could be included in the definition of "mixed", ensuring the absence of species "under observation" by the EC or species that are over-exploited or shared with other countries.

The first sale in Spain is regulated and the traceability system is good, but it is lost along the chain and it should be advisable to improve its persistence until the final consumer in order to inform the consumers that the Mediterranean fresh products are subject to high standards that are demanding for the producer.

Oceana agrees with the description of the problems and on most of the major identified causes of inefficient implementation on traceability, except for 1) as we believe traceability objectives and provisions on fish product are clear enough (whether from EU Food Information to Consumers Regulation No 1169/2011, the Common Market Organisation regulation 1373/2013, or the Control Regulation), some aspects could be improved, but the main weakness is uneven implementation and too limited controls.

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to clarify the provisions and establish an EU wide based system.

1. Clarify definitions and provisions, including the objective of traceability and its use (market control purposes vs information to consumers). Add requirement of unique trip identifier.
2. Digitalise the system to control the application of the rules of the CFP at all stages of the marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, from the first sale to the retail sale, including transport.
3. An EU – wide system is established.

Oceana agrees that there are some issues with the scope of application (derogations), such as the exclusion processed products (e.g. canned and processed fish / imports), as well as consumer

information in restaurants and caterers. This has led to several cases of mislabelling in the EU (e.g. a few studies¹⁰). Nevertheless, most of the labelling provisions entered into force in December 2014 (CMO) and are still in the early implementation phase.

WWF recommends that the revised CR should provide more clarity on the requirements for seafood traceability. Finally, WWF recommends that the revision of the CR takes into account the existing best practices across the EU and adopt clear mandatory requirements for the use of digital seafood traceability systems.

3. Food and feed safety

PROBLEM: *Some definitions (e.g. risk management or audit) and general principles (cooperation rules, responsibility of operators) are not aligned with the food law, thus creating confusion and posing problems to the authorities when enforcing the fishery and the food and feed control legislations.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation to better align it to the principles of the food law.

1. Align the terminology and principles of Control Regulation with the food law;
2. Introduce minimum cooperation rules and procedures between Member States and define the responsibilities of the food chain operators (using the same register as under food and feed law, see point B.3.4 above).

POLICY OPTION 3: AMENDMENT OF THE FISHERIES CONTROL SYSTEM

Policy option 3 builds upon policy option 2, considering all the approaches proposed in the policy option 2 plus the following (not implementable in policy option 2 as they need amendment of IUU Regulation and/or EFCA Founding regulation).

Oceana agrees with policy option 3, under the condition that a public consultation is held and the revision is not executed under an accelerated timeline. Oceana urges the EC to be very cautious and take the time to have a well thought out strategy. If such a strategy is not in place we would proceed with option 2 and add the revision of the EFCA mandate, without a targeted revision of the IUU Regulation, and not support option 3.

ENFORCEMENT RULES

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation and the IUU Regulation to clarify, simplify and streamline the current rules. Move enforcement rules from the IUU Regulation to the Control Regulation to ensure one single enforcement system.

MEDAC believes that clarity and simplification are undoubtedly essential for a better application of the rules. So any revision of the CR should be carried out with this approach.

1. Establish a common list of definitions of serious infringements of the CFP by ensuring EU international obligations in this respect.
2. Introduce the obligation to treat infringements of CFP under administrative law (not excluding criminal law).
3. Introduce common rules on administrative sanctions for infringements of the CFP rules either:
 - a. by setting at EU level types and ranges of sanctions (e.g. in monetary terms or as % of economic revenue/benefit from infringement, % of value of the illegal catches);
 - b. or by obliging MSs to set national sanctions, including their ranges, in accordance to clear benchmarks or minimum levels set in EU rules.
4. Define concepts such as "economic benefit from the infringement" or "value of the prejudice to the fishing resources and the marine environment" (not necessary if point 3.a is chosen).

INCREASED SYNERGIES WITH OTHER POLICIES

Market control (and traceability)

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the Control Regulation so to apply it to products from Third Countries

1. Remove derogation for products from Third Countries*.
2. As a result need to also digitalise the IUU catch certificate (see next point).

* This can also help EU operators and administrations to comply with possible Third Countries' import requirements.

IUU

PROBLEM: *The IUU Catch Certification Scheme is paper-based and as a result it would not be compatible with a fully digitalised traceability system extended to imported products.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the IUU Regulation to digitalise the IUU catch certificate.

1. Mandate the use of an EU-wide IUU IT system (already under development) for the electronic submission and collection of catch certificates and processing statements.

EFCA FOUNDING REGULATION

PROBLEM: *Lack of alignment of the Founding Regulation with the Common approach on decentralised agencies, alignment with the CFP (LO, role of EFCA as regards the external dimension), alignment with the proposed amendments in the Control Regulation, need to follow-up on recommendations of the Administrative Board.*

Do stakeholders agree with the description of the problem?

MEDAC considers that an increased mandate and resources of EFCA not only in relation to control the EU waters, but also to contribute to control in non-EU waters in order to ensure adequate operational coordination of the national means of control and inspection are necessary. Moreover, it is advisable to organize more training of EU MS and Third Countries inspectors, promoting the harmonization of inspection procedures.

Do stakeholders believe that the following possible specific actions could address the above mentioned problem? Do they believe that additional actions should be envisaged and/or that certain actions would not be adequate to achieve the objectives?

Amend the EFCA Founding Regulation to:

1. Align it to the Common approach on decentralised agencies.
2. Clarify EFCA's mission and tasks as regards the external policy, and align them fully with the CFP. This would include: a) empowering EFCA to carry out inspections beyond international waters, upon mandate/request by the Commission, limited to activities in the context of RFMOs, SPFAs and fight against IUU; b) allowing EFCA to coordinate among MS certain control schemes in RFMOs; and possibly c) clarify the future EFCA's coordination role when it comes to regional control measures in the framework of the landing obligation (see also point on landing obligation).
3. Clarify the tasks of the Advisory Body and review the tasks of the Administrative Board.
4. Revise current rules for the adoption and participation to the Joint Deployment Plans, and provide for more flexible working arrangements to ease the participation of Third Countries under the coordination of EFCA.
5. Follow-up on ECA recommendation by requiring EFCA to set up an EU-wide system to exchange data on infringements and sanctions –and this beyond JDPs. Data accessibility will have to be designed carefully taking into consideration data confidentiality rules at EU/national level.

Possible role of EFCA in the EU-Fisheries Control Data Centre (FCDC) (see also policy option 2 point B.5 on data management and sharing at EU level).

10 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON A NEW MODEL OF SPECIFIC CONTROL AND INSPECTION PROGRAMMES (SCIPS)

Rome, 28th June 2018

1. Do you agree with the introduction of mandatory measures in the SCIPs for the application of CCTV technology across all MS and to specific fishing fleets, on a regional basis, according to harmonised risk management?

All¹ the members of the MEDAC are against the introduction of mandatory measures, as it would certainly cause an increase in costs for companies to control measures already perceived by operators as ineffective, uneconomical and generally difficult to apply, given the characteristics of the Mediterranean multi-species fisheries. It is not possible to establish these measures that are not taking into account the existing costs not only related to investment, but also to the maintenance of another control system. In addition there are other problems, such as those related to the law on the privacy of personal data, the safety of navigation and activities on board.

2. What criteria should be used to determine the fisheries/fleet segments/vessels subject to control through CCTV? Should there be a threshold in fishing vessel's length?

Given that MEDAC does not agree with the first question, MEDAC believes that any eventual introduction of CCTV on board of the fishing vessels should be based on a previous study that should consider some criteria. The criteria used should take into account the dimensional² and constructive characteristics of the boats: therefore a differentiation should be done by fishing gear; fishing zone; fishing more than 24 hours; LOA and target species. In any case, the installation of CCTV should not take place automatically but only as a result of repeated unlawful conduct (serious infringements) within the IUU and Control Regulations, as a further deterrent measure.

3. What do you believe will be the greatest technical and legal challenges and what do you think can be the solutions? (e.g. Installation and maintenance costs. Data access and exchange by flag and coastal state competent authorities. Technical specifications, implementing protocols. Privacy and data protection laws,...).

As already mentioned, MEDAC considers that the burden of controls must not be transferred to fishing companies, but must remain the responsibility of the competent Authority: this is one of the great limitations of the CCTV hypothesis on board. Moreover, the aspect of the CCTV should not be forgotten either protection of privacy that is increasingly "defending" in the same EU context. MEDAC reiterates that the socioeconomic impact of any measure should be taken into account, so an installation of this type must assume a zero cost both for its acquisition, start-up and maintenance. Likewise, it must be a system that can be accessed not only by administrations but also by shipowners. MEDAC supports an extract of the report of the rapporteur Isabelle Thomas "How to make fisheries controls in Europe uniform" (2015/2093(INI)), stating that is "to rework the chaotic legal system imposed on fishing and the unjustifiable overlapping of regulations and public administrations acting in an uncoordinated way, carrying out an attack against elementary principles of the Community order when establishing, de facto, differences of treatment between EU citizens."

Finally MEDAC considers that the start-up and running cost could be funded by EMFF, which is underused. The greatest challenge may be to allow for collection, storage and sharing of data at EU level. Transparency is very important for control purposes but also as a deterrent. A common database should be handled at EU level with access for Member States, scientists and stakeholders, without violating EU privacy and data protection laws.

4. Do you believe the use of some kind of incentives can be positive to start the process?

MEDAC³ underlines again that the cost of control cannot burden companies, so it is a fundamental condition that in the case of the introduction of CCTV on board there will be funding to comply with the obligation, as well as for the future functioning of the system, avoiding what happened for the VMS control for which the cost of traffic is paid by the companies. Moreover, it is the case to stress that the typology of a large fleet, especially in the Mediterranean, makes it technically impossible to install this type of system, with or without incentives of any kind. Finally, MEDAC stresses the need to commission a study and analysis about the socioeconomic situation of the Fishery Coastal Sector.

¹ EAA agrees with the introduction of mandatory measures.

² EAA states that to be effective CCTV should be installed on all commercial fishing vessels no matter the length.

³ EAA considers that if the Mediterranean fisheries management system will be changed to a TAC and Quota system, as suggested by the Commission, then additional quotas could be offered those who install CCTV, and viceversa less quota to those without CCTV.

MEDAC OPINION ON REVISION OF THE CONTROL REGULATION (Abstract)

Rome, 21st December 2018

Given that

- during the WG1 meeting session held on 11th October in Rome, reading commenced of the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control [COM(2018)368]
- on that occasion the more relevant aspects of the proposal were illustrated with particular reference to the issues of interest to the members and the subsequent exchange of opinions revealed the need to elaborate further on the text, in order to be in a position to formulate an opinion in a future special session of WG1.
- in order to simplify the work and to summarise the most relevant aspects, the Secretariat, with the support of the coordinator, prepared an ad hoc questionnaire which was submitted to all the members with a request for feedback, article by article, where possible providing reasons for the observations made - by the end of November 2018;
- this questionnaire was drafted using different colours to highlight the different addressees of the requirements: the vessel's captain, Member States, delegated acts and EC implementing acts) with a view to facilitating its compilation given the substantial length of the overall text;
- during the month of November, the Secretariat received numerous contributions in response to the questionnaire, which emphasised the level of interest in the issue.

It was noted during the WG1 ad hoc meeting held on 10th December 2018 that:

- the contributions received by the Secretariat were highly heterogeneous and it would therefore neither veracious nor appropriate to disperse the different points of view expressed by the members in the attempt to reach compromises, which in some cases would probably be unattainable;
- on many of the issues dealt with, there was a distinct lack of uniformity of opinion, not only between the fisheries representatives (60%) and the representatives of other interest groups (40%), but also within each of these segments;
- standardised implementation throughout the Mediterranean basin is desirable, allowing however for the characteristic features of the fisheries to be recognised as appropriate, both in terms of marine resources and of the kind of fleet operating there.

The MEDAC, with regard to the Commission's proposal COM (2018) 468:

- Considers it appropriate to highlight, article by article, the opinion of the all members who replied to the questionnaire by means of a specially designed chart, moreover the individual positions expressed are also attached in full, in addition to the summary provided in the full questionnaire;
- The need to make the most of all the opportunities offered by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, both present and future, was emphasised, with the aim of supporting the fisheries sector in the challenges that arise from the application of the common fisheries policy and its effective control. Particular reference was made, by way of example, to assistance in equipping vessels with the necessary control devices, in ensuring that they are operated appropriately and in training activities to ensure informed and proper use of such equipment;

- Agrees to ensure that any new compliance requirements, mainly concerning vessels of smaller dimensions, that are necessary to achieve the objectives of the common fisheries policy fully, do not lead to financial and/or administrative burdens, both in their installation and maintenance, for companies and workers, while also achieving the goal of simplification;
- Acknowledges that, where the individual aspects brought to the attention of WG1 are concerned, although it is not possible to prepare a joint opinion due to the large number of aspects analysed, the attached questionnaire and the related charts with the individual positions, provide some useful prompts for the legislative process the proposal is going through.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE OBSERVATIONS OF MEDAC'S WORKING GROUP ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EP AND OF THE COUNCIL AS REGARDS FISHERIES CONTROL COM (2018)368 FINAL, CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

http://www.medac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2018/12/339_medac_questionnaire_proposal_fishery_control.pdf

THE HISTOGRAMS OF THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE MEDAC MEMBERS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

http://www.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2018/12/339_histograms_questionnaire-numbers.pdf

LETTER ABOUT THE EGYPTIAN FLEET IN THE STRAIT OF SICILY

Rome, 3rd March 2020

To Virginijus Sinkevicius (Commissioner Environment, Oceans and Fisheries - EC)

Dear Commissioner Sinkevicius,

the MEDAC met on 18 and 19 February in Rome to progress the discussion in the Working Groups. Among the different topics that were addressed, the Focus Group on the Strait of Sicily analysed GFCM Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6 on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily.

A researcher from the Italian National Research Centre and another from the Zoological Station Anton Dohrn attended the Focus Group as experts as well as several members representing the fisheries sector in the area. During the meeting the EFCA representative presented the Joint Deployment Plan for 2019 in the Strait of Sicily and it was highlighted that, in contrast with the rules applied by their own country as well as the GFCM recommendations, vessels from the Egyptian fishing fleet carry out fishing activities intensively in the Strait of Sicily, especially in shallow waters, even though none of the vessels are listed in the register of fishing vessels authorised to operate in the Strait (as per GFCM Recommendation 39/2015/3). The 100% of the Egyptian vessels inspected were associated with a potential non-compliance.

During the discussion, the great concern of all those attending the meeting came as a clear message. The ever-increasing activities of the Egyptian fishing fleet could jeopardize all the efforts that the countries concerned (mainly Italy and Tunisia) made to adopt multi-annual management measures for the fisheries involved (FRAs etc...).

We therefore consider it appropriate to report this matter and inform you that there is growing concern over the proper evaluation of the situation and the measures to be discussed in the framework of the GFCM by the representatives of the EC during the upcoming scheduled meetings.

Yours sincerely,



TOPIC: Regulation 1380/2013 (CFP, discards and landing obligation)

• Common Fisheries Policy

MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MALTA MEDFISH4EVER DECLARATION

15

Rome, 14th May 2019

Please list your country/organization's **most relevant achievements in relation** to the following main topics of the MedFish4Ever Declaration:

A) Enhance data collection and scientific evaluation

Main actions:

- 100% of key Mediterranean stocks are subject to adequate data collection and scientifically assessed on a regular basis by 2020
- Convene a Forum on Fisheries Science

Achievements:

- Specific projects and best practices already in place:
 - In France National fishing fleet register for SSF is already established and the benchmarking on ERMS (electronic Reporting and Monitoring System) is ongoing;
 - In EU countries SSF data collection is already implemented by EU Control Regulation and data are already available on sale notes;
 - In Croatia logbook mobile app;
 - In Andalusia, a System of Fishing Vessel Tracking, called "caja verde" (green box), has been implemented throughout the fleet including SSF
 - According to some fishery organizations in EU Mediterranean waters data collection on socio-economic impact is already included in EU regulations;
 - EU workshop on digital tools held in Brussels on December 2018 in order to improve data collection in SSF;
 - Socio-economic analysis on SSF in three pilot sites concerning Alboran sea and strait of Sicily subregions (by LIFE);
 - In Mediterranean EU countries a data collection system on different fisheries has been implemented according to EU regulations, but it doesn't reach the 100% of commercial stocks.

B) Establish an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework

Main actions:

- No later than 2020, establish and implement a regional capacity plan ensuring an adequate balance between resources and the fleet capacity
- No later than 2020, manage 100% of the key fisheries with a multiannual management plan
- Ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats
- Further develop fisheries restricted areas and marine protected areas ensuring an effective protection of at least 10% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020
- Establish, by 2020 at the latest, a set of baseline rules to ensure an effective management of recreational fisheries across the Mediterranean

Achievements:

- In Balearic Islands spatio-temporal closures of the fleet are already based on scientific advices;
- In Andalusia the preparation and enforcement of management plans are always positive processes. The only issue raised is related to exclusivity, because to manage fishing zones together is better than promote exclusive areas;
- In France fisher's organization already cooperate and collect private funds in order to sustain scientific research and monitoring programs on coastal species
- Specific projects and best practices already in place:
 - in France SELPAL and REPAST projects on Selectivity of longlines -bluefin tuna (cooperation with scientific research and awareness of fishermen), UEGC and PELAMED project (improvement of methods to increase the knowledge on species targeted by SSF) and PEEXNAC project 2018 (growth and reproduction of *Nassarius mutabilis*);
 - in Spain, Italy and Turkey ECOSAFIMED project aimed to establish management guidelines to improve ecosystem conservation and ensuring maintenance of acceptable practice of SSF;
 - Minouw project developed selective gears for SSF set and trammel nets;
 - In Italy "Pomo pit" and "Sicily Channel" FRAs have been established as well as new SIC and protected areas.

C) Develop a culture of compliance and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Main actions:

- Ensure by 2020 that all countries have an adequate legal framework and necessary human and technical capabilities to meet their control and inspection responsibilities. Support the development of national control and sanctioning systems.
- Establish, where appropriate, Joint Schemes of International Inspection by subregional area to ensure the monitoring of high seas
- Through the Compliance committee, set up and maintain compliance indicators
- By 2020, ensure the allocation of a unique vessel identifier (IMO number) to commercial fishing vessels of 24 meters and above

Achievements:

- Existing projects already aimed to improve cooperation among fisheries organizations/ NGOs/scientific experts.

D) Support sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture

Main actions:

- Set up a regional plan of action for small-scale fisheries
- Commit to implementing the GFCM Strategy for the sustainable development of aquaculture
- Support partnerships between producers and the marketing chain to enhance valorization of catches

Achievements:

- In Spain the entire fleet is involved at all levels and all catches are valued through promotional campaigns, specific labelling, self-regulation of supply (mainly for species of high commercial value);
- Existing projects to support information and/or awareness campaigns for consumers on the importance of responsible consumption of local products (in Almeria "Pescados con arte"), or

- enhancing valorization of catches (Project Synepesca, Diverso, freshfishalert, ...), or developing a labeling scheme for Mediterranean small-scale and artisanal fisheries (LABMAF);
- In Spain the involvement of SSF in the management decisions is similar to other fisheries;
- The representation of SSF is guaranteed in fisher associations, but in the big organizations its participation should be improved.

E) Greater solidarity and coordination in the Mediterranean

Main actions:

- Establish a permanent network for cooperation and technical assistance by 2018
- Work programme on spatial planning
- Formalization of cooperation through memoranda of understanding to avoid duplications and promote synergies

Achievements:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MEDAC and GFCM signed on 14 May 2012

*Please list the **main challenges** foreseen for the future of the Mediterranean and strategic actions needed to address these challenges in 2021-2025:*

MAIN CHALLENGES

- Adopt, as soon as possible, a characterization of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, reflecting their socioeconomic relevance and specificities on the basis of a set of indicative criteria (vessel size, gear used, duration of fishing trip, non-vessel based fishing activities, etc.), such as ICCAT Definition (Rec. 18-02)

Topic A) Data collection in SSF should be improved reporting all catches through new technologies

Topic B) Support investments in small-scale fisheries to, among others, improve selectivity, preserve biodiversity, minimize bycatch and interactions with vulnerable species and predators and promote energy efficiency.

Topic D) Promote decent work, the improvement of working conditions as well as social protection for all small-scale fisheries workers

Topic E) Assist and support small-scale fisheries communities affected by climate change or natural and human-induced disasters

- Women have equal opportunities and rights in the sector. It is true that due to the durability of the profession, it has traditionally been more devoted to other tasks than being embarked, but not less important and necessary

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Follow the mechanism of SSF characterization defined by Friend of SSF Platform

Topic A: - Initiate an integrated regional research activity in order to collect accurate, valid and complete data on the value and socio-economic impact of small-scale fisheries;
- Administrations should provide new technologies aimed to improve the management and reduce bureaucracy to the crew.

Topic D: Ratification and enforcement of the "C188 ILO Convention"

Topic E: - Improve research and share of knowledge on the alien species and the impact of climate change;
- Management actions are needed, mainly focused to reduce fishing mortality due to plastics pollution and water acidification.

• Discards and Landing Obligation

16 RAC MED LETTER ON DISCARDS

Rome, 30th April 2013

To Ulrike Rodust (Rapporteur CFP Reform); Gabriel Mato Adrover (President of the PECH); Guido Milana (Vice-president of the PECH); Alain Cadec (Vice-president of the PECH); Struan Stevenson (Vice-president of the PECH); Nils Torvalds (Vice-president of the PECH); Maria Damanaki (Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries – EC); Lowri Evans (General Director – EC - DG MARE); Cécile Bigot-Dekeyser (Directorate of Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture –France); Dimitra Savvopoulou (Directorate-General for Fisheries- Greece); Emilio Gatto (Directorate General of Maritime Fishing and Aquaculture-Italy); Joseph Caruana (Directorate General for Fisheries-Malta); Anica ZAVRL BOGATAJ (Direction for Forests, Hunting and Fishing-Slovenia); Ignacio Escobar Guerrero (Directorate General of Fisheries and Aquaculture-Spain)

In relation to the landing obligation, as envisaged in art. 15 of the proposals on the reform of the CFP which are being addressed in the trialogue, RAC MED*:

- Confirms the position it expressed in its Opinion dated 28th October 2011, in particular with regard to the difficulties of implementation in the Mediterranean basin (ref. n. 266/AV); ¹
- Re-iterates that, in order to achieve the shared goal of a significant reduction in discards, it is first and foremost essential to avoid unwanted catches by adopting suitable technical management measures and by achieving greater gear selectivity.

RAC MED is of the opinion that protecting juveniles and minimising discards are goals to be pursued within fishery-level management plans. Such management plans must contain specific technical measures, including time/area closures and gear selectivity improvement and establish a timetable for implementation.

RAC MED considers that measures to protect juveniles are already specified in detail in Mediterranean Regulation 1967/2006, and that such measures afford adequate protection for juveniles. It also believes that the landing of undersized fish:

- would involve a serious risk of the CFP reverting to a less effective status;
- would be contradictory and set a bad example for fishers and consumers;
- would be a danger for the conservation of fish resources and potentially damaging for the environment and the trophic chain;
- would involve enormous technical and financial difficulties to implement and entail potential negative effects on employment.

Therefore, in order to guarantee the full recovery of Mediterranean stocks and a healthy future for fisheries, RACMED suggests that the Mediterranean be exempted from the landing obligation, leaving it to multi-annual management plans to prepare suitable gear selectivity measures and that all necessary measures be intensified to ensure the full respect of existing regulations.

*This letter was endorsed by all members of the Executive Committee² with the exception of Oceana and EAA (together with IFSUA substitute of the seat assigned to EAA). Oceana is fully supportive of a discard ban in the Mediterranean and expresses its willingness to co-operate and work towards its appropriate implementation in the Mediterranean Sea. EAA is generally supportive

¹ Opinion attached

² Table attached on the composition of the Executive Committee of the RAC MED

towards a discard ban for all EU waters, including the Mediterranean Sea. They do agree to ‘discards’ (or releases) of fish with a high probability of survival. They do know and accept, that derogations have to be negotiated for some fisheries, at least for the short term. They cannot support a statement that all Mediterranean fishermen should be exempted from the landing obligation at this point in time. Exemptions should be negotiated case by case.

MEDAC ADVICE FOR A JOINT RECOMMENDATION ON DISCARD MANAGEMENT PLAN (Art. 15 Reg. 1380/2013) (Abstract)

17

9th June 2014

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Executive summary

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, includes the gradual introduction into the EC law of the ban on discards at sea and the consequent obligation to land some target species. The gradual nature of the introduction of the obligation is determined according to the gear used and the relevant target species: in a word, according to the fisheries.

In the Mediterranean, in contrast to the seas of Northern Europe, the landing obligation is applied according to a timetable set out in the Regulation for species that have a minimum landing size in the Mediterranean Sea, under Regulation (EC) 1967/06, Annex III, as well as for the only species subject to a quota (Bluefin tuna).

In certain circumstances, the obligation does not apply: for example, in the case of species whose capture is forbidden or species defined "high survival", or situations that fall under de minimis exemptions. The de minimis exemption, under certain conditions, allows fishermen to discard species that would otherwise be subject to the landing obligation: in order to obtain this exemption, however, a discards management plan is required which defines the percentage of discard and the reasons for it as accurately as possible.

The main aim of this management plan is, therefore, to make the application of the de minimis exemption possible in the conditions described herein.

Adaptive approach. Due to the significant difficulty in applying the de minimis exemption in the Mediterranean, the proposal is to request that the European Commission apply an adapted version of the exemption during the years of validity of this three-year plan: we would therefore like to apply the de minimis rule in the first two years at a fixed rate (the first year for the collection of real data and the second for data processing), and then apply the percentage of actual catches from the third year onwards.

In addition, pursuant to Article 18 of Reg. 1380/2013, this management plan has been drawn up as a Joint Recommendation, as different areas of the Mediterranean are shared by several Member States, thus achieving another objective of the reform to the CFP.

Since the introduction of the landing obligation represents not only a significant change in approach for fishermen - between December 31 2014 and January 1, 2015 they pass from the requirement to discard to a ban on discards - but also a different way of working in terms of compiling and recording data, as well as the use of the inevitable undesired part of the catch, MEDAC has prepared this management plan in two parts: a general and a specific part. In the general part, after a short chapter on the legislative framework, concerning both the reform and some aspects related to the

introduction of compulsory landing, the reasons that led to the decision to prepare a single for the whole Mediterranean. This is followed by the analysis of the major biological aspects of the species involved, anchovy, sardine, mackerel and horse mackerel, with an overview of stock size and distribution where applicable. Statistical data are provided for each species, relative to biomass and other parameters which are important for the plan itself. A special section recalls the species subject to a minimum landing size in the Mediterranean, since these species have to be landed if caught inadvertently (only, however, if the fishery in question is subject to this requirement).

The general section continues with a discussion of technical aspects of the gear involved, with particular reference to pelagic trawl (pair or single vessel) and purse seine, while also taking into consideration the specific EC regulations covering these fisheries.

The national supervisory authorities have been assigned a section of this document in which to detail monitoring and control activities with particular reference to the controls carried out on the application of the landing obligation, the *de minimis* exemption, as well as a monitoring system to verify the plan's effectiveness. There is no lack of possible areas for intervention in the framework of the EMFF, in support of the implementation of the landing obligation and to assist fishers, businesses and administrations in compliance with the new provisions, from measures to avoid unwanted catches to those for the optimization of the use of landed by-catch and/or to assist in data collection.

The final part of the recommendation enters into further detail on the application, where necessary, of *de minimis* exemption, pointing out that in the Mediterranean there are no studies on the survival rate of the species that are initially affected by the landing obligation, and in the case of force majeure in which it is not possible to comply with the requirement .

The specific part on the other hand, goes into greater detail on the single areas that are involved, divided according to the FAO GFCM GSA (geographical sub-areas), with specific annexes organized as Joint Recommendations. In particular this section classifies the possible uses of the undesired part of the catch that is inevitably subject to the landing obligation (for each Member State concerned), bearing in mind that this is an option to be considered only after every effort has been made to reduce by-catch, especially of undersized specimens.

In addition, the critical aspects of handling are highlighted (all operations that are a consequence of having to deal with undersized fisheries products on board and on land, such as the problems of separate stowage on board, refrigeration at sea and on land etc.). Lastly the requested *de minimis* percentage is defined, considering the conditions for access to this exemption and therefore the reasons for which increased gear selectivity is not possible (in this case a scientific study would be required) or the evidence of disproportionate handling costs compared to the very limited quantities that should be landed using the gear in question.

This draft recommendation for a discards management plan presents the opinion of MEDAC as expressed in the various meetings held so far, both at individual Member State level and in MEDAC WG1, as well as in Brussels in meetings organized by the European Commission (25 October 2013). In all these circumstances, the EC has provided significant support, including assistance in understanding the texts and regulations.

The following WG1 meetings within MEDAC are highlighted as fundamental stages in the discussion of this topic:

- Barcelona (Spain) 4 to 5 March 2014
- Rovinj (Croatia) April 8, 2014
- Portoroz (Slovenia) 7-9 May 2014

In each of these meetings the constructive spirit shown by all parties representing the social, economic and environmental aspects of this discussion permitted the achievement of the objective of drafting this document.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE ADVICE (IN ITALIAN) CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

[http://en.med-](http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2014/09/159_medac_draft_joint_rec_mgmt_plan_discards_small_pel.pdf)

[ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2014/09/159_medac_draft_joint_rec_mgmt_plan_discards_small_pel.pdf](http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2014/09/159_medac_draft_joint_rec_mgmt_plan_discards_small_pel.pdf)

COMMENTS RECEIVED BY SOME EXCOM MEMBERS ON A JOINT

RECOMMENDATION DISCARDS MANAGEMENT PLAN (Art. 15 Reg. 1380/2013)

ITALIAN ASSOCIATIONS-(AGCI Agrital, FEDERCOOPESCA, FEDERPESCA, Lega Pesca, EAA)

The aforementioned Italian Associations recognize the validity of the scientific and technical work of the draft joint recommendation; however, we point out the following.

As it came out during the various discussions and as it is highlighted in the general part of the draft, the pelagic trawl and the purse seine due to their specific characteristics, are operating in a different way. For this reason we believe that a differentiation of the de minimis percentage in all GSAs between the two fisheries should be kept and reflected in the percentages proposed for the de minimis in GSA 17 as well.

The reasons behind this have been well articulated in the text and it has to do with the fact that the purse seine is a more selective gear than the pelagic trawl.

Therefore, during the Working groups meeting it was suggested to adopt the following percentages for de minimis for GSA 17:

Purse Seine: 3%

Pelagic Trawl 7%

In addition, EAA stresses the fact that there cannot be any agreement with de minimis percentage above 5%.

OCEANA

Oceana, member of the Executive Committee of the MEDAC, is not in a position neither for approving nor for rejecting the joint advice proposed by MEDAC due to the short timeline with which the document has been circulated. The joint advice, a 104 pages document long, has been circulated for the first time among the MEDAC members at 15:13 CET on the 5th of June 2014 with deadline for feedback set on the 6th of June close of business.

Oceana finds this attitude contrasting with the regionalisation process promoted in the Common Fishery Policy (Art. 18 and 45). The procedure adopted in this case is contrary to the spirit of the newly adopted Common Fishery Policy.

Oceana kindly requests MEDAC to annex Oceana's position to the document "ADVICE FOR A JOINT RECOMMENDATION DISCARDS MANAGEMENT PLAN (Art. 15 Reg. 1380/2013)" to be submitted to DG MARE, along with circulating Oceana's inputs to all the MEDAC members.

Oceana urges MEDAC to take into consideration the following recommendations:

- The landing obligation, as per Art. 15 Reg. 1380/2013, is a provision aimed at identifying more selective fishing techniques. This has to go in parallel with ad-hoc management plan for targeted

species. Therefore, any proposal for a management plan of discards shall go hand in hand with measures designed specifically to i) identify and protect Essential Fish Habitats in particular those hosting juveniles fish aggregations, along with the definition of spatial and temporal closure areas ii) improve the selectivity of fishing gears and fishing techniques, iii) improve the scientific evidence on the selectivity of the gear.

Thus, Oceana urges that *de minimis* should only be applied only when scientific evidences demonstrating a reduction in unwanted catches are provided.

Moreover, Oceana believes that there is not a cornerstone to request the *de minimis* exemption in relation to Art.15.5c ii) “avoid disproportionate costs of handling”. Overall, in the joint recommendation document, it is reported that landing obligation will imply a highly increase of costs but no concrete cost estimation is provided and “disproportionate costs” are not demonstrated. In conclusion, Oceana considers that more effort should be invested in defining a sustainable solution to the management of the landings in line with the EC Reg. 1380/2013.

WWF

WWF appreciates the efforts of the MEDAC in developing this joint recommendation, but regrets the limited time available (24 hours) to provide comments to such an extensive document.

We understand that the final goal of Article 15 of Regulation 1380/2013 is the minimization as much as possible of the undesired catches, and particularly in the Mediterranean of undersized fish. Therefore, we believe that any discard management plan in this regard should be ideally within the context of a comprehensive management plan for each specific fishery and should include measures addressing the protection of the more vulnerable life stages of the target species (as time/area closures) as well as measures to improve selectivity by implementing the currently available and innovative technology. We understand that the management plan should be adaptive including new data and scientific recommendations. However, it is our view that the “*de minimis*” exception should be granted only after all efforts to reduce unwanted catches at fishery level, based on the available science, have been considered from the starting implementation date, and reduction of the current amounts of unwanted catches have been forecasted.

THE WHOLE TEXT OF THE COMMENTS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

<http://en.med->

[ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2014/11/159bis_comments_medac_draft_joint_rec_mgmt_plan_discards_small_pel_pdf.pdf](http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2014/11/159bis_comments_medac_draft_joint_rec_mgmt_plan_discards_small_pel_pdf.pdf)

18 ADVICE ON THE OMNIBUS PROPOSAL COM 2013 (889)

Rome, 27th March 2014

The MEDAC considers that the provisions included in the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the landing obligation COM (2013) 889, constitutes a new heavy additional bureaucratic burden for shipowners with negative consequences in terms of additional work and high economic costs and a related profit reduction, instead of just bridging the gap for the smooth implementation of art.15 of the new CFP Reform regulation (Reg.(UE)1380/2013).

Major doubts raise from articles 3 and 7 and their subparagraphs.

- Art 3, relative to the modification of art. 15 of Mediterranean Regulation (Reg. (CE)1967/2006), should clearly indicate the possibility of selling minimum size species for uses as long as it is not used for human consumption;
- Art 7.2: MEDAC considers that the elimination of the 50kg limit for logbook recording of each species on board relative to each logbook establishes a heavy bureaucratic burden and associated increased worked hours on board;
- Art 7.6: MEDAC is very sceptical about regulations relating to art. 25bis on remote monitoring control, because of its management and installation costs and related legislative constraints and labour laws in some EU countries. Considering the existence of small and medium fishing vessels of more than 30,000 small artisanal vessels in the EU Mediterranean countries this measure does not seem realistic and its feasibility appears doubtful.
- Art.7.8: Separate stowage from product to be sold for human consumption for undersize product is equally unfeasible especially for small and medium fishing vessels for obvious reasons of operational space. Furthermore, it will only add work burden for fishermen on board to what is already stated in art. 49 quater. Also unclear is the provision that when catches of minimum conservation reference size species (anchovy, sardine, horse mackerel, mackerel) account for more than 80% an exemption from separate stowage is granted. The measures set out in Articles 7.2 and 7.8, will produce substantial adverse effects on wages and employment of workers on board as they increased the workload without an equivalent compensation.
- Art 7.10: Extending the obligation of traceability pursuant to ex art 58.5 of Control Regulation (Reg.(CE)1224/2009) for undersized product seems excessive since catches are destined for non-direct human consumption
- Art 7.14 The provision referred to art. 73bis for MS to send on board observes might clearly stipulate that such costs will not be borne by shipowners.
- Art 7.15/16: Given the complexity in the application of the discard ban, MEDAC is greatly concerned about including discarding of species subject to the landing obligation as a serious infringement as for Control Regulation (EC) 1224/2009 and above all regarding the consequent application of the point-based system.

Last but not least, there are strong doubts about the obvious lack of scientific and statistic data on undersized bycatches which were illegal up to 2014. This lack of data might be a major obstacle to the calculation and subsequent approval of de minimis exemptions, as the Commission and STECF would be forced to take note of this. While it might be easy to find such data for other undersized species whose discards will be banned from 2019 (demersal) with monitoring studies in the coming years, it would be impossible for small pelagic species in only a few months. The WG1 considers that for the first three years the de minimis exemption should be awarded on a forfeit basis (% over total catch) subject to subsequent reconsideration, once scientific and statistic data becomes available.

This advice was adopted by majority of the ExCom members, however ALCP want to express their great concern about the use of discards as raw material for the fishing industry, and with some comments/observations expressed by WWF, OCEANA, EAA and IFSUA here below.

OCEANA and WWF share some of the views above but would like to point out the following discrepancies:

- An accurate register of data on all quantities is considered necessary.
- The potential use of on-board cameras should first be appraised by means of a feasibility study in the different sectors and areas.
- Separate stowage of undersized specimens from the fisheries product destined for human consumption, but not by species.
- Traceability of undersized fishery products is also considered necessary in order to allow consumers to make an informed choice when purchasing cosmetics, industrial or transformed products.
- Penalties should be proportionate to the infringement committed from when the regulations come into force.
- The concession of de minimis exemption should be clearly substantiated within the context of a management plan which aims to improve gear selectivity and reduce by-catch.

EAA and IFSUA support the views expressed by Oceana and WWF, and also consider:

- to paint the fish landed and not destined for human consumption if it is feasible (of course with non-poisonous colours).
- fishermen should be assisted and trained to understand how to comply with the discard ban in order to reduce any illegal action which could occur.

19 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF LANDING OBLIGATION

Rome, 1st August 2014

To Lowri Evans (Director General EC - DG MARE); Dovile Vaigauskaite; Stamatios Varsamos

Dear Ms Evans,

Referring to the letter (Ref: Ares(2014)2367422) received on July 16, relative to the regulations on Bluefin tuna in the ICCAT area, MEDAC makes the following observations.

Given that:

- Regulation n.1380/2013, article 15, establishes an obligation within the EC legal framework to land all catches subject to a quota (and/or minimum size in the Mediterranean ex Regulation n. 1967/06) and that the Bluefin Tuna (BFT) has a quota;
- Section 32 paragraph 1 of ICCAT Recommendation 13/07 states that "Catching vessels not fishing actively for Bluefin tuna are not authorized to retain at any time following each fishing operation, Bluefin tuna exceeding more than 5% of the total catch by weight or number of pieces."
- Section 32 paragraph 2 of the same recommendation, 13/07, also affirms that this ban, i.e. the ban on keeping more than 5% of the total catch on board, does not apply to CPCs whose domestic legislation requires that all dead fish be landed.

MEDAC considers that:

- 1) In order to ensure clarity of interpretation and to discourage any conduct not in line with the principles of sustainable fisheries, the delegated act will comply with, in its implementation, the provisions within Recommendation 13/07, in order to ensure that all catches of Bluefin tuna, if dead, are landed, with the difference that:
 - those below 5% (by-catch), once declared and included in the national quota, may be marketed in compliance with applicable provisions of the law in force;

- those above 5% (by-catch), once declared and included in the national quota are subject to confiscation.
- 2) In order to ensure full compliance with the applicable ICCAT provisions on the issue, Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No. 302/2009 of 6 April 2009 should be changed where a multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean is concerned, amending Regulation (EC) No. 43/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1559/2007.

When undersized specimens are caught as a result of direct fishery activities, as by-catch or as a result of recreational fisheries, if these specimens are dead then they must be destined for uses other than human consumption.

ADVICE ON THE DISCARD MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE VENUS CLAM (Art. 15 EU Reg. 1380/2013) (Abstract)

20

Rome, 17th March 2016

The Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC), officially appointed by the Italian Fisheries Administration by letter, ref. 10041 of 14th May 2015, on the basis of the combined provisions of Articles 15 and 18 of the Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, hereby puts forward the following advice:

1. General introduction

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 (hereinafter referred to as the “Basic Regulation”), envisages the progressive introduction of a discard ban into EC law and the consequent landing obligation for certain target species. The obligation is introduced gradually according to the fishing gear employed and the relative target species, in other words the timing is staggered according to the fisheries.

On the contrary to Northern European seas, in the Mediterranean area the landing obligation is applied according to a schedule defined in the Basic Regulation for species that have a minimal conservation reference size in the Mediterranean Sea, pursuant to Annex III of Regulation (EC) 1967/06.

Where the Striped venus clam (*Chamelea gallina*) is concerned, as this is a species that “defines the fishery” (article 15.1 letter d of the Basic Regulation) the landing obligation comes into force on “1st January 2017 at the latest”.

This discard management plan for the Venus clam (*Chamelea gallina*) therefore aims to put sector operators in a position to comply with the regulations in terms of minimum conservation reference size, without intervening in any way on the management measures, with particular reference to the technical characteristics of the fishing gear and the quantities harvested.

Following a brief chapter on the regulatory framework, covering both the reform and aspects related to the introduction of the landing obligation, there is a general section which clarifies why a discard management plan is required. This is followed by an analysis of the main biological aspects of the species in question, reference is also made to the size of the stock and its spatial distribution in the Italian GSAs.

The MEDAC was formally appointed by the Italian Administration to prepare this plan by means of official letter ref. 10041 of 14th May 2015, issued by the General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Italian Ministry MiPAAF.

Although stocks of the species in question are not shared with other Member States, the MEDAC consulted with other EU countries bordering the Mediterranean basin anyway, however no interest

was expressed in managing the resource in question, nor consequently was there any interest in the plan.

Some statistical data are provided in the text in relation to the species, including biomass and other key parameters considered important for the plan. A great deal of further data can be gathered from the scientific research attached to the document.

The general part continues with a description of the gear used to harvest the species, with particular reference to hydraulic dredges.

A separate chapter examines the support which is possible through the EMFF to facilitate implementation of the landing obligation and to help fishers, fishing enterprises and governing administrations comply with the new provisions. For example, measures to avoid by-catch, temporary suspension of fishing activities, ways to use the unwanted part of the catch which is landed, as well as support for data collection.

The last part covers the results of the detailed scientific analysis carried out on *Chamelea gallina*. The study evaluates what effects a possible redefinition of the minimum size to improve the biological and commercial management of the stock would have on this species. The Italian fisheries administration presented the results of this research to stakeholders at an ad hoc event held in Chioggia at the end of October 2015.

This advice regarding a management plan for *Chamelea gallina* includes the findings of the dedicated MEDAC Focus Group, which emerged during the various meetings held, the dates of which are as follows:

- Rome, 3rd June 2015
- Rome, 8th July 2015
- Rome, 4th December 2015
- Rome, 14th December 2015.

At each meeting, the constructive spirit demonstrated by all the representatives of the social, economic and environmental partners made it possible to achieve the goal of drawing up this document.

13. Conclusions and general recommendations

This management plan applies to the territorial waters of Italy without prejudice to the management measures in force, and therefore all national technical measures envisaged in the various Ministerial Decrees (Ministerial Decree of 12 January 1995, Ministerial Decree of 1 December 1998 and Ministerial Decree of 22 December 2000, as amended) remain in force.

On the basis of the findings of the scientific research attached, and taking into due account the fact that the sieving system allows for a relatively wide selection range (3-4 mm, see pages 26 onwards of the attached study), by way of derogation from Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006, the minimum conservation reference size of *Chamelea gallina* is set at 22 mm.

To ensure compliance with the minimum conservation reference size throughout the supply chain, and without prejudice to the provisions of Article 7(1)(a) of the Ministerial Decree of 22 December 2000, a second screening is introduced at the landing site, which is the responsibility of the management consortia (known by the Italian acronym CoGeVo). Any vessels that are not members of the CoGeVo are also required to obtain certification of the size of the landed specimens through these same management consortia.

The undersized specimens identified during the second screening at the land site must be transferred alive to restocking areas, these areas are identified periodically by the management consortia,

pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 1, letter e of Decree No. 515 of 1 December 1998, which states that the consortia shall submit technical measures to the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies concerning, among other things, the establishment of restocking areas that are rotated in order to ensure optimal environmental sustainability, pursuant to Article 16 of Regulation (EC) 1967/2006. Until the clams reach the legal harvest size, in the restocking areas all fishing activities are forbidden. The procedure that is to be observed in order to guarantee that the general objectives of the CFP in terms of economic, environmental and social sustainability are achieved together with the more specific objectives of art. 15 of Regulation (EC) 1380/2013, is described hereunder:

- 1) once the product has been harvested using hydraulic dredges, a first selection is carried out using the sieving gear on board;
- 2) the product is packed into sacks and landed at the landing sites that have been authorised by the management consortia;
- 3) once landed, the product is screened for a second time in the facilities identified and run by the management consortia;
- 4) following the second screening at the landing site, the management consortia responsible for the procedure then certify the product which respects the established criteria;
- 5) the certified product over the minimum conservation reference size is returned to the fishing vessel;
- 6) The undersized specimens which are detected at the second screening are transferred by the CoGeVo to the restocking areas which have been identified, in accordance with Article 16 of Regulation (EC) 1967/2006 and in compliance with the procedures established by the management consortia;
- 7) the results of restocking activities in terms of growth, survival and minimum size are subsequently verified with the collaboration of the CoGeVo's contact research institutes.

The plan also includes the implementation of a pilot project involving one or two fishery districts (i.e., CoGeVo), considering a minimum conservation reference size of 22 mm for *Chamelea gallina*, increasing the diameter of the holes in the grids by 1 mm so as to verify whether making the vibrating sieve gear more selective would be feasible.

Another measure involves reducing the daily bag limit, imposing a maximum number of 40 sacks per vessel per day.

The option of changing the size of the holes in the grids was not considered economically sustainable by the fisheries enterprises as it would lead to a highly significant loss (around two-thirds) of commercially-viable specimens. As selectivity of the perforated metal grids in the sieves is based on average size, a large proportion of marketable product would be lost. In the future, therefore, when the findings of the plan would also be available, it may be possible to work on other elements of the vibrating sieve to increase its selectivity.

The results of restocking activities in terms of growth, survival and minimum size are subsequently verified with the collaboration of the CoGeVo's contact research institutes.

It is stressed that controls on fisheries activities by the national Authorities remain of key importance in all the phases of the procedure described above. Monitoring and control activities shall be conducted according to plans drawn up with specific risk-assessment criteria, it could be useful to draft these drawing, inter alia, on the experience of the EFCA. Moreover, the management consortia will be given greater responsibility during the two screening phases mentioned above, and they will certify the product which meets the legal requirements.

This plan will have a duration of three years, subject to adaptation following monitoring and control by the Directorate General for Fisheries, that may make use of the scientific research bodies referred to in Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Ministerial Decree of 24 July 2015.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE ADVICE (IN ITALIAN) CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_parietti_letters/2019/02/97_parietti_pdg_rigetti_vongola_italia.pdf

21 MEDAC LETTER ON CLARIFICATIONS ON LO DEMERSAL SPECIES

Rome, 1st March 2016

To Ernesto Penas Lado (Director General Policy Development and coordination); Hubert Gambis (Director General EC -DG MARE); Member States

Dear all,

With reference to article 15, paragraph 1 letter d) of EU Regulation 1380/2013 (CFP), which states “From 1st January 2017 at the latest for the species which define the fisheries...”, we became aware informally and without prior knowledge that the STECF was planning to prepare a document indicating these species by Member State and by fishing gear.

Considering that the possible proposals for the management of discards of this species should be presented to DG MARE by Member States (regionalisation ex art. 18 Basic Regulation) by next June, so that they can potentially be adopted and translated into European Commission (EC) delegated acts so as to enter into force on 1st January 2017, we hereby present some questions and suggestions in order to proceed with the rapid initiation of a MEDAC response to collaborate on fulfilling our commitment with landing obligations deadlines.

a) We suggest that the STECF document should be formally transmitted to the Member States and to the MEDAC so as to let them know which discards management plans the EC expects to see implemented by 1st January 2017. Thus, it could be useful information to guide us to prepare our own recommendations.

b) The definition of Article 15 paragraph 1 letter d), is open to interpretation for us. For example, it is not clear: what percentage of the economic or commercial value and quantity of catch per gear is represented by “the species which define the fisheries...”, what percentage has been considered by the STECF and if Member States can vary this percentage at their discretion (if different percentages are presented for the different Member States it would be difficult to proceed with regionalised proposals according to art.18).

c) Species which define fisheries in the Mediterranean, concerned by the landings obligation, are only those present in Annex III of the Mediterranean Regulation 1967/2006. We would like to know if any by-catch of those species present in Annex III caught by fisheries that target species not present in annex III should be considered.

d) Article 15, paragraph 5 letter c) point ii, on the matter of “de minimis” exemptions mentions disproportionate costs. We would like to know the criteria used to consider that costs are disproportionate. Moreover, accidental catch is mentioned as representing more than “a certain percentage”. We would like to know who decides this percentage, Member States or EC, and if it could change according to the case in question.

We would be very grateful if you could answer these questions as they would be very useful and would help us to prepare our own advices. We look forward to receiving a reply as soon as possible,
Yours sincerely,

MEDAC LETTER ON DISCARD MANAGEMENT PLANS “FOR FISHERIES CHARACTERISED BY TARGET SPECIES”

22

17th March 2016

To Hubert Gambs (Director General, EC - DG MARE); Valerie Lainé (EC- DG MARE)

The MEDAC Working Group 1, which deals with management plans in the framework of the landing obligation, met in Almeria on 16th March and based the meeting's discussion on the analysis of the STECF study (Landing Obligation - Part 6 (Fisheries targeting demersal species in the Mediterranean Sea) (STECF-15-19) on the aforementioned fisheries. The following conclusions emerged from an in-depth analysis: the STECF template identifies the main fisheries by fishing gear/main target species/GSA.

Taking into consideration the latter, it was possible to see that in only two GSAs (7 and 17) we can identify the same fisheries with species that are shared by more than one Member State. In all the other GSAs the Member States are alone. More specifically, only in GSA 17 can we find a fishery that is shared between Slovenia and Croatia, which is sole fishery using trammel nets. In the same GSA the Italian fleet targets sole with gillnets.

In GSA 7, France and Spain do not carry out fisheries of the same type. We can thus conclude that, other than in GSA 17 where there is a shared fishery that does not, however, present problems related to undersized bycatch, we do not have the necessary conditions to proceed with regionalised discards management plans according to article 18 of the Basic Regulation which should see the involvement of more than one MS.

It ensures that the MEDAC could only be called to action if expressly requested by the MS in the context of the discards management plans, for individual MS and for individual fisheries, but not within the framework of article 18.

The same STECF study also suggests the adoption of a different approach (by species or by area) if the aim is to maintain the regionalised nature of the management plans in question, perhaps this suggestion should be duly evaluated. In this context it should be noted that, in the STECF study several inconsistencies were evident, in particular:

- Fisheries in which the species noted represent 90-100% of the catch (which suggests an almost mono-specific fishery);
- Fisheries which associate fishing gear with apparently incompatible species (sea bream caught with fyke nets or sole caught with hydraulic dredges).

Where these issues are concerned, the delegations of the MS participating in the MEDAC WG will verify the reliability of the information in the STECF study, but before initiating contact between MEDAC and the MS, we consider it appropriate to clarify that the direction taken by STECF places the MEDAC in a position to take action only in a non-regionalised sense, restricted to those fisheries which present issues of undersized bycatch, not forgetting all the uncertainties and different interpretations about which we sent a letter requesting clarification on 1st March. We attach the forms divided by Member State with the fisheries indicated by the STECF drafted by the coordinator of the Working Group1.

We are available for further comment or clarification while we look forward to receiving your comments before putting these same issues to the Member States.

Yours sincerely.

23 JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS ON DISCARD MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR SPECIES DEFINING THE FISHERIES (Art. 15 Basic Regulation) (Abstract)

8th June 2016

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General Overview

Article 15 of Regulation 1380/2013 envisages the gradual introduction of the landing obligation for all catches, according to a clearly identified schedule. The landing obligation for small pelagic fish species caught with purse seine and pelagic trawl nets is already in force, the next deadline is the 1st January 2017 "for species defining the fisheries". The identification of these species proved very complicated and was resolved thanks to the Member States whose General Directors of the relevant ministries prepared letters to communicate the target species which identify the fisheries. The MEDAC therefore, on the basis of the work carried out in the recent past in the context of the opinion for a joint recommendation on the landing obligation for small pelagics, and with reference to requests for cooperation received from Member States concerned, hereby proposes an

opinion for a joint recommendation for the start, as of 1st January 2017, of the landing obligation for certain demersal target species, divided into three main areas

- Western Mediterranean Sea (FR, IT, SP) red mullet and hake;
- Adriatic Sea (HR, IT, SI) red mullet, hake and common sole;
- Central-Eastern Mediterranean Sea (CY, GR, IT, MT) red mullet, hake and deep rose shrimp.

The plan is structured as follows: a descriptive part (I) which describes the four target species, including information on statistical and biological data available and a proactive part (II) which aims to provide all the available information for the preparation of joint recommendations for management plans for the species defining the fisheries.

The opinion that follows is thus presented to the Member States, which - if they agree – can pass it on, including any changes deemed appropriate, to the European Commission.

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK RELATED TO THE LANDING OBLIGATION

Article 15 of Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, in force since 1st January 2014, dictates that all catches of species subject to catch limits and, in the Mediterranean, catches of species subject to minimum sizes as defined in Annex III of Regulation (EC) No. 1967/2006, must be brought and retained on board fishing vessels, registered, landed and counted against the quotas, if applicable, unless they are used as live bait.

Therefore, for the Mediterranean EU countries, the obligation will begin:

- a) at the latest from 1st January 2015 for:
 - Small pelagics: Anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*), Mackerel (*Scomber* spp.), Horse mackerel (*Trachurus* spp.) [as they have a minimum landing size in Reg.1967/06];
 - large pelagic species: Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) [as they are subject to a catch limit – quota]
- b) from 1st January 2017 for the species that define the fishery
- c) no later than 1st January 2019 for all other species in the fishery that are not subject to letter a) [which have a minimum size in Reg.1967/06], namely:
 - Demersals: European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), Annular seabream (*Diplodus annularis*), Sharpshout bream (*Diplodus puntazzo*), White seabream (*Diplodus sargus*), Common seabream (*Diplodus vulgaris*), White grouper (*Epinephelus* spp.), Sand steenbras (*Lithognathus mormyrus*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), Mullet (*Mullus* spp.), Axillary seabream (*Pagellus acarne*), Blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*), Wreckfish (*Polyprion americanus*), Common sole (*Solea vulgaris*), Gilthead seabream (*Sparus aurata*), unless scientific evidence demonstrates high survival rates, "taking into account the characteristics of the gear, fishing practices and the ecosystem" (Art. 15 , paragraph 4 , letter b);
 - Crustaceans: Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), Common lobster (*Homarus gammarus*), Spiny lobster (*Palinuridae*), Mediterranean Rose Shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), unless scientific evidence demonstrates high survival rates, "taking into account the characteristics of fishing gear, practices and the ecosystem" (Article 15 , paragraph 4 , letter b);
 - Bivalve molluscs: Great scallop (*Pecten jacobaeus*), Carpet shell clam (*Venerupis* spp.), Clam (*Venus* spp.). Unless scientific evidence demonstrates high survival rates, " taking into account the characteristics of the gear, fishing practices and ecosystem" (article 15, paragraph 4, letter b);

Paragraph 4 of Article 15 defines the cases in which the landing obligation does not apply:

- a) species for which fishing is prohibited, provided that they are identified as such in a legal act of the Union adopted in the context of the CFP;
- b) species for which scientific evidence demonstrates high survival rates, taking into account the characteristics of the gear, fishing practices and the ecosystem;
- c) catch falling under the de minimis exemptions;
- d) fish damaged by predators (Art. 9 Reg. 812/2015)

Paragraph 5 states that details of implementation of the landing obligation in each Member State must be indicated in specific multi-annual plans, with particular reference to the various fishing activities, the species covered by the landing obligation, including indications of any exemptions from the landing obligation for species recognized as having a high survival rate. The key issue is to lay down provisions for the application of the de minimis exemptions, calculated up to 5% "of the total annual catch of all species covered by the landing obligation". The de minimis exemption applies in the following cases:

- i) where it is scientifically demonstrated that it would be extremely difficult to increase gear selectivity;
or
- ii) to avoid disproportionate costs that may result from handling by-catch, that is, everything that results from the landing obligation, boxing on board, landing, creating a new supply chain for products not destined for human consumption, etc., in the case of fishing gear for which by-catch does not represent more than a certain percentage of the total annual catch by the gear in question. The percentage is established in the framework of the multi-annual plan however, for a transitional period of four years (Art. 15, par.5), the rate may be increased by two percentage points in the first two years of implementation of the landing obligation for fisheries, and one percentage point in the following two years.

For species subject to the landing obligation, catches of specimens that are below the minimum reference size for conservation (as listed in Annex III of Reg. (EC) 1967/2006), may only be used for purposes other than direct human consumption, such as fish meal, fish oil, animal feedstuffs, food additives, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

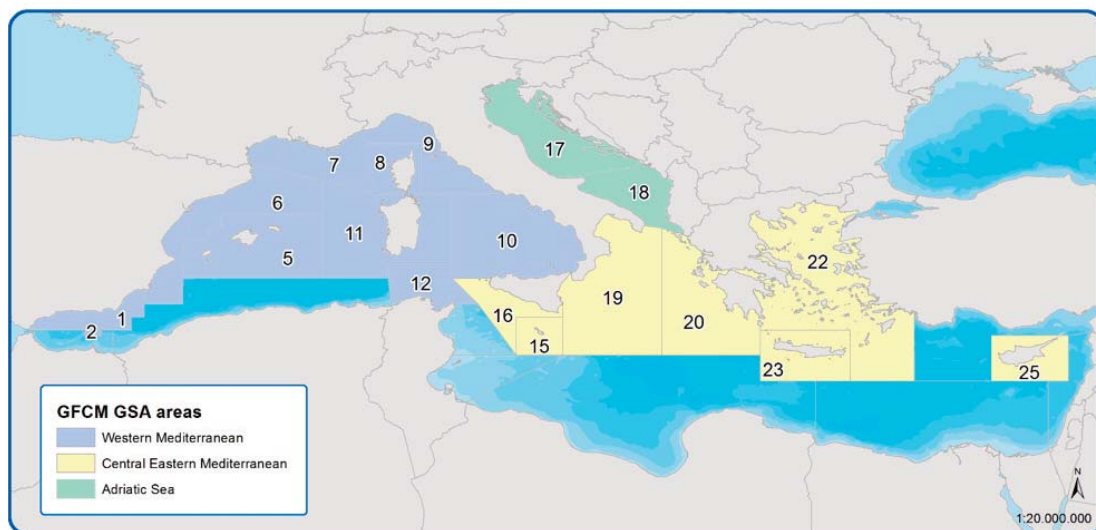
On the contrary, for species not subject to the landing obligation referred to in paragraph 1 (for example, those for which the obligation will come into force from January 1, 2019) specimens caught that are below the minimum reference size for conservation are not retained on board, but must be returned to the sea immediately. Lastly, in order to monitor compliance with the landing obligation, Member States shall provide a detailed and accurate documentation of all fishing operations as well as their capacity and adequate equipment on board, such as monitors and closed-circuit television systems (CCTV) etc.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

In order to have several MS involved a sub-regional approach has been identified:

- Western Mediterranean (GSAs 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12;)
- Adriatic Sea (GSAs 17,18);
- Central-Eastern Mediterranean (GSAs 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23,25;)

GRAPH 1: GEOGRAPHICAL SUBAREAS SUBJECT TO THE DISCARDS MANAGEMENT PLAN



3. SPECIES IDENTIFICATION, STATISTICAL DATA AND MS INVOLVED

The species with a minimum landing size in the Mediterranean that are subject to the landing obligation from January 1, 2017, pursuant to art. 15 point 1b, proved especially difficult: several attempts, also using the STECF document (Landing Obligation - Part 6 (Fisheries targeting demersal species in the Mediterranean Sea) (STECF-15-19), did not produce adequate results for the drafting of a plan. These issues were discussed in two MEDAC sessions, precisely at Almeria and Split. The solution was found, thanks to the Member States involved according to the geographical division described under chapter 3. The target species that define the fisheries have been identified following their commercial value and amount of landings registered in the DCF.

Species with a minimum landing size in the Mediterranean that are subject to the landing obligation from January 1, 2017, pursuant to art. 15 point 1b.

- all the geographical areas: hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) - red mullet (*Mullus* spp.)
- GSA 17- GSA 18: hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) - red mullet (*Mullus* spp.) - common sole (*Solea solea*)
- GSAs 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23,25: hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) - red mullet (*Mullus* spp.) - deep rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*)

All the letters received by the Italian Administration, respectively, can be found in the summary below:

- Ref.146/2016 of April 22, 2016: the PESCAMED meeting identified the following target species for the Western Mediterranean: hake, red mullet;
- Ref.148/2016 of April 22, 2016: Italy and Croatia identified the following target species for the Adriatic Sea: hake, red mullet and common sole. Also Slovenia joined Italy and Croatia (ref.172/2016 of May 13, 2016);
- Ref.167/2016 of May 5, 2016: the SudEastMed meeting identified the following target species for the Ionian Sea: hake, red mullet and deep rose shrimp.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE JOINT RECOMMENDATION CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2016/06/190_medac_jr_lo_demersal_8june.pdf

24 MEDAC REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT OF PESCAMED GROUP

Rome, 27th January 2017

To Jose Miguel Corvinos Lafuente (Director General of Fishery Resources and Aquaculture)

Dear Mr Corvinos Lafuente,

I wish to thank you first of all for sending the letter of 20th January 2017, in which you ask the MEDAC to continue collaborating with the PESCAMED group, focusing on the landing obligation for all demersal species that will enter into force on 1st January 2019, so as to coordinate the work to be carried out harmoniously and efficiently.

As you are aware, the MEDAC has a work programme for 2017, which I enclose for your convenience, it has been agreed with the EC and approved by the ExCom members.

The first meetings of 2017 will be held on 21st and 22nd February and will address the issues surrounding the proposed regulation on technical measures and the Focus Group on the Western Mediterranean. These meetings will aim move forward in the identification of useful elements for preparation of a multi-annual management plan for shared stocks and to receive an update from the French and Spanish fishery sectors on the agreement for the preparation of a management plan for demersal species in the Gulf of Lion. In addition, elections will be held for the Presidency and the composition of the ExCom.

According to the MEDAC work programme, the dossier on the Landing Obligation for demersal species will be addressed on 27th March, before the Ministerial Conference in Malta.

In light of the above, it will not be possible to issue a MEDAC contribution in relation to the demersal species identified in Annex III of the Mediterranean Regulation and to the fishing vessels involved by the date proposed. However, as you are aware, the dossier on the Landing Obligation is one of our highest priorities and we will continue work on this with the active and effective cooperation of all the MEDAC members and with the Directorates General of the Member States. Lastly, I wish to thank you for inviting me to the first technical meeting to be held in Madrid in early March, I hereby confirm that I shall attend.

Yours sincerely,

25 JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS ON DISCARD MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE SPECIES LISTED IN ANNEX III MED.REG. (Art. 15 Basic Regulation) (Abstract)

21st May 2018

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I. THE RATIONALE BEHIND A NEW APPROACH

The landing obligation, established under Reg. 1380/2013, which is now just a few months away from full entry into force, has always been a cause of concern within the MEDAC for various reasons, ranging from the problems related to the construction of a supply chain on land capable of storing and marketing the undersized specimens landed, for uses other than human consumption; for the possible development of a market linked to illegal fish products; the potential weakening of efforts towards the reduction/elimination of the capture of undersized specimens; and for the definition of *de minimis* exemption.

The efforts made by the MEDAC have focused so far on seeking the necessary technical and economic conditions that together would make handling stations on land feasible, this has been carried out by verifying the existence of the factors that influence feasibility in several areas of the Mediterranean Member States and also by assessing aspects of production and the scientific data on the stocks affected, which could form the basis for requests by the Member States for *de minimis* exemption.

These assessments were recently developed within the STECF through a proposal for a more analytical approach, this led the MEDAC to request support from the Member States, inviting them to provide data from the scientific institutes operating in the DCF, while also continuing the activities of the ongoing projects aiming to increase selectivity of fishing gear and related good practices (e.g. Galion, Minouw)¹, which currently have full responsibility for the pursuit of the real goal set within the framework of Mediterranean fisheries legislation: the reduction/elimination of discards made up of undersized specimens.

From the above it emerges that, in view of the complexity of the problem, several actions are being developed simultaneously but independently, without a logical sequence of steps that would draw them together into a single coherent strategy. While increasing selectivity of certain fishing gear is central to some projects, as the LO enters into force for the different stock groups, work continues regardless of this on the scientific basis for the requests for *de minimis* exemption.

The pursuit and the definition of the necessary conditions that would ensure the feasibility of the development of handling stations on land, in which to receive, store, freeze and sell the undersized specimens landed, seems to be considered an independent variable. It is as if the existence or lack of a concrete, operative possibility to comply with the landing obligation and to market this specific product under the conditions laid down within the regulation, while also covering the costs related to this activity, were entirely irrelevant or at best secondary.

It is also clear that if it proves impossible to cover the above-mentioned costs, or if it transpires that these fish products have to be disposed of as “special waste” (which would be obligatory in the absence of buyers) no one - neither public nor private - would be able to sustain the costs.

There are several aspects, however, that remain undefined, such as which parties would be eligible to take the initiative of activating this type of supply chain (that is destined to fail if there is a progressive reduction or elimination of discards), or the existence of an EMFF contribution that depends on this item being envisaged in the respective NOPs of the various Member States.

If the objective of Regulation 1380/2013 was, and still is, that of eliminating the practice of returning unwanted catches to the sea by ending the capture of undersized specimens in the Mediterranean, the MEDAC believes that, in light of the partial entry into force of the LOs, of the assessment of the situation in the various Member States and of the ongoing projects for the improvement of gear selectivity, periodically redefining the *de minimis* exemption is the wrong

strategy even if the scientific evaluation of the relative justifications is constantly refined; it amounts to a dead end and will not produce any improvement in the situation, on the contrary, it will worsen bureaucracy and intensify on-board operations for the registration of the discards eligible for *de minimis* exemption in the logbooks.

With this recommendation, the MEDAC therefore aims to propose a new approach which, starting from the data already acquired and in compliance with the Basic Regulation, focuses on the real objective of Article 15: the significant reduction in catches of undersized specimens.

The joint recommendations of the Member States for the granting of *de minimis* exemption, as proposed by the MEDAC, should therefore be considered complementary to the management proposals to reduce capture of undersized specimens that the same Member States will present to the EC².

¹ Annex I

² Oceana does not support the approach proposed on granting of “the minimis exemptions” as set in the document, as it considers that it does not fulfil the requirements of CFP art. 15.5. c) were the minimis exemption should be applied only under certain conditions. Oceana condemns the approach of setting *de minimis* exemptions “as high as possible” as stated in this joint recommendation, and Oceana is not in agreement that it complies with the objective of the Landing Obligations, nor serve its purpose. Finally, Oceana considers that MEDAC should state that the aim of the contribution is to help on gradually eliminating discards, in line with art. 2.5, and that official scientific bodies should evaluate the suitability of the proposals.

1. The non-feasibility of landing undersized specimens in the Mediterranean.

The first and most important piece of information acquired in over four years since the regulation was published, is the fact that it is not technically nor economically feasible in any of the eight Mediterranean Member States to create handling stations for the storage, freezing and trade of undersized specimens in order to sell them to industries with a potential commercial interest (feed, cosmetics, lubricants, etc.).

The lack of existing areas or structures available in or near ports and landing sites (affordable ones at least), the costs related to the construction and equipment of storage and processing units, the requirements of the industries questioned (regular quantities guaranteed, uniform product characteristics, prices, transport, etc.), the management costs (personnel, energy, etc.), are all factors which together would entail significant investments (to be amortised) and operating costs (that should be covered by earnings), which are not compatible with the volume of business that can realistically be envisaged in a business plan and which would therefore justify any business venture. Nor is it conceivable for the public sector to take the initiative, there would be little inclination to burden public accounts with business activities that would cause financial losses. Furthermore, the goal of the progressive elimination of undersized specimens from catches would make the future of this activity particularly uncertain.

Without the stations on land to ensure correct handling of the unwanted part of the catch that is landed, the only viable alternative to comply with the landing obligation would be disposal as special waste (incineration), with costs that would fluctuate around 0.05-0.10 euro/kg, which is clearly unsustainable for the fishing enterprises and difficult to enforce by the city authorities in the Municipalities concerned.

In view of the above, and without going into the reasons underlying the regulation imposing the Landing Obligation, **the landing of undersized fish products in fishing ports cannot be seen as a practice to be carried out even where the necessary conditions are absent, but rather as an**

eventuality to be eliminated, so as not to have to deal with problems for which there are no operational or economic solutions.

Rather than multiplying efforts in a direction which would appear to be a dead end, the strategy to be implemented should take a different route, moving away from the need to land the undersized specimens, aiming instead to reduce their capture.

Only in this way, without ever exceeding the *de minimis* limit granted (ideally moving away from it), will it be possible to achieve a situation in which undersized specimens are never landed, thus avoiding the insurmountable problems mentioned above.

To pursue this aim, it is necessary on the one hand to be in a position to count on a *de minimis* limit that is as high as possible, while intervening on the other hand in the short-medium term on the fishing zones/seasons/sectors which give rise to the highest levels of capture of undersized specimens, by means of actions (management plans) aimed at drastically reducing these catches.

In pursuing this objective, these plans will have to take into account the specific nature of the fleets in question and the socio-economic consequences of the spatial/temporal closure measures, paying particular attention to small-scale fisheries.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE JOINT RECOMMENDATION CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:
http://www.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2018/05/132_medac_jr_lo_species_annexiii_regmed_en.pdf

MEDAC LETTER - LO REQUEST TO MEMBER STATES AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION

26

Rome, 24th October 2018

To Member States (CY,FR,GR,HR,IT,MT,SI,SP); Joao Aguiar Machado (Director General EC - DG MARE)

With reference to the imminent deadline of 1st January 2019, which marks the entry into force of the Landing Obligation for all species¹, we would like to draw to your attention the joint recommendation already produced by the MEDAC (protocol 132/2018, 22 May 2018). In this document we strive to underline the technical and economic reasons that make the creation of facilities for the processing, freezing and sale of undersized specimens unfeasible in all eight Mediterranean Member States. The non-feasibility of these facilities, that some would like to see proven with the support of scientific data, can be appreciated if we consider the total lack of projects or initiatives both from the private and from the public sectors. This fisheries product, if landed, would have to be destroyed as special waste with all related costs being borne by the companies. The fact that this cost (0.5- 1 euro/kg) is disproportionate and excessive if added to the high costs that fishery enterprises already have to sustain – especially trawl fisheries – has not been calculated on a scientific basis, however it can easily be deduced from an analysis of cost/income of fisheries enterprises and from the reactions they have to any increase in costs (for example, the cost of fuel). This excessive cost would trigger the condition foreseen in Article 15 paragraph 5 letter c point ii of the Basic Regulation (exemption as a result of disproportionate costs).

These reasons for authorising exceptions and granting *de minimis* exemptions for all species listed in Annex III of the Mediterranean Regulation make it advisable, in our opinion, for the EC to grant high *de minimis* rates while also prompting a different approach to the reduction of catches of undersized specimens. In particular, our recommendation focused on the need for Member States to prepare management plans with the aim of reducing catches of undersized specimens in

the areas, in the seasons and for the capture systems indicated in the results of scientific research and included in our joint recommendation. These plans, which could be formulated and implemented in the space of a few months on the basis of existing data, should represent the condition that would be necessary to obtain de minimis exemption and must also include the adoption of technical solutions identified within various research programmes (Minouw, Galion) that aim to increase gear selectivity.

So, with just a few months to go before the entry into force of the Landing Obligations, we do not have the impression that the Member States are working on this issue, nor do we note that the text under discussion for the Delegated Act relative to the granting of de minimis exemptions for the year 2019, and subsequent years, carries any explicit reference to Article 15 para.5 letter c point ii. The stakeholders are, therefore, extremely concerned that there will be widespread non-compliance with the Landing Obligation by fishing enterprises in the Mediterranean, this concern also extends to the lack of an alternative strategy targeting a reduction in the capture of undersized specimens, which was the aim of lawmakers in the preparation of the basic regulation.

We therefore hope that the reasons given in our joint recommendation for the preparation of management plans as a complementary measure to the landing ban shall be taken into greater consideration; moreover, that the delegated act granting de minimis exemption from the LO, as well as specifying exemptions on the basis of the high survival rate of some species, shall also consider exemptions for other species for reasons of disproportionate costs, as stipulated in Article 15 para.5 letter c point ii.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further clarification.

Yours faithfully

¹ It is to be noted that NGOs members of MEDAC firmly oppose the approach of requesting overall de minimis exemptions “as high as possible”, as it was already reported in the minority statement submitted by Oceana on the MEDAC opinion. This approach does not fulfil the conditions under CFP art. 15.5 as disproportionate costs or the difficulty of increasing selectivity are not provided with due argument. The adoption of fishing technologies and practices to increase selectivity and reduce unwanted catches are the purpose of the landing obligation.

27 MEDAC OPINION ON THE DISCARD MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR VENUS CLAM *CHAMELEA GALLINA* (ART. 15 EU REG. 1380/2013)(Abstract)

Rome, 11th March 2019

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The Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC), officially appointed by the Italian Fisheries Administration by letter, ref. 1820 of 21st January 2019, on the basis of the combined provisions of Articles 15 and 18 of the Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, hereby puts forward the following opinion:*

* FACOPE, CEPESCA, FNCP and WWF voted against. FACOPE, CEPESCA and FNCP deem that there has not been enough time to analyze the report in the working group, with which there are biological discrepancies. It is a management plan that is limited to the fleet operating in Italian waters, but which nonetheless has repercussions of another type in another fleet of the same sea. Moreover, the commercialization of catches of *chamelea gallina* below the size established by Regulation 1967/2006 has very negative repercussions on other fleets such as the Spanish fleet. WWF deems that the plan is to be submitted to the EC under the art. 18 of the CFP and it should then be focused on a shared stock and involve at least two MS. Moreover, the measures and scientific research are only focusing on Italian fisheries, with no involvement of any other MS apart from the market aspects. EAA abstained due to the short time to find out other papers about mechanised and suction dredges environmental impacts. Furthermore, supports WWF concerns.

General introduction

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 (hereinafter referred to as the “Basic Regulation”), envisages the progressive introduction of a discard ban into EC law and the consequent landing obligation for certain target species. The obligation is introduced gradually according to the fishing gear employed and the relative target species, in other words the timing is staggered according to the fishery.

On the contrary to Northern European seas, in the Mediterranean area the landing obligation is applied according to a schedule defined in the Basic Regulation for species that have minimal conservation reference size in the Mediterranean Sea, pursuant to Annex III of Regulation (EC) 1967/06.

Where the Striped venus clam *Chamelea gallina* is concerned, as this is a species that “defines the fishery” (article 15.1 letter d of the Basic Regulation) the landing obligation comes into force on “1st January 2017 at the latest”.

This discard management plan for the clam (*Chamelea gallina*) therefore aims to put sector operators in a position to comply with the regulations in terms of minimum conservation reference size, without intervening in any way on the management measures, with particular reference to the technical characteristics of the fishing gear.

The previous MEDAC opinion (ref. 97/2016 of 13th March 2016) already included the regulatory framework, the reasons that made it necessary to prepare a discard management plan, a description of the fishing gears involved, the possible EMFF support for the implementation of the landing obligation, as well as an overview of the main biological aspects of the species involved, reference should be made to this document as there have been no further changes. It is important, however, to bear in mind that the first discard management plan for the *Chamelea gallina* was implemented with Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/2376 of 13 October 2016 “establishing a discard plan for mollusc bivalve Venus spp. in the Italian territorial waters” as well as at national level by the Ministerial Decree of 27 December 2016, reference n.21946.

The MEDAC was formally appointed to prepare this opinion of the plan by the Italian Administration by official letter ref. 1820 of 21st January 2019, issued by the General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Italian Ministry MiPAAFT.

Although stocks of the species in question are not shared with other Member States, the MEDAC consulted the other EU States that border the Mediterranean basin nonetheless. Only the Spanish members expressed their interest in managing the resource and, as a consequence, in participating in the preparation of the opinion for the plan, partly to highlight the commercial discrepancies that had arisen over the previous three years due to the reduction of the minimum commercial reference size in Italian territorial waters. With reference to the latter, the MEDAC considers it useful to report commercial aspects to the Market Advisory Council (MAC), with which it plans to hold meetings in order to overcome and solve the matter, thus focusing on aspects related to technical measures in this opinion.

This document includes the available results in relation to the application of the first discard management plan, the current state of the resource as a result of this plan, as well as the management measures implemented by fisheries enterprises to comply with the regulatory requirements.

The discard management plan continues to base its scientific evidence on the coordinated research project “Evaluation of the effects on clam resources of the possible redefinition of the minimum size and the improved biological and commercial management of the product”, prepared by Conisma and UNIMAR where the Italian part is concerned and updated as appropriate with the results of the plan. It is further emphasised that the socio-economic aspects of the implementation of the Plan must be taken into account, with particular reference to the need to foresee measures to stem any impact on employment in the event of failure to implement the Plan or changes that affect the socio-economic aspects.

This opinion for a management plan for *Chamelea gallina* includes the results of the work carried out by the dedicated MEDAC Focus Group, established during the WG1 meeting held in Venice on 19th February 2019, which has only got together online.

Summary of results

- **The bivalve mollusc management consortia have applied the measures envisaged in the discard plan**, conforming to the provisions of this Plan in relation to providing systems for detecting vessel position, defining restocking areas, introducing a certification system to verify conformity of the product to the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) at the landing sites. There are a few exceptions, but the consortia which have not fully implemented the Discard Plan have very low levels of the resource in question.
- Given the adjustment of the Minimum Conservation Reference Size to 22 mm, compared to 25 mm established in Reg. EC1967/2006, some details have been provided on the biology of the species. This information was gathered following careful review of the available literature (as already demonstrated in the first opinion on the Discard Plan) together with new biological research.
 - The results obtained with regard to sexual maturity and growth confirm the scientific findings of other authors in previous years. In the samples obtained from surveys in both 2017 and 2018 **it was possible to determine the sex of individuals of 8-10 mm and observe mature gametes in both sexes from a length of 11-12 mm**. From the results of the studies, from March to June it is possible to determine the sex of a large number of individuals, with the lowest percentage of undetermined individuals in the months of May and June, these two months correspond to the reproductive peak with the highest number of mature individuals found. This reproductive peak is followed by a resting stage until November, which is when the gametogenic cycle begins again for both sexes.
 - A size of 22 mm is therefore 22-38% higher than the size in the first stage of maturity ($L_{50} = 16-18$ mm) and is therefore aligned with and in full respect of sexual maturity, guaranteeing the sustainability of exploitation of this resource.
 - Data relative to growth, on the other hand, have shown that clam size increases by about 1 mm/month. This means that a clam takes just under 2 years to reach a size of 22 mm and that the clams of 22 mm or slightly less, once released back into the sea, reach a size of 25 mm in about 3 months.
- The effects of the technical measures included in the Discard Plan have brought about a **reduction in fishing effort by hydraulic dredges**. On the one hand the potential fishing days per year have decreased, on the other there has been a significant reduction of daily fishing effort for two reasons. The reduction of the maximum daily quota (from 600 to 400 kg) and the possibility to market specimens smaller than 22 mm (although it is currently rare to find clams smaller than 23 mm on the market) have together made it possible to reach the quota set more quickly (on average 1 – 1.5 fishing hours per day), this has also resulted in a **reduction in the areas dredged, thus reducing the environmental impact of dredging gear**. It is clear that the effects will need to be assessed over time. The reduction in the time spent on fishery operations means that this fishery also has implications of a socially useful nature.
- With the entry into force of the Discard Plan, the characteristics of the size-selective gear on board (mechanical vibrating sieves) have not been modified. The sieving grids themselves have not been modified either. A recent study on the selectivity of Adriatic dredgers demonstrated unequivocally that, **where compliant vibrating sieves are employed (hole diameter 21 mm), the number of specimens under 22 mm is negligible**. The length-frequency distribution of the clams sampled directly from the collecting box (before sorting) shows a wide range of sizes with a large number of undersized specimens (< 22 mm). However, on considering size

distribution after sieving, it is possible to observe that there are very few specimens under 22 mm, sometimes almost none (<1%). It is clear from the results obtained from monitoring activities that, as a consequence of the sorting operations on board with a sieve that is compliant with the regulations in force, there are not sufficient quantities of clams retained on board to allow for reasonable seeding operations for restocking purposes. This explains why, in many Maritime Districts, restocking areas have only been used marginally. In the light of the selective properties described above, the quantity of clams under 22 mm kept on board was often so low that it was completely impractical and unprofitable to discard these specimens in the restocking areas. It will, however, be possible to use these areas to test rotational seeding as envisaged in Ministerial projects that have already been approved.

- The standardised monitoring activities carried out in 2017 and 2018 demonstrate that, **in almost all the consortia, the resource has recovered**, with biomass and densities that are higher than the values registered for previous years. At the end of August 2018, however, clams died in very large numbers in the central-northern Adriatic Sea, probably due to a sudden, exceptional climatic phenomenon and this may have negatively affected the surveys carried out from September onwards.
- The surveys have demonstrated that **good levels of spawning stock have been maintained, which is confirmed by the large quantities of juveniles** in all the areas, proving that recruitment has been excellent and will be able to sustain the future population of commercial clams.
- **The vessel position detection system has enabled the sector to participate in control operations, considerably improving management activities.** This tool can be used to plan fishing activities in relation to the effort applied.
- Hydraulic dredges cause physical disturbance to the seabed, giving rise to a resuspension of the sediment with effects on water turbidity. If on the one hand this remixes the superficial sediments favouring the oxygenation of the deeper layers and the release of organic substance and nutrients, on the other hand it could have negative effects such as the destabilisation and modification of the sediment conditions resulting in a decrease in habitat complexity, with consequences for the benthic communities. The biological communities present in the fishing areas have undergone a prolonged selection process and the composition of the species currently present is the result of the selective action of dredge fishery activities. **It should, however, be noted that communities living in low-depth and high-energy environments are already naturally subjected to constant environmental stress due to exceptional phenomena (in particular, significant wave movements, strong currents), and for this reason, they demonstrate rapid recovery (resilience).** The fishing areas also enjoy long rest periods that allow the macrobenthonic community to recover for periods of 2-6 months. The ecological effects and the recovery of the benthic community after the action of hydraulic dredge gear can therefore be equated to the recovery that takes place following natural disturbances. No species are caught that present problems related to conservation or which are protected.
- In the light of the studies carried out during the first two years of implementation of the Discard Plan, it is possible to affirm that maintaining the Minimum Conservation Reference Size at 22 mm appears to be a fundamental element towards guaranteeing a positive future for the fisheries sector operating with hydraulic dredges, as it is sustainable from an ecological point of view (the biology of the species and the low environmental impact support this argument) and also from a socio-economic point of view.

Foreword

The venerid clam (*Chamelea gallina* L., 1758), known locally in Italy as “cappola”, “lupino”, “cocciola” etc., is widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean, in the eastern Adriatic and in the Black Sea; in Italy it is particularly abundant along the central and northern Adriatic coast (noteworthy quantities are also caught in the mid and lower Tyrrhenian Sea) and is one of the most commercially important molluscs.

C. gallina is found in high density shoals in the coastal area up to a depth of 12 m on sandy sea beds in which it burrows, leaving only the two siphons protruding on the outside, with which it draws in (inhalant siphon) and expels (exhalant siphon) water. The growth of the clam, as well as other fossorial species, is influenced by various biotic and abiotic factors such as temperature, water trophism, the nature of the sediments and population density. In the presence of high densities (> 500 individuals m²), phenomena such as increased natural mortality have been demonstrated (especially in the summer when hypoxia can occur more frequently in the area close to the coastline), as well as a reduced growth rate and a slowing down of recruitment. It is therefore not rare for this species to suffer mass deaths, which on several occasions have led to critical periods for the relative fishing industry, these deaths can be caused by changes in the coastal environment due to natural and other causes (anoxia, quantities of fresh water river run-off, storms, pollution, etc.); it would appear, however, that the clam possesses a remarkable capacity for recovery following stressful conditions and its reproductive biology appears naturally predisposed to react to phenomena of sudden mass deaths with subsequent intense recruitment.

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 (hereinafter referred to as the “Basic Regulation”), envisages the progressive introduction of a discard ban into EC law and the consequent landing obligation for certain target species. The obligation is introduced gradually according to the fishing gear employed and the relative target species, in other words the timing is staggered according to the fishery.

On the contrary to Northern European seas, in the Mediterranean area the landing obligation is applied according to a schedule defined in the Basic Regulation for species that have minimal conservation reference size in the Mediterranean Sea, pursuant to Annex III of Regulation (EC) 1967/06. Where the clam *Chamelea gallina* is concerned, as this is a species that “defines the fishery” (article 15.1 letter d of the Basic Regulation) the landing obligation comes into force on “1st January 2017 at the latest”.

With Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/2376 of 13th October 2016, the EC established a discard plan for mollusc bivalve *Venus* spp. in the Italian territorial waters. This plan, by way of derogation from the minimum conservation reference size established in Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 set the minimum conservation reference size of *Chamelea gallina* in Italian territorial waters at 22 mm. The Italian Ministerial Decree of 27th December 2016 implements the Regulation EU 2376/2016, adopting the National Discard Management Plan for the clam *C. gallina*, establishing a series of additional technical measures.

This document aims to analyse the preliminary results of the implementation of the so-called Discard Plan and to evaluate its possible extension.

In the general part, after a brief chapter on the regulatory framework touching both on the reform and on some aspects relative to the introduction of the landing obligation, the reasons for a discard management plan are clarified. The general part continues with a description of the gears involved, with particular reference to the hydraulic dredger. An analysis of the main biological aspects of the species involved follows, drawing both on bibliographical studies and on ad hoc research carried out in the last year. Mention is then made of the size of the stock and its distribution in the various Italian GSAs.

The preliminary results are reported in the text (the Discard Plan is still in progress) relative to the implementation of the Plan itself. Lastly, reference is made to the sustainability of the fishery activities and the selectivity of the vibrating sieves, the impact of dredges and fishing effort.

Final considerations

In the light of the investigations conducted in the first two years of application of the Discard Plan, it has been possible to observe that the Management Consortia have applied the measures envisaged in the Discard Plan adequately, adopting systems to detect the position of vessels, defining the restocking areas according to the established schedule, introducing a certification system attesting the conformity of the product to the minimum conservation reference size at the landing sites. There are a few exceptions, but the consortia which have not fully implemented the Discard Plan have very low levels of the resource in question.

Where the minimum conservation reference size of 22 mm is concerned, it was considered appropriate to investigate some aspects of the biology of the species. This information was gathered following careful review of the available literature together with new biological research. The results obtained with regard to sexual maturity and growth confirm the scientific findings of other authors in previous years. In the samples obtained from the survey it was possible to determine the sex of individuals of 8-10 mm and observe mature gametes in both sexes from a length of 11-12 mm. The reproductive peak for the species would appear to be in the months of May and June, this period is followed by a resting stage until November, which is when the gametogenic cycle begins again for both sexes.

A size of 22 mm is therefore larger than the size in the first stage of maturity ($L_{50} = 16-18$ mm) and is therefore aligned with and in full respect of sexual maturity, guaranteeing the sustainability of exploitation of this resource. Data relative to growth, on the other hand, have shown that clam size increases by about 1 mm/month. This means that a clam takes just under 2 years to reach a size of 22 mm and that the clams of 22 mm or slightly less, once released back into the sea, reach a size of 25 mm in about 3 months.

The technical measures included in the Discard Plan have brought about a reduction in fishing effort by hydraulic dredges. The potential fishing days per year have decreased, the maximum daily quota per vessel has been reduced (from 600 to 400 kg) and lastly the possibility to market specimens from a minimum length of 22 mm has been conceded (although it is currently rare to find clams smaller than 23 mm on the market). As a direct result has been possible for vessels to reach the daily quota more quickly, this has also resulted in a reduction in the areas dredged, thus reducing the environmental impact of dredging gear. The reduction in the time spent on fishery operations means that this fishery also has implications of a socially useful nature.

With the entry into force of the Discard Plan, the characteristics of the selection gear on board have not been modified. Therefore the properties of the sieving grids themselves have not been modified either. The research carried out has demonstrated that with the use of the correct vibrating sieves (hole diameter 21 mm), the number of specimens below 22 mm retained is irrelevant. Therefore, the number of individuals under 22 mm in the catch after selection is so low that it is impractical and unprofitable to return these specimens to the restocking areas. This explains why in many Districts the areas of restocking have only been used marginally.

The standardised monitoring activities carried out 2017 and 2018 demonstrate that in almost all the Consortia the resource has recovered, with higher biomass and density values recorded in comparison with previous years. At the end of August 2018, however, there was an episode of

sudden mass death in the central-north of the Adriatic, probably due to a severe climatic event that may have negatively affected the surveys conducted from September onwards.

The surveys demonstrate high levels of spawning stocks, with a large number of juveniles in all areas, proving that recruitment has been excellent and this will ensure the future quantities of commercial clams.

The vessel position detection system has enabled the sector to participate in control activities, significantly improving its management activities. This tool can be used to plan fishing activities in relation to the effort applied.

Hydraulic dredges have a physical impact on the sea bed. However, it should be noted that communities living in low-depth, high-energy environments are already naturally subjected to constant environmental stress due to exceptional events (in particular large wave movements, strong currents), and they demonstrate resilience with rapid recovery, also depending on the duration of the event. The areas of the shoreline affected by *Chamelea gallina* fishing activities are not chronically disturbed as management planning differentiates harvesting activities by area, closing areas in rotation, or reducing fishing effort. In advanced management planning, large areas of the coast are subject to bans on fishing activities for average periods of 4-5 months, up to a maximum of 8-9 months (also applied by means of Orders issued by the local Port Authorities). These rest periods for the production areas allow the macrobenthonic community to recover over a 3-6 month period as indicated by Pranovi and Giovanardi (1994), or over about 2 months for areas with predominantly sandy characteristics used for commercial fishing (Pranovi et al., 1998). According to Goldberg et al., 2012, in a specific assessment of the effects of the hydraulic dredger used to harvest *Mercenaria mercenaria* in Connecticut, it appears that the ecological effects and recovery of the benthic community after the action of hydraulic dredgers can be assimilated to those which intervene after natural disturbances.

Keeping the Minimum Conservation Reference Size at 22 mm therefore appears to be a crucial to guarantee a positive future for the sector operating with hydraulic dredges, because it is sustainable from an ecological point of view (the biology of the species and the low environmental impact support this theory) but also from a socio-economic point of view.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE OPINION CAN BE DOWNLOADED ON THE WEBSITE:

http://www.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_parietti_lettere/2019/03/71_medac_opinion_discard_management_plan_chamelea_gallina_2019-1.pdf

MEDAC REPLY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANDING OBLIGATION – SUDESTMED SUBMISSION OF AMENDED JOINT RECOMMENDATION AND ADDITIONAL DATA

28

Rome, 18th March 2019

To Marina Argyrou (Director General, Department of Fisheries and Marine Research, Cyprus)

Dear Chair of SudEstMed,

Thank you for your letter ref. 02.01.002.13.02 of March 4 in which you ask the MEDAC to collaborate and give our views to the amended Joint Recommendation.

Referring to this request we kindly remind you that paragraph 2, art. 18 of the CFP states that: “Member States....shall cooperate with one another in formulating joint recommendations. They shall also consult the relevant Advisory Councils....”. So, the MS should consult the ACs before

the draft of a joint recommendation. At this stage, the MS have to submit to the EC additional info on scientific data. In order to provide the MEDAC overview you are kindly invited to download the MEDAC joint recommendation submitted last year (http://en.medac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2018/05/132_medac_jr_lo_species_annexiii_regmed_en.pdf) that reflects the MEDAC opinion on this topic.

We remain at your disposal for any eventual request of collaboration.

Kind regards.

29 MEDAC REPLY ON THE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION IN 2019 OF THE LANDING OBLIGATION- YOUR LETTER REF. ARES (2019)7821069 - 19/12/2019

Rome, 29th January 2020

To Veronika Veits (Acting Director – EC – DG MARE)

Dear Ms Veits,

The MEDAC started from the beginning the collaboration with both MS and DG MARE in finding adaptive solutions through the JRs, and this process contributed to the draft of the last Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/04 of 29 August 2019.

Moreover, please find attached the letter sent by MEDAC on 24 October 2018 (Ref. 262/2018) to the MS and to the General Director of DG MARE on the entry into force of the landing obligation for all species, where the reasons of the Mediterranean constraints and difficulties related to the LO implementation has been provided.

Furthermore, as confirmed by Consideranda 16 of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/4, STECF concluded that "due to the small quantities and the very large number of landing places [...], the evidence indicated that the collection costs would be disproportionate" then "in light of the above, it is appropriate to apply the de minimis exemptions [...] until 31 December 2021".

The section of the questionnaire relevant for MEDAC is mainly related to the socio-economic aspects. Therefore, acknowledging the important results of the multiannual collaboration, the MEDAC cannot fulfill the questionnaire of the annual report on the implementation of the landing obligation 2019, because the exemptions recognized by now avoided the strong socio-economic impact of the measure. Yours sincerely.

30 MEDAC OPINION PURSUANT TO ART. 18 OF REGULATION (EU) 1380/2013 AND ART. 15 OF REGULATION (EU) 2019/1241

Rome, 12th May 2020

Given that¹:

- with the opinion issued on 19th March (ref. 71/2019), the MEDAC has already commented on the discard management plan for the species *Venus* spp. (*Chamelea gallina*) pursuant to the provisions of art. 18(2) of Reg. (EU) 1380/2013 and of the EU directives in force at the time;
- in the meantime there has been a change to the legislation, as in August 2019 Reg. (EU) 2019/1241 came into force, which introduced the possibility for amendments (art.15) to various technical measures at regional level, including the minimum conservation reference sizes, which are identified in annex IX part A of the same document where the Mediterranean is concerned;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/3 approved a discard plan for the species *Venus* spp. (*Chamelea gallina*) establishing that this plan would remain valid until 31st December 2022, this period of validity, however, only applies to the survivability exemption for the species

- and not to the derogation from the minimum conservation reference size, the exemption of 22 mm in Italian territorial waters is limited to 31st December 2020;
- the Italian national administration recently presented a Joint Recommendation to the STECF with an attachment to support the request to extend the derogation from the minimum conservation reference size until the natural expiry of the discard management plan (31st December 2022). This recommendation was drawn up on the basis of the provisions of the recently adopted Reg. (EU) 2019/1241;
 - with reference to the abovementioned Joint Recommendation, the STECF stated that (PLEN 20-01 - written procedure) “.....given that the size at first maturity of Venus clams is below 22 mm, a reduction in MCRS to 22 mm is likely to have little effect on the exploitation rate on juveniles”;
 - on the basis of the scientific evidence already produced in the aforementioned MEDAC opinion of 19th March 2019, which has recently been updated and confirmed, the further period of derogation from the minimum conservation reference size, 22 mm in Italian territorial waters, would not appear to impact juveniles nor the state of the resource at local level;
 - in its note dated 27th April 2020, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies has formally requested the MEDAC to comment once more on the matter of the request to derogate from the established minimum conservation reference size, applying the minimum size of 22mm for the species *Venus* spp. in Italian territorial waters;
 - as already reported in the Italian Dredge Management Plan (DM 17/06/2019) approved by EC, the lack of the derogation to the MCRS (from 25 mm to 22 mm) would significantly increase the fishing effort;

the MEDAC:

- confirms the views expressed in its Opinion n.71/2019, as indicated in the preamble, and therefore
- considers that in Annex IX, part A of Reg. (EU) 2019/1241 the following amendment should be introduced:

as a note to the entries: “Carpet clams (*Venerupis* spp) and Venus shells (*Venus* spp)” in the table, Part A – Minimum conservation reference sizes, the following sentence should be inserted:

“Until 31st December 2022 in the Italian territorial waters of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) geographical subareas 9, 10, 17 and 18, as defined in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1343/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the minimum conservation reference size of 22mm is applicable.”

¹ FACOPE, CEPESCA, FNCP, WWF, MEDREACT, EAA and IFSUA do not agree on this opinion considering the reasons listed below. FACOPE, CEPESCA and FNCP reiterate their vote against the MEDAC opinion ref. 17/2019 considering that there has not been enough time to analyze the report in the WG, with which there are biological discrepancies. The Italian management plan related to venus clams is limited to vessels operating in Italian waters, nevertheless it has negative repercussions on other fleets, such as the Spanish one. FACOPE, CEPESCA, FNCP, WWF, MEDREACT, EAA and IFSUA highlight the great problem related to the continuation of the current situation because the two different sizes of the same species in the same market can cause difficulties at the control and inspection level, besides the competition. In fact, the Spanish sector supports the size of 25 mm, since in Spain there are no scientific basis that guarantees that a decrease in size does not affect the future of the fishery and the species. FACOPE, CEPESCA, FNCP, WWF, MEDREACT, EAA and IFSUA highlight that the STECF Plenary (PLEN 20-01) also emphasizes the uncertainties and acknowledges that it cannot evaluate the new information sent by the Italian Fisheries Administration: “... Given the paucity of such information, STECF is therefore unable to fully assess the potential past and future impacts of the proposed change in the MCRS for Venus clams from 25 mm to 22 mm on exploitation rates and stock biomass.” WWF, MEDREACT, EAA and IFSUA stress the lack of data provided by the Italian administration to STECF and the shortcoming of the scientific evidence supporting the request of extension of the derogation on MCRS until 2022 in Italian national waters



Fisheries Reserve of Cap Roux, France ©Cristina Mastrandrea / WWF Mediterranean / FishMPABlue

TOPIC: Technical Measures

RAC-MED ADVICE ON TECHNICAL MEASURES

Marbella, 8th June 2010

31

To Maria Damanaki (Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs)

Meeting on 7 and 8 June 2010 at Marbella (SP), the Mediterranean RAC¹

whereas:

- protests are under way in many fishing ports of Mediterranean Member States, following the coming into force of the measures of Council Regulation 1967/2006, which had been the subject of derogations until 31 May 2010,
- there is a danger of serious socio-economic consequences resulting from the loss of profitability deriving from said measures, and a risk of unemployment for many workers in the sector,

requests of the European Commission:

that Council Regulation No 1967/2006 be the subject of urgent revision, accelerating the procedures provided for in article 9.3.3 of said regulation, so as to assess, in the light of the latest scientific opinions, the technical and scientific justification and validity of the most problematic measures, and in particular:

- the **maximum twine thickness** of 3mm which, in the opinion of the sector, should be increased to 5 mm. *All RAC members are unanimous on this item* and the RAC MED calls for an urgent solution;
- **the minimum mesh size of the cod end;**
- **the minimum distance from the coast;**
- **minimum sizes;**
- **the technical specifications and the features of the gears.**

The RAC believes that it is urgent to proceed with an assessment – never undertaken (contrary to Community norms) upstream of the approval of the Regulation – of the socio-economic aspects of the implementation of the Regulation, so as to identify, as fast as possible, the most appropriate proposals for amendments which will make it genuinely possible to pursue the criteria of biological, social and economic sustainability, and avoid disseminating a lack of confidence towards the Community institutions among the fishing community, as well as resignation to what will be a situation of widespread illegality.

¹ With reserves by the Greek organisation PASAGES and abstention of the WWF and the recreational/sports fishing organisations, with the exception of the item on maximum twine thickness.

MEDAC ADVICE ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION LAYING DOWN A PROHIBITION ON DRIFTNET FISHERIES COM(2014) 265 final

Rome, 30th July 2014

32

Regarding the proposed EC regulation that aims to enforce a total ban on the use of driftnets in European waters, MEDAC expresses deep concern at this measure as it is inconsistent with the MEDAC contribution that was approved unanimously during the EC consultation on Technical Measures.

MEDAC considers that the approach applied in this proposed regulation is in contradiction with the indications of the CFP reform, and with the consultation on Technical Measures, as it fails to take into account the principle of regionalization (Article 18 of the Basic Regulation), this principle should also be adopted for a possible ban on drift nets, taking into due consideration the specific nature and needs of each single region as over 1200 fishing enterprises are involved.

Moreover, in the MEDAC region, drift netting is a traditional, local fishery activity and therefore before proposing a total ban on the use of this gear, the socio-economic impact of such a ban should be carefully evaluated. Furthermore, an in-depth evaluation of the regulations currently in force and their degree of implementation should be carried out, particularly in the Mediterranean. MEDAC believes that these initiatives should follow a regionalized decision-making process, with the cooperation of the respective Advisory Councils.

In any case, MEDAC is in favor of the application and control of European and international law prohibiting the use of large driftnets by the fleet segment that targets highly migratory species.

The Executive Committee adopted this advice unanimously by written procedure¹.

¹ EAA supports the Commission's proposal to ban all driftnets in the Mediterranean Sea.

33 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW TECHNICAL MEASURES

Rome, 11th December 2014

The MEDAC has already transmitted its contribution to the public consultation on technical measures and emphasises that an approach based on designing technical measures in the context of a scientifically aligned management plan created at fisheries level would be much more effective than the current approach. The technical measures must take into account the specific nature of each fishery and the measures need to include rapid and effective decision-making processes in order to adapt to the circumstances and the evolution of the species in question.

The MEDAC believes that the final objective of a framework legislation is to support the achievement of a sustainable exploitation of fisheries, delivering into social and economic benefits. These basic elements need to be accepted by both the scientific community and the fishery sector. The fishing gear and the limitations applied should be defined regionally, based primarily on science as well as promoting traditional knowledge, and experience within the area in which the fleet operates, in line with the principles laid down in the Common Fisheries Policy, respecting the obligations to provide healthy fish stocks regionally as well as globally.

With reference to the document sent by DG MARE following the results of the public consultation on the development of a new framework for technical measures, the MEDAC is keen to stress that the document in question is very complex and its concepts need to be examined in depth in the context of the Mediterranean fisheries, as they are extremely technical and not easy to interpret.

Replacement of mesh sizes and rules on catch composition

The MEDAC agrees that it is advisable to aim towards baselines that do not enter into great detail concerning the gear to be used, moreover MEDAC agrees that management should be based on result-based approach, and results still need to be obtained.

The catch metrics (or catch composition), as presented, would enable the issue of sanctions to be solved concerning a single undersized specimen put on the market, but not for direct human consumption. Thus, it is necessary to enter into further detail in order to understand the scope of what is described; and its ecological effectiveness in the usual Mediterranean multi-specific fishery should be carefully analysed. Perhaps it would be useful to create a more wide-ranging document that enters into greater detail, so as to be in a position to hold exhaustive discussions.

Where selectivity profiles are concerned, the problem of their definition arises, both regarding what selectivity is and how it is determined, as well as how it can be calculated for mesh sizes other than those used during experimentation. What the profiles are is also less than clear.

The text would appear to state that, once the selectivity profiles of a specific gear currently in use have been measured (would this be standardized gear?), then fishers are free to use any other kind of gear with equivalent selectivity.

It would also be useful to have a precise definition of capture profiles. Leaving fishers free to an established gear type or any other gear developed at regional level by the fishers themselves would be a positive step and would help eradicate distrust as well as the opposition of the fishermen to the Commission, Council and European Parliament.

Regionalization (Article 18 of the Basic Regulation), through the five concepts listed in the document, could effectively solve all the problems. In the case of the Mediterranean with multi-specific (and therefore multi-size) fisheries, the catch could include adults of species of smaller size together with juveniles of those of bigger size. It is therefore important to define besides size selectivity other technical measures, such as time/area closures for the protection of juveniles.

The matters under discussion are revolutionary and will change the way both the Commission and the fishers think; the MEDAC believes that some time will be necessary before the new concepts are fully understood and, possibly, adapted and accepted (catch profiles and selectivity profiles, others). There is, however, no doubt that it is in the interest of all parties to see the reform enter into force as soon as possible so as to overcome the rigidity of the Mediterranean Regulation, which has repeatedly been contested.

Is the implementation of catch parameters/profiles, selectivity profiles or other measures that could be established, feasible in the framework of simplification? The MEDAC believes that could be (see above), and that this would make the reform more effective.

Will the use of the abovementioned parameters ensure the achievement of the established objectives? The MEDAC believes that these measures could be helpful in achieving the objectives and MEDAC will do everything possible to analyse the use of these or other parameters with the help of the scientific community.

It is also necessary to reflect on the absolute certainty that concepts presented will contribute to fisheries practices that are more selective and more suited to the reduction of unwanted catches.

Closed areas

The MEDAC believes that a review of the areas closed to fishery activities, or those in which fishing is limited in terms of gear or possible periods, would be helpful in order to optimize their effectiveness while keeping conservation targets in sight. The list of closed areas presented is rather

incomplete where the Mediterranean basin is concerned, and does not take into account several Fishing Protected Areas adopted at national level under the Mediterranean Regulation (Council Regulation EC 1967/2006) and the Fisheries Restricted Areas in EU waters established by the GFCM. A complete list of closures would be needed in order to give an in depth advice for the Mediterranean region.

The discussion points are well identified. The first question asks whether there are closed or limited areas that could be eliminated: the MEDAC believes that if such areas exist, should be carefully analyzed according to a clear set of criteria along with areas which need greater protection to deliver on its creation objectives as well.

Where the second question is concerned, it would appear logical that fisheries closed areas (permanent or temporary) should be established in the context of regionalization, as the MEDAC has already stated in the INTER-AC meeting held on 30th October in Brussels. Indeed involvement of fishermen (small, coastal or artisanal) in the management or co-management of closed areas could be an asset by giving an alternative income in addition to fishing activities while, at the same time, contributing to scientific knowledge with their practical one.

Fully documented fisheries

Fully documented fisheries are needed to be able to monitor the fisheries and to evaluate properly the effects of the changes to come.

34

MEDAC POSITION ON THE REGULATION PROPOSAL ON TECHNICAL MEASURES COM (2016)134

Rome, 19th January 2017

The Technical Measures Framework proposal (TCM) provides a good opportunity for the European Parliament and the Council to agree on a framework which is coherent, consistent and ambitious in meeting the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) objectives and the European Union (EU) Environmental legislation.

The current proposal aims at simplifying the existing legal framework which is composed by 31 regulations difficult to implement not only for the complexity of the norms but for its fragmentariness and to align the existing regulation with the obligation set in the Common Fishery Policy (Reg. 1380/2013). MEDAC welcomes this new simplified Regulation proposal as a tool to reinforce compliance among the fishing sector that report to have lost confidence in regulations due to the high number of norms they had to comply with.

The intention to provide a framework of common objectives is strategic and we must underline the importance to set quantitative targets as they are essential to ensure that baseline measures and any subsequent regional proposal deliver what the framework sets out to achieve.

The reform of the CFP created an innovative strategy for fisheries management, introducing regionalization and encouraging participation of stakeholders. MEDAC welcomed this new approach and started to work in this regard.

In the meantime, MEDAC would like to individually address some of the main key issues related to the proposal which have a direct impact in the Mediterranean catching sector, in order to contribute to the strengthening of sustainability of fishing fisheries activities.

1. It is worth noting that up until recently, policy decisions were taken exclusively by Council and detailed technical measures were delivered as EU Regulations rather than as regionally devised rules that would have accommodated the specificities of each fishery and sea basin. In this respect, the exhaustive micro-management approach together with the intention of EU institutions to compile all technical details under a single framework brought about a complex legal system for fishers to comply with, with little room for maneuver adapting. Regionalization now is a tool to encourage participation of all stakeholders and empower fishermen and their engagement so that they can work in close cooperation with MSs, ACs and scientists to create tailor-made measures that consider the specificities of each fishery areas and safeguard their environmental conditions. It is expected that simplification of the existing regulations will result in better understanding and acceptance by operators, national authorities and stakeholders; higher level of compliance by fishers and easier enforcement of controls; and strengthen the alignment with environmental policy objectives.
2. During the Inter-AC meeting, held on December 5, 2016, DG MARE recalled that in the case of the Mediterranean in particular there are sub-regional requirements that can be managed through regionalization. Moreover, DG MARE recalled that article 18 of Reg.(EU) No 1380/2013 (henceforth, the CFP Basic Reg.) sets out the guiding principles of regionalization for conservation measures, even in cases where there are no multi-annual management plans. Moreover, when there is a specific issue that relates to just one Member State (MS), it can present individual proposals, having a direct management interest, on modifying current conservation measures in the framework of discard management plans work (as in the case of the discards management plan for bivalve mollusks in the Adriatic Sea), with the previous consultation and collaboration of the ACs. If this proposal is accepted by the European Commission (EC) it can be transposed into a delegated regulation. MEDAC welcomes this possibility involving just one MS submitting agreed recommendations that define appropriate conservation measures at the local level. Thus avoiding the waiting for the co-decision procedure that can take long, such as that one on small pelagics in the Adriatic Sea which has not yet published.
3. The MEDAC acknowledges the importance of the fishing resources for the future of the fisheries. Therefore highlights that MCRS shouldn't be set below spawning size according the more recent scientific information, and it should be set for all the species of commercial and recreational interest (for example nowadays there isn't any MCRS for *Dentex dentex*; *Lichiaama*; *Seriola dumerili*; *Coriphaena hippurus*; *Umbrina cirrosa*). Furthermore the MEDAC suggests that restrictions on the use of passive gears (traps and longlines) by Recreational fisheries should be included in Annex IX.
4. The MEDAC notes that control and enforcement measures, and a system for monitoring the effectiveness of technical measures at achieving their objectives, will become even more important as the new framework moves towards a more result-based management. To ensure that the new rules are followed and to maintain a level playing field for vessels operating in the EU waters, MSs must help to develop a "culture of compliance" through effective control and monitoring measures.
5. Taking full advantage of the possibilities given by art. 18 of Reg UE 1380/2013, MEDAC believes that any further technical measure must be clear and easily applicable, it will simultaneously be able to reach environmental, economic and social sustainability, rewarding fishermen's good behavior. The real results of these new measures application must be evaluated

in a medium time to verify their implementation and effectiveness. In spite of these developments, it is important to underline that the proposal for a Technical Measure Regulation raises questions concerning, in particular, certain definitions, the procedure related to regionalization, the introduction of more binding measures. MEDAC will investigate more thoroughly the proposal in its future Working Group, formulate an official position.

35

MEDAC OPINION ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION ON TECHNICAL MEASURES

Rome, 13th March 2017

Working Group 1 met on 21st February in Rome to discuss the European Parliament and Council proposal for a regulation relative to the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems by means of technical measures, thus modifying regulations (EC) n. 1967/2006, (EC) n. 1098/2007, (EC) n. 1224/2009 of the Council and regulations (EU) n. 1343/2011 and (EU) n. 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council revoking regulations (EC) n. 894/97, (EC) n. 850/98, (EC) n. 2549/2000, (EC) n. 254/2002, (EC) n. 812/2004 and (EC) n. 2187/2005 of the Council [COM (2016)134], and to study the impact of this proposal on the Mediterranean basin in greater detail. The Working Group:

- recalling the opinion adopted by MEDAC (prot.19/2017 of 19th January 2017), presented to the European Parliament at the meeting organized by Gabriel Mato, held on 25th January 2017 in Brussels;
- acknowledging that technical measures are rules for where, when and how fishing may take place, and aim to control how much is taken out of the water with a given amount of effort and to minimize the impacts of fishing activities on the marine environment;
- given that it agrees with the need for a careful review of the current framework for technical measures so as to make them consistent with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, especially with regard to the achievement of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2020, the reduction of discards through the implementation of the landing obligation, minimizing and where possible eliminating the impact of bycatch on sensitive species, and achieving good environmental status by 2020;
- given that it considers the aim of standardizing legislation a welcome and necessary step, provided this does not result in new obligations that disregard the regionalisation process and/or administrative burden but maintains and where needed improves the current EU obligations under the Common Fisheries Policy and other environmental legislation;
- given that it hopes to see regionalization implemented as a tool to bring fisheries management closer to the specific requirements of the individual areas, in line with the regionalization as defined in Art. 18 Regulation (EU) 1380/2013;
- given that, in line with Art. 18.5 of the CFP, joint recommendations on technical conservation measures have to be based on the best available scientific advice and should ensure that they can effectively contribute to achieving the objectives of the CFP, namely Art. 2, they meet quantifiable targets of the management plan (when available) and are at least as stringent as measures under European Union law;

- given that it underlines once again the importance of safeguarding environmental, economic and social sustainability, avoiding measures that increase business costs in financial terms and in terms of jobs;
- given that in the Commission's proposal there are various measures which until now had not been envisaged for the Mediterranean fishery sector and that these new measures may have an adverse effect on fishery enterprises;
- given that in various parts the proposal would appear to be too detailed on measures that should be included in regionalization;
- given that in some language versions various translation errors have been found, especially where technical terms are concerned, although during discussion it was still possible to understand the sense of the various regulations;

the following principles are explained, which should form the basic rational of the framework:

- absolute consistency with the objectives set by the CFP, which aspires to results-based management, leaving more flexibility for those involved, in the context of regionalization as defined by Art. 18 of the Regulation (EU) 1380/2013;
- development of a more effective control and monitoring system for fishery activities, especially in light of the change in governance of the sector towards results-based management;
- simplification of the rules, constantly applying the provisions of the Commission's REFIT program that aims to reduce the legislative burden, to the benefit of civil society, businesses and public administrations, so that the sector and the operators can better understand the regulations and implement them;
- identification of the tools available to achieve the objectives of the CFP taking into account the specific characteristics – local as well as marine environment- in the Mediterranean basin;
- identification of clear and consistent quantifiable management targets in order to achieve the objectives of the CFP within the set deadline;
- identification of measures to promote the development of selective gear and practices (e.g. spatial/temporal closures) to reduce and where possible eliminate discards, minimizing the impact of fishery activities on the environment while safeguarding the economic viability of fishing enterprises and jobs in the sector in the long term;
- implementation of measures such as gear/vessel modifications and practices (e.g. spatial/temporal closures) to minimise and where possible eliminate the incidental catches of marine mammals, marine birds, and marine reptiles;
- definition of clear, verifiable performance indicators for measures established at regional level as well, in order to respond to an adaptive management approach for the protection of spawning stocks, juveniles and sensitive species and habitats;
- regional monitoring of the impact of recreational fisheries, regardless of the fact that current legislation makes Member States responsible for the management of these fishery activities.

Specifically, where the articles are concerned, MEDAC remarks as follows:

- Preamble, paragraph 11 and article 24 on innovative fishing gears. The proposal should be amended to ensure that there is appropriate knowledge about the impacts of innovative fishing gears such as pulse trawl, including cumulative effects, before use of the gear is widely adopted.

Additionally, a system for monitoring, control and evaluation must be in place, serving for enforcement and research as well as evaluation purposes. Finally, current licenses should be made subject to scientific (re-) assessment, before being given a permanently “non-prohibited” status.

- Preamble, new paragraph (44): A part of the coastal zone should be reserved for low impact and selective gears, as well as recreational fisheries, provided its accountability on the impact on marine environment and stocks, to protect breeding grounds and sensitive habitats and to increase the social sustainability of European fisheries while securing the sustainable and ‘best use’ of the resource.
- *Art.6 "Definitions"*: many definitions should be simplified to avoid differences in interpretation and to facilitate comprehension, not only for the sector but also for the authorities responsible for control activities. In particular, the definition of “directed fishing’ could cause problems, (4) where this means fishing for a defined species or combination of species where the total catch of that/those species makes up more than 50% of the economic value of the catch; MEDAC proposes amending this definition so that the reference parameter is objective and quantifiable. In the same way, the definition of gears should also be made clearer.
- *Art.6 "Definitions"*: paragraph 1 point (6) sensitive habitats and (7) sensitive species: WG1 agrees that it is necessary to improve the definition of sensitive habitats and species to be protected more precisely. All threatened and sensitive habitats and species should be considered, based on habitats listed by all EU environmental legislation (e.g., the Habitat Directive), fisheries legislation (Mediterranean Regulation 1967/2006) FAO and GFCM (e.g., VMEs), and under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- *Art.7 “Prohibited fishing gears and methods”*. Letter (h). MEDAC agrees that it would be appropriate to add the following words after “aqualung”: “spear-guns if used in conjunction with underwater breathing apparatus (aqualung), diver propulsion vehicles (e.g. scooters), or at night from sunset to dawn.
- *Art.10 “General restrictions on the use of static nets”*: paragraph 5: introduces a ban in the Mediterranean on the use of gill nets at depths exceeding 600 meters, this measure had so far only been envisaged for the North Sea (ex Reg.850 / 98). The MEDAC demands the maintenance of the current regulation waiting for scientific evidence that can support the need to justify such a measure.¹
- *Art.16 “Prohibition of high grading and slipping”*: high grading is relatively rare, if not unknown, practices in the Mediterranean. The exception to the ban on high grading species exempted from the landing obligation (ex article 15 .4 of Reg. 1380/2013) with reference to their high survival, would increase fishing mortality, and this mortality would not be taken into account in the calculation of total catches. MEDAC therefore proposes an amendment to this article, so that the ban on high grading continues to apply to all species. Slipping is a common practice in purse-seine fishery for small pelagic species: when they see that the average size in the bench is below minimum landing size, they open the net and let go free the fish alive. It is used to avoid catching undersized fish. To prohibit this practice is absolutely counterproductive for the conservation of small pelagic resources and the protection of undersized specimen. On the contrary, provided that scientific advice confirms high survival rates, slipping could be an effective tool to reduce discards, together

with methods and equipment to estimate the catch volume, fish size and quality, at an early stage of pursing, while slipping is still acceptable in terms of catch survival. Slipping shouldn't be prohibited as it is a selectivity measure use all around the basin.

- *Article 19 point 4 D (new)*: A part of the coastal zone should always be reserved for low impact and selective gears, as well as recreational fisheries, provided its accountability on the impact on marine environment and stocks, to protect breeding grounds and sensitive habitats and to increase the social sustainability of European fisheries while securing the sustainable and 'best use' of the resource. In this sense we propose to maintain article 13 of the Mediterranean Regulation (1967/2006) and where necessary increase the distance from the shore and depths for certain gears such as trawling and purse seining.

- *Art.29 "scientific research"*. Paragraph 2, letter. (b), establishes that specimens caught in the context of scientific research programs (sampling, gears' selectivity tests, impacts on habitats, etc.) should only be used for purposes other than direct human consumption. This is a new provision for the Mediterranean Basin. It must be highlighted that in order to ensure full scientific rigor during the research program period, fishing operations engaged in research program may be needed to be carried out under the same circumstances as professional fishing operations. This means that marketable fish is caught and could be sold for human consumption. Therefore MEDAC proposes that Art 29 Paragraph 2, letter. (b) applies only to specimens below the minimum conservation reference size (MCRS), in accordance with Article 15 of Reg. (EU) 1380/2013.

- *Art.35 "Amendments to Reg. 1967/06"*: The complete abolition of Article 15 of the Mediterranean Regulation will effectively make it impossible to fish for juvenile sardines, which was allowed up to now under Article 15, paragraph 3, in areas outside GSAs 17 and 18 (where this fishery is prohibited according to Recommendation GFCM/2013/37/1). MEDAC thinks the derogation should be reintroduced, with the same conditions.²

- *Art.35 "Amendments to Reg. 1967/06"*: MEDAC proposes to reiterate the content of Article 13 of the Mediterranean Regulation, in the proposed Regulation on technical measures. The MEDAC considers that the distance from the coast and the depth can be fully reintegrated into the regulation in question.

- *Art.35 "Amendments to Reg. 1967/06"*: Following an extensive and interesting debate, the MEDAC considers it necessary to delete Article 13, paragraph 3, second sentence, of the Mediterranean Regulation as it causes major technical difficulties, particularly in certain low-depth areas. In this regard, the pilot project conducted in the framework of the FAO Regional Project ADRIAMED ("Technical properties of purse seines targeting small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea and impact of their use on the seabed". - FAO AdriaMed Italy-Croatia-Slovenia. Final report Lucchetti A., Arneri E., Belardinelli A., Čikeš Keč V., Colarossi M., De Carlo F., Marčeta B., Marković J., Martinelli M., Milone N., Notti E., Santojanni A., Russo T., Vrgoč N., Vujević A., Zorica B. 2015) clearly demonstrated that no environmental damage occurs using traditional purse seiners, although depth does not exceed 70% of the net height.

- *Annex I, point o*: There is a mistake on the French translation (at least), since it refers female crawfish and female lobster as prohibited species, and it should said "berried female crawfish and berried female lobster" (in French: œuvrées).

- *Annex IX, part B, point 1*: it is underlined that a clear definition of "directed fisheries" is required, (as used for sardine and anchovy as well as small pelagic species targeted by seiners, and

for red seabream in part c), given that the conditions for the use of minimum mesh size are defined in function of the definition.

- *Annex IX, part B*, point 1: In Note 1 the consideration is made that the minimum twine thickness in the cod end can be greater than 3 mm (a maximum of 5 mm is proposed), as demonstrated by scientific studies, and much less on the thickness of the twine used (Sala, A., Lucchetti, A., & Buglioni, G. (2007). The influence of twine thickness on the size selectivity of polyamide codends in a Mediterranean bottom trawl. *Fisheries Research*, 83(2), 192-203.
- *Annex IX, part C*, point 3 and 4. The abandonment of taking into account the number of sailors on board to determine the lengths of nets and the number of hooks authorized seems to us a bad idea and an increase in the potential fishing effort.
- *Annex IX, part D* “Mitigation measures for sensitive species” protective measures to reduce the incidental catch of cetaceans and seabirds. MEDAC agrees with the content as it ensures the achievement of obligations already laid out in current environmental legislation, which does not correspond to a real reduction of incidental catches considering the poor effectiveness of proposed systems demonstrated by specific scientific studies and no effects on the species. Different members of the MEDAC have informed on the effects of pingers; they attract cetacean in the nets to eat the fishes. Research projects aiming at identifying innovative solutions are needed and the allocation of dedicated EMFF to support the sector’s adaption to these new provisions should be considered a top priority by the Member States affected.
- *Annex IX, part C point 5*. “restrictions on the use of pots”: MEDAC does not think that it is appropriate to cite *Plesionika* spp. and *Pasiphaea* spp among the species of deepwater crustaceans targeted using pots and for which the limit placed is 250 pots per vessel, because scientific studies have demonstrated that they may not necessarily be considered as deepwater species.
- *Annex IX, part C*, lastly, MEDAC underlined once more that in Annex IX, part C, a ban on the use of pots and longlines by recreational fishers should be added.³

¹ OCEANA, WWF, EAA, IFSUA, FIPSAS and CIPS don’t agree with the last sentence. They propose to put: “It is part of an international requirement and as such to be extended to Mediterranean Sea”

² OCEANA, WWF, EAA, IFSUA, FIPSAS and CIPS do not agree on reintroducing a derogation and are proposing to put the previous wording: “further evaluation is needed on whether it would be appropriate to abolish this regulation”.

³ FIPSAS and CIPS are contrary to the general ban and in favor of a better regulation.

36

MEDAC OPINION ON THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE GFCM WORKING GROUP ON FISHING TECHNOLOGIES (WGFT)

Rome, 18th March 2020

The MEDAC,

- Having received the DG MARE request to provide a contribution related to the forthcoming GFCM Working Group on Fishing Technologies
- With regard to the opinion of the WG1, met in Rome on 18 February 2020

Whereas

- Fishers are the first to embrace any improvements in the measures to protect resources, including the increase of fishing gears’ selectivity;

- It is necessary to seek a compromise and equilibrium between selectivity and the economic sustainability of fisheries and to fully assess the socio-economic impact of the management measures, according to the CFP provisions (Reg. EU 1380/2013);
- The Union regulations in force already foreseen and implemented measures aimed to the improvement of the fishing gears selectivity;
 - The fishing gears examined by the MINOUW project should be still wider tested and agreed with stakeholders (also by taking into account the results of GALION and IMPEMED projects);
 - The achievement of a level playing field in GFCM area, between EU and extra-EU countries, is a shared and crucial objective;
 - Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to undermine fishing management, the livelihoods of legitimate fishers and environment,

MEDAC

- 1) Supports the spatio-temporal closures shared and agreed with stakeholders, as a first step towards the adoption of measures to reduce the impact of fishing effort¹, until² technological innovations to improve selectivity³ are checked and standardised at regional level, GFCM contracting parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs);
- 2) Agrees on the improvement of gears selectivity and on the implementation of studies for the development of new fishing technologies⁴, in order to improve fisheries to the benefit of workers, enterprises and marine environment and resources;
- 3) Highlights the need for the assessment of results on natural resources and socioeconomic impact⁵ carried out by the previous management decisions before the adoption of new selectivity and effort reduction measures with the same objectives: the sustainable fishing activities by the EU countries⁶ and the recovery of depleted fish stocks;
- 4) Emphasizes the importance of enforcement and compliance with Recommendations by all the contracting parties of the GFCM, by reinforcing the activity of the Compliance Committee of GFCM in order to identify cases of non-compliance and the appropriate measures to deter and stop non-compliance;
- 5) The adoption of any further new gear or fishing technology aimed at increasing selectivity, should be supported by Contracting Parties' financial funds.

¹“The implementation of trawling ban in critical zones (FRA) and periods (temporary closures) aimed at delaying the first catch size of species for which the current minimum mesh size is not appropriate would improve their exploitation patterns” and “Closure of some areas with a high density of juvenile hake, combined with effort reductions, would achieve effects comparable to those expected with higher effort reductions”. Source: The state of the stocks and the role of the FRAs in management fisheries of the Strait of Sicily – F. Fiorentino Oral Communication of MANTIS results, February 2020.

²EAA states that also when the technological innovations to improve selectivity are checked and standardized, the benefit of spatio-temporal closures in some areas should be evaluated, shared and agreed with stakeholders.

³MEDREACT privileges spatio-temporal management instead the technological innovations for selectivity improvement.

⁴MEDREACT highlights the lessons of the Galion project: with existing robust technology (shifting from 40C to 50L mesh size) the rate of escapement of small fish becomes incompatible with economic constraints of fleets (too many fish lost for sale) and the difficulties in the control activities are too expensive.

⁵ Ref.: 191/2017 - 22 June 2017 MEDAC OPINION ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

⁶ FAI CISL, WWF require the assessment of socio-economic impact of management measures before their adoption.

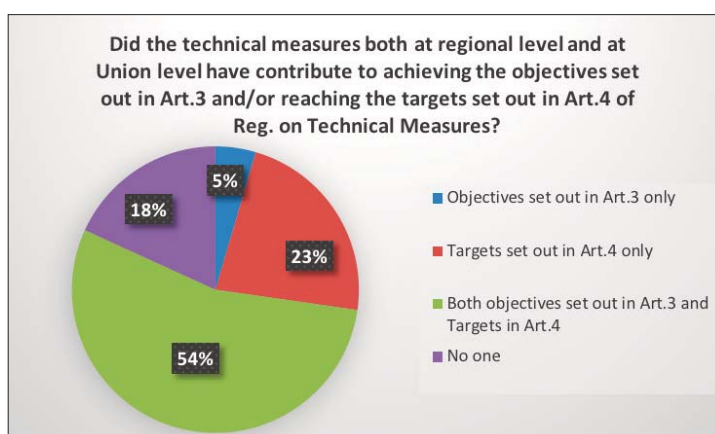
37 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON TECHNICAL MEASURES (ART 31.1. of EU REGULATION 2019/1241)

Rome, 2nd March 2021

24 MEDAC members filled out the questionnaire, both from professional and OIGs sector.

1. *Even though the Regulation on Technical Measures has only entered into force recently, the Advisory Council's views are welcome on whether technical measures both at regional level and at Union level have contributed to achieving the objectives set out in Article 3 and reaching the targets set out in Article 4 of that Regulation.*

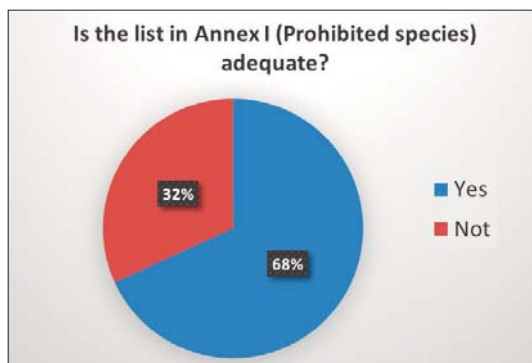
In the Mediterranean Sea the measures already in place (EU Reg 1967/2006 - Mediterranean Regulation) were not modified. Therefore, the way toward the objectives of EU Reg. 1380/2013 has been carried on, with particular emphasis on the landing obligation.



The comments of the AC members on this topic generally agree that more time is needed to understand whether technical measures both at regional level and at Union level have contributed to achieving the objectives set out in Article 3 and reaching the targets set out in Article 4 of that Regulation. Although some of the MEDAC members noted that these new measures will help to avoid accidental catches and catches of juveniles and help to protect sensitive habitats, other observations were raised up in order to highlight the following potential weaknesses and potential opportunities:

- The targets of art.4 have been reached because they are consistent with the functioning of fishing enterprises, while the achievement of the objectives listed in the Art.3 compromises too much the economic viability of fishing activities. In general, the Technical Regulation has improved the fisher's mentality in relation to the targets and objectives set in both articles, as highlighted by the FAO results on the slight improvement of stock status.
- The regionalization should support the development of "joint recommendations" on gear modifications and use of area or temporal protection without a patchwork approach in order to avoid discarding and the need of exemptions. The selectivity should be improved.
- Technical measures and their modifications should be focused only on certain species and gears through the MAPs.
- The fishers' opinions should be more taken into account in order to improve compliance.

2. Does the Advisory Council consider that the list in Annex I (Prohibited species) is adequate? If not, what should be amended? (please provide a brief explanation)



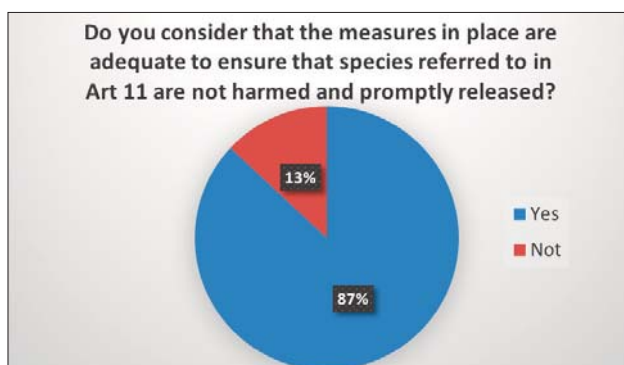
The suggestions raised up by some of the MEDAC members on the list in Annex I are the following:

- Sharks and rays: an additional 18 species should be included in Annex I as a matter of harmonization with Recommendations 36/2012/3, now 42/2018/2, and Article 11 (2) of this Protocol to the Barcelona Convention (14 species), because of their conservation status listed on IUCN Red List as endangered or critically endangered (4 species) and for Harmonization with ICCAT Rec (1 species). 14 species are prohibited under the GFCM Rec but not included in the Annex I of the TCM. An additional 3 species should be included in Annex I due to their conservation status (CR or EN), and additional one species should be included for harmonization with ICCAT prohibition. Furthermore, more endangered species are indicated by CITES in Mediterranean Sea. Finally, the already existing EU regulations aimed to protect species of elasmobranchs and other species should be referred in the TM Regulation, such as: Reg. EU 2017/2107, Reg. EU 1343/2011, Reg. 2021/92. The process of alignment should be clear: it could be done more automatically through the update of the annex/delegated acts/TAC and quotas regulations.

- Prohibited species, including *Galeorhinus galeus* and *Epinephelus marginatus*, and others on the basis of updated stock assessments should be added to the list. Among others, *Pristis pectinata* and *Pristis pristis* should be added to the list of prohibited species. Special attention should be paid to *Squalus achantias*, due to its reproductive behaviour.

- It is important that the list was split in two: one part remains in the Technical Measures regulation (very sensitive species) and the other in the T&Q regulation, so it remains flexible.

3. Does the Advisory Council consider that the measures in place are adequate to ensure that species referred to in Art 11 are not harmed and promptly released?



4. *Has the Advisory Council been involved in any scientific research envisaging the use of accidentally caught marine mammals, seabirds?*

The Advisory Council has not been directly involved, however some updates on scientific research have been reported by MEDAC members during the working groups and/or sharing the information by email.

5. *Is the Advisory Council aware of any mitigation measures or restrictions on the use of certain gear that Member States have put in place aimed at minimising or where possible eliminating the catches of mammals, seabirds and marine turtles?*

The AC's members reported the following existing mitigation measures, and the related potential issues on their effectiveness in minimizing or eliminating the catches of mammals, seabirds and marine turtles in the Mediterranean Sea:

- Some EU fisheries are using TED. However, non-EU operators can export to the EU without TED. This creates an unfair competition in addition to putting endangered species at risk.
- In Portugal it is now mandatory to use acoustic deterrent devices in beach seines, because of their impact on cetaceans, especially common dolphins, and harbour porpoises.
- It was prohibited until 100nm of Azores to use wire leaders to increase shark catches.
- Longline vessels operating in the Atlantic (including in NEAFC waters), have adopted measures to avoid bycatch of seabirds and turtles. Avoiding use of exterior lights during night-setting, use of tori-lines, live release of captured specimens, data capture and other actions are in place.
- Sweden, Denmark and Germany have had projects evaluating potential mitigation measures, such as trials with pingers, seal safe gears and pots. These pilot studies on alternative gears show interesting results but, in general, the efforts have been insufficient, and results are often not shared beyond national borders.
- There are already measures in place to minimise the catches of mammals (use of pingers in the Bay of Biscay for French trawlers since 2019 for example). Projects are currently underway in the Bay of Biscay to test solutions for reducing bycatches of common dolphins by netters: pingers, acoustic reflectors (LICADO, DolphinFree projects). A joint recommendation has been written by the South Western Waters group in 2020 to reduce common dolphin accidental catches. The SWW AC has already written two advices on the matter, the second one in late 2020.
- In the Mediterranean Sea, trials had been led by the AMOP and the SATHOAN Producer Organisations on the reduction of accidental catches of seabirds and marine turtles and a good practice guidance for the release of these catches produced. Moreover, trials for minimising bycatches of Balearic Shearwater will also be carried out in pilot sites in the Western Channel, Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean.
- in Italy training courses have been activated for fishermen on how to handle sea turtles and mammals with a guideline book and the support of experts.

6. *Is the Advisory Council involved in any proposal to amend Annex II (Closed areas for protection of sensitive habitats)? If so, please provide a brief explanation.*

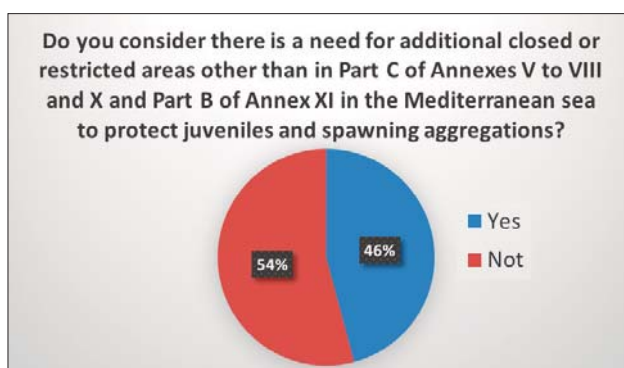
No, the proposal of additional FRAs were supported by one MEDAC members in 2018 and then the MEDAC opinion on the proposed areas has been sent to DG MARE.

7. *Is the Advisory Council involved in any pilot project for the avoidance of unwanted catches? If so, please provide a brief explanation.*

No, the Advisory Council is not involved in any pilot project on this topic, however the scientific experts of IMPEMED project attended the MEDAC meeting in February 2020 in order to explain the activities planned for the selectivity improvement.

8. *Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for additional closed or restricted areas other than in Part C of Annexes V to VIII and X and Part B of Annex XI to protect juveniles and spawning aggregations? If so, provide a brief explanation.*

Although the Mediterranean is not considered in the reported Annexes, the question has been posed to the MEDAC members and the answers have been reported in the graph below.

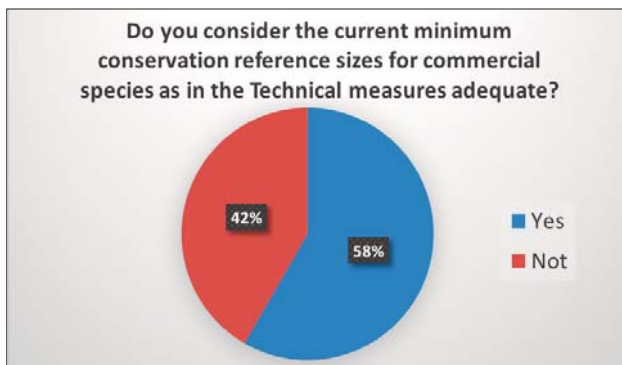


*Note: *HGK replied both yes and not*

Furthermore, some of the MEDAC members added the following comments on the need for additional closed or restricted areas other than in Part C of Annexes V to VIII and X and Part B of Annex XI to protect juveniles and spawning aggregations:

- The success of the already existing FRAs underpins the replication of this measure in other areas of the Mediterranean. However, some members highlighted that new scientific information on the interested areas are needed before the establishment of new FRAs, both onshore and offshore. The spatio-temporal closures of nursery areas can provide better results than the reduction of fishing days in protecting natural resources.
- Some members suggested the extension of the fishing ban in the coastal strip where the bathymetric allows it, especially to the most impacting gears.
- Considering the differences between Mediterranean subregions and subareas, and the wide variety of fishing gears, the spatio-temporal closures should be featured on the basis of each situation. Moreover, the juvenile protection and the spawning areas should be managed separately.

9. *Does the Advisory Council consider the current minimum conservation reference sizes for commercial species as in Part A of Annexes V to X adequate? If not, please provide a brief explanation why not and whether the Advisory Council sees a need to amend established sizes or introduce additional ones.*



Note: *HGK replied both yes and not

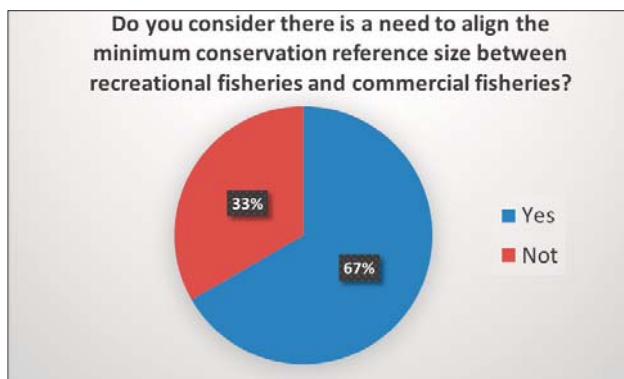
Each of the MEDAC members contributing to the questionnaire and that answered “not” provided its opinion on potentially useful amendment to the established sizes:

- the minimum conservation reference size should be adapted to size at first maturity (WWF and IFSUA).
- CNPMEM supported the opinion and JR adopted by some Northern ACs: such as in the NWW AC the increase of MCRS of sole up to 25cm in ICES area 7d and in the SWW AC from 35 mm to 32 mm in Bassin d’Arcachon (ICES areas VIII) for the short-necked clam.
- the MCRS of *Trachurus spp* should be reduced to 11 cm in order to decrease discards (EMPA and FACOPE).
- MCRS should be adopted also for the following species, according to EAA contribution: *Coryphaena hippurus*, *Dentex dentex*, *Lichia amia*, *Loligo vulgaris*, *Merlangius merlangius*, *Pomatomus saltatrix*, *Sciaena umbra*, *Scorpaena scrofa*, *Sepia officinalis*, *Seriola dumerilii*, *Spicara flexuosa*, *Umbrina cirrosa*, *Zeus faber*. MCRS should be increased for *Dicentrarchus labrax*, *Epinephelus spp*, *Merluccius merluccius*, *Pagrus pagrus*, *Sparus aurata* and *Trachurus trachurus* on the basis of the most updated scientific results (some of these MCRS have been suggested by FIPSAS-CIPS and the others by EAA).
- other MCRS were suggested, according to the following information: *Sciaena umbra* 35 cm because it spawns at 15,5-15,7 cm; *Dentex dentex* 35 cm because it spawns at 15,4-15,6 cm; *Diplodus sargus* 28 cm because it spawns at 15,3-30,4 cm; *Dicentrarchus labrax* 30 cm; *Dentex gibbosus* 40 cm; *Seriola dumerilii* 45 cm; *Diplodus puntazzo* 26 cm because it spawns at 23 cm; *Epinephelus spp* 45 cm; *Zeus faber* 30 cm; *Scorpaena scrofa* 30 cm; *Octopus vulgaris* 1 kg (CFOSA). Furthermore, an increase of MCRS of *Sardina pilchardus* and *Engraulis encrasicolus* is suggested (ZZRS).
- Considering the lack of MCRS for cartilaginous fishes and for some fishes, a recommendation about the release of juveniles of commercial interest should be adopted (FIPSAS – CIPS).
- MCRS have to be modified considering on what the future MAPs will be based on (HGK).

Notes: PEPMA fully disagrees with the minimum conservation reference size considering that: 1) the fishery of spawners is an incorrect approach because it affects the pyramid of fishery resources; 2), the undersized catches are unavoidable in the Mediterranean: the waste of this important nutritional source is a mistake both in case of discarding at sea or of landing obligation, and 3) multispecies fishery doesn’t allow an effective selectivity in the whole Mediterranean sea.

10. *Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need to align the minimum conservation reference size between recreational fisheries and commercial fisheries? If so, please provide a brief explanation.*

The MEDAC opinions and letters ref.219/2019 (and the related ref.218/2019 and ref.335/2019), as well as the opinion ref.62/2020 (and the related reply ref.92/2020) highlight the support by the Advisory Council to align the minimum conservation reference size between recreational fisheries and commercial fisheries. However, the question has been posed to the members in order to collect also the related explanations.



The opinions supporting or against the alignment of MCRS are the following:

- because the MCRS is set for biological reasons (e.g. to protect mature/larger fish in general that are considered spawners): the technical rules should be the same, especially when the recreational fishers use professional gears, or similar ones. In fact, the current national legislation in France already provides that MCRS of RF cannot be less restrictive than for commercial fisheries.
- Some members support the idea that Recreational MCRS could be more restrictive as recreational fishermen are not subject to the same rules as professional fishermen (license, quota, etc.)
- Anglers catch individual fish, then alternative approaches can be applied, such as the release of larger specimens or spawners caught close to spawning grounds. Otherwise, a regulation forcing all areas and all types for fishing activity to use the same MCRS would be damaging to such local efforts.

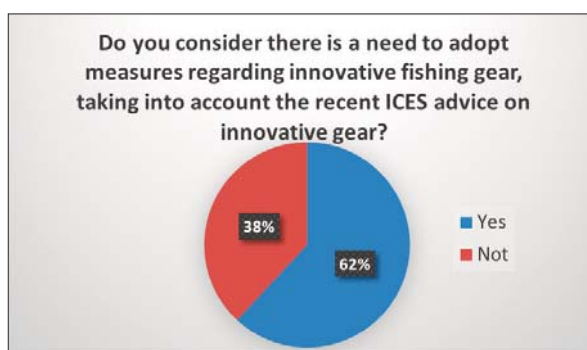
11. *Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for real-time closures and moving-on provisions? If so, please provide a brief explanation.*



The members contributing to this question explained their replies adding the following information:

- the real time closures and moving-on provisions will be needed:
 - in case of stocks managed with input approach (TAC),
 - in spawning grounds, especially considering that changes in spawning patterns due to fast ocean parameters changes call for prompt action,
 - when scientifically underpinned and agreed with the interested fishers, always considering an effective socioeconomic support to the sector.
- The current regulation and the regionalisation process give member states a useful tool. For the Celtic Sea, some useful RTCs were suggested but not kept in the JR.

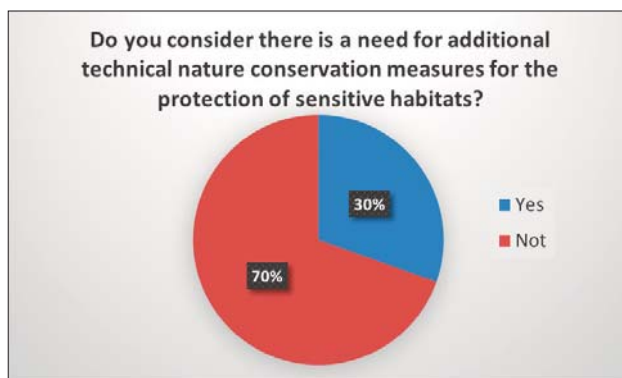
12. Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need to adopt measures regarding innovative fishing gear, taking into account the recent ICES advice on innovative gear? If so, please provide a brief explanation.



The following opinions on measures regarding innovative fishing gears have been raised up by some of the MEDAC members:

- ICES recent advice shows that there are viable options to currently allowed gears, meaning available science indicates that negative effects can be reduced. Although fishers signal that they appreciate the ICES advice, they do not want ICES and scientists to develop gears because they often miss practical implications and other unforeseen effects. Regardless, the process from innovation and new knowledge to reach practical use is far too slow.
- Innovative gears are needed to increase the selectivity performance considering the scientific results and the viability of the fleets.
- It is extremely difficult to invent a gear that reduces or eliminates bycatch of unwanted catch (in the Baltic case, mainly cod or flatfish) and still maintains economic viability as well as reduced negative bottom impacts. We support results-oriented thinking and prefer rules to imply a target that must be reached for the gears used, limited impact, % bycatch etc. Gear modifications can then be encouraged based on some minimum standards.
- the need of a clear distinction between professional and recreational/sport fishery is raised up in order to address the issue of innovative fishing tools in both sectors.

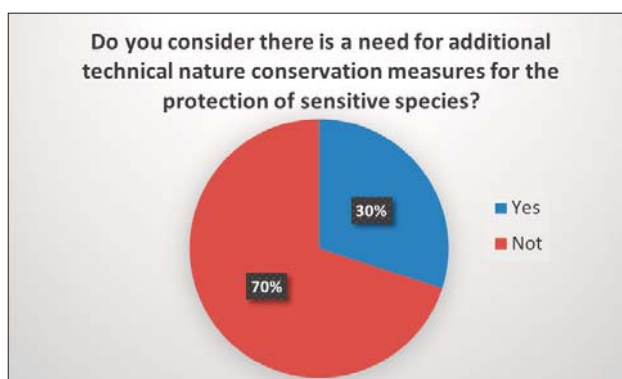
13. Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for additional technical nature conservation measures for the protection of sensitive habitats? If so, which measures for which habitats?



Some of the MEDAC members suggested the following measures:

- The protection of sensitive habitats shall take into account the demographical pressure, climate change, water pollution, the alien species and maritime traffic, more than fishing activities only.
- Habitats that are listed as particularly important or rare are targeted somewhat via the existing EU rules in place (such as the Habitats Directive) or in MPAs. However, coastal sensitive habitats and the more widespread and normally productive sea areas on the coast or in the open ocean are also in need of protection. Trawl free areas should be part of the technical measures tool box used to protect them.
- No additional measures are needed now. However, technical measures should be decided at the local level, depending on the habitat conservation status and fishing activities concerned.
- Mainly for trawling to protect spawning areas and nurseries.
- More activity controls should be carried out.

14. Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for additional technical nature conservation measures for the protection of sensitive species? If so, which measures for which species?



Some of the MEDAC members suggested the following measures:

- The protection of sensitive species shall take into account the anthropic demographical pressure, water pollution, the alien species and maritime traffic, more than fishing activities only.
- to reduce mortalities from elasmobranch population of conservation concern and to ensure that the minimum standards for safe handling and live release procedures, such as published by FAO

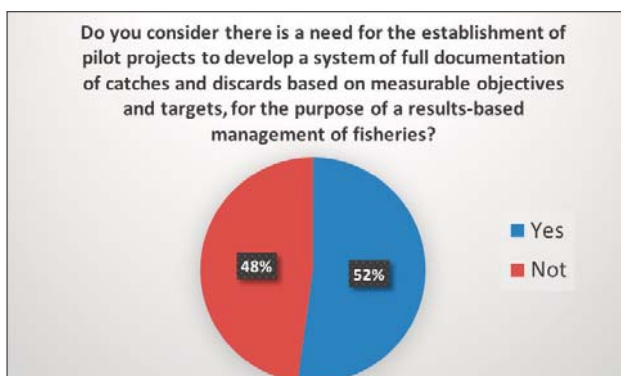
<http://www.fao.org/3/i9152en/I9152EN.pdf> or other recognized advices available at <https://www.bmis-bycatch.org/index.php/mitigation-techniques/safe-handling-release>. Furthermore: the prohibition of wire leaders in longline fisheries, the minimum standard guidelines to increase survival chances in elasmobranchs, stopping the vessel or reducing the speed substantially to avoid the gear to further injure the animal (e.g. through trailing gear), the avoidance of removal of the alive shark from the water boat side, while safely removing the gear. Techniques aimed to reduce the impact of fishing gears on sharks to be released should be implemented.

- further research be carried out on technological solutions, including pingers, to avoid incidental bycatches of cetaceans. Furthermore, careful consideration may be given to spatial/temporal closures especially taking into account that the state of common dolphin population needs such drastic. These must be based on scientific evidence.

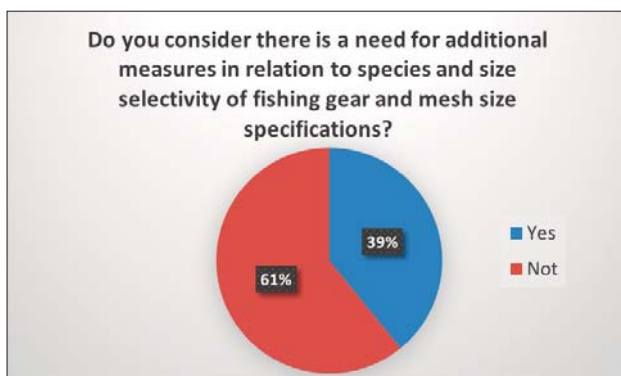
- Training courses of fishermen and collaboration between fishermen and scientist.

- More activity controls should be carried out.

15. *Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for the establishment of pilot projects to develop a system of full documentation of catches and discards based on measurable objectives and targets, for the purpose of a results-based management of fisheries?*



16. *Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for additional measures in relation to species and size selectivity of fishing gear and mesh size specifications? If so, why and how?*



Note: *HGK replied both yes and not

Some of the MEDAC members raised up the following information related to the need for additional measures in relation to species and size selectivity:

- In the Mediterranean: IMPEMED is testing T90 for improved selectivity in Spain, Croatia, Italy. It is a follow up of the wider project MINOUW (<http://minouw-project.eu/>).
- The implementation of gears selectivity already studied by research projects should be more encouraged.
- Additional measures are needed in order to comply with the MCRS.
- One MEDAC member highlighted that the additional measures should reduce the length of fishing gears, introduce hunting stops and new closed areas. Management measures should be implemented also for recreational fishers especially when overlap with coastal and professional fishing.
- The current measures on species and size selectivity are already adequate, however more controls should be carried out in order to assure compliance.

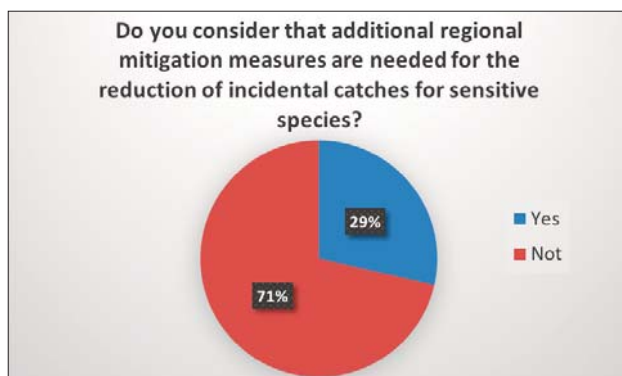
17. *Is the Advisory Council involved in the preparation of a Joint Recommendation in order to further define the term 'directed fishing' for relevant species in Part B of Annexes V to X and Part A of Annex XI? If so, please describe.*

The MEDAC has already sent its proposal of joint recommendation on “Direct fishery” (opinion ref. 60/2020 and reply Ref. 102/2020). Referring to the Annex IX of the Regulation on Technical Measures, the MEDAC deemed that what was already provided in the Mediterranean regulation should be pursued and that therefore:

- 1) For the purposes of the provisions of Annex IX, part B, paragraph 1, it is considered “direct fishing” of anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) when these species represent at least 80% of the catches in live weight measured after sorting
- 2) For the purposes of the provisions of Annex IX, part C, paragraph 6, it is considered “direct fishing” for the red sea bream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*), when this species represents at least 20% of the catches in live weight.

Moreover, MEDAC once again drawn attention to the issue of limitations to the height of purse seines (see art.13.3, 2nd sentence of Reg.(EC) 1967/2006) that causes technical difficulties, particularly in certain low-depth areas (i.e. north Adriatic sea), considering also the studies clearly demonstrating the absence of environmental impact, as repeatedly reported in the MEDAC past positions. (MEDAC opinions ref. 102/2017, 13/3/2017; ref.128/AV , 11/09/ 2015).

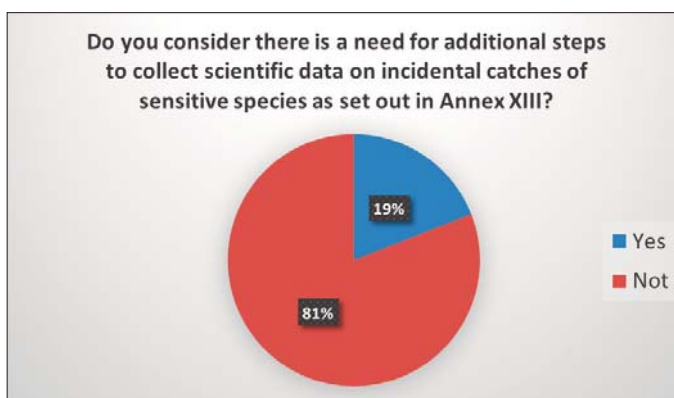
18. *Does the Advisory Council consider that additional regional mitigation measures are needed for the reduction of incidental catches for sensitive species? If so, what measures?*



Some of the MEDAC members raised up the following opinions on additional regional mitigation measures needed for the reduction of incidental catches for sensitive species:

- Seasonal/spatial closures in critical habitats, such as nurseries.
- Strategies for protected elasmobranch species must be adopted.
- The extension of bycatch mitigation measures to a more appropriate range of fishing gear types are required, including passive gears, driftnet, pelagic trawl, demersal trawl, or other fisheries where monitoring identifies bycatch.
- Using the Advice provided by ICES, EU Commission should ensure Member State compliance with implementation of Habitats Directive and Common Fisheries Policy monitoring and bycatch prevention and mitigation requirements, without which bycatch rates cannot be calculated or reduction measures cannot be monitored for effectiveness.
- No additional regional mitigation measure is currently needed as the effects of the measures already in place have not been evaluated.
- Any additional regional mitigation measures should be as much local as possible.
- More catch controls are needed both in commercial and recreational fisheries.

19. Does the Advisory Council consider there is a need for additional steps to collect scientific data on incidental catches of sensitive species as set out in Annex XIII? If so, why and what steps?

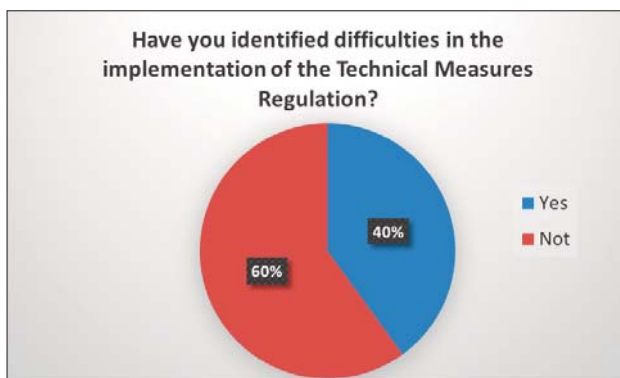


The following information on additional steps to collect scientific data on incidental catches of sensitive species, as set out in Annex XIII, have been reported by some MEDAC members:

- Improving scientific data could be done by adjustments of the selected areas in ANNEX XIII to the range of distribution of cetaceans, by adding restrictions and monitoring on vessels smaller than 12 m, by AIS and camera monitoring, by monitoring and developing bycatch mitigation measures especially to longline fisheries in general, but specifically in areas 8,9 and 10 both pelagic and demersal, namely deep sea. A common data collection protocol should be followed, an example is the methodology for data collection for Monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (<http://www.fao.org/gfcm/publications/series/technical-paper/640/en/>).
- Where possible, animals should be kept for scientific sampling although the logistics problems related with lack of space on small scale vessels. Application of hook-timers and of satellite tagging programs to investigate the post-release mortalities should be supported to gather data that can inform the adaptation of fisheries strategies. There is an experimental project in France about on-board camera in order to improve knowledge on common dolphin bycatches.

- The professional fishers can be involved in the collection of scientific data in order to prevent these accidental catches (e.g. French pelagic trawls in the Bay of Biscay).
- Innovative monitoring methods, that are currently being tested, could be applied, specially to smaller vessels, when there's no possibility to place observers on board (e.g. REM, smart-phone apps, among others). There is also a need to increase effort collection data, especially in smaller vessels and understanding which gears are used in the multispecies polyvalent fleet.

20. *Has the Advisory Council identified difficulties in the implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation? If so, please indicate the relevant Article(s) and the difficulties encountered.*



Some of the MEDAC members indicated the following difficulties encountered:

- From a general point of view, the Technical Measures Regulation should gather all the technical measures that are in force. Because many other measures are included in other regulations (T&Q regulation, JR for the landing obligation, etc.) it is hard for fishermen to fully understand the rules they should comply with.
- From a more specific point of view, the articulation between article 9 of the Technical Measures Regulation that states that it shall be prohibited to use driftnets to catch shark, and the TAC and Quotas regulation that put a TAC for this species can be really confusing for fishermen.
- Finally, the definition of directed fisheries is a very important but complicated topic that will need further discussion. Until there is a clear definition, the regulation cannot be fully applied.
- The unwanted catch of prohibited species (such as some shark species) and their landing due to the limited knowledge of the fishers has caused many issues, including sanctions.
- The unwanted catches below the MCRS through gears compliant with regulations cannot be sold. This is an economic loss for fishers.
- The features of some gears, such as purse seiners (Cianciolo), and the minimum distances from the coast (beam trawls) caused operational issues to the fishing enterprises.
- Many difficulties have been faced because the regulation is overly complex. Simpler rules would be needed for a better understanding and implementation. By failing to take account of the sector's contribution, many of the measures are meaningless.
- At the regional and local level, it is not enough the implementation of the Regulation on technical measures referred to in Art.3 item 1.3 and Art. 4 item 1.a.



Northern Adriatic, Italy © Jacopo Pasotti

TOPIC: MSY - Fishing Opportunities - Stock Assessment

LETTER TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON STOCK ASSESSMENT

Rome, 17th July 2012

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To Lowri Evans (Director General, EC - DG MARE); Ernesto Bianchi (EC- DG MARE)

Dear Ms. Evans,

A RAC MED observer was present at the meeting of the EWG-STEFC (11-20) on the assessment of Mediterranean fishery stocks, held in Madrid from 16th to 20th January 2012, and he gained knowledge on the working methods used by the researchers in formulating the opinions and indications that are taken into consideration by the EC in the decision making process.

RAC MED believes it is important for all stakeholders to be aware of these mechanisms and thus invited EWG-STEFC researchers to the Working Group meeting (WG3), which focuses on monitoring and analysing of GFCM related issues. The experts presented several case analyses and assessments of specific stocks, illustrating the procedures, models used, procedural and technical timing issues and the indications given to the EC with the scientific basis for each one.

These presentations highlighted among other things the worrying state of some stocks and the need to move towards a reduction in fishing mortality for these species. As a result of the presentations some issue were chosen and debated which we feel are useful to transmit to the Executive Committee, not as a proposed Opinion but as informative elements to be reflected on. This letter has been approved by written procedure by the Executive Committee members on July 16. The global debate brought to light the urgent need to increase cooperation between scientist and all stakeholders with decision makers in order to improve knowledge on the various matters. In the course of the WG3 discussion the following aspects emerged:

- 1) The RAC MED revealed that there is a significant time lag between the period in which data are gathered and analysed, the elaboration of the stock assessments and therefore the recommended management proposals by researchers (STEFC). This time lag is then followed by the time lapse needed by the EC to formulate fishing opportunities for those member States in which the TACs and quotas system is working and technical and management measures' proposal in those the previous system cannot be applied, as it is the case in the Mediterranean. The recommended data provided by the STEFC will obviously be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the management plan. Regardless of the technical difficulties that cause this lag, it is clear that there can be a time lapse of 2 – 2.5 years between the situations described by the data provided by the MS and the EC proposals. This is a significant time lapse during which events that modify the situation of the stocks and its fishing mortality could occur. For example it is clear that the assessments carried out in 2011 are produced on the basis of data provided by the MS for 2010, and that the forecasts and then the proposals that could derive from these data will be produced in the second half of 2012, about two years after the moment that was initially observed and assessed, and will be used to advise fishing opportunities for 2013. This can cause potentially significant differences between the day to day situation observed by fishery operators at sea relative

to the abundance (or lack) of certain stocks, and the circumstances described in the scientific reviews that are based on official data on landed products from the MS.

- 2) If the above considerations are not only applied to the definition of fishing opportunities, for the TAC and quotas area and for eventual proposal concerning technical or management measures for the Mediterranean for a given year, but also to the formulation of legislative proposals, the resulting picture would cause great concern. The impact of the change in codend mesh size in trawl nets that came into force on 31st May 2010 (but only fully noticeable in 2011) will inevitably only be analysed in 2012 and as a consequence evaluated in terms of legislative proposals in 2013 (which in turn would be applicable in 2014). The same delay could also be observed concerning the effects of further fleet reductions brought about by the continuing European Fisheries Fund subsidies for decommissioning fishing vessels. In other words, given the time lapses described herein, it would appear that some proposed legislation that is still under discussion has been formulated without waiting for an insight into the impact of the policies and measures that are already in force.
- 3) A further issue under discussion referred to the indications and recommendations which result from research, and the relative time span. It was clear from the presentations made by the independent researchers at the Working Group meeting that the assessments provided to the EC, among others, include the reduction of F necessary to achieve MSY, and the different scenarios that result from mesh size enforcement, reduction of the fishing activity, and consequences on the biological indicators of the different time periods (to 2015 and to 2020) in which this reduction is carried out. Results from research, however, do not provide indication of the different levels of impact on the sector that will cause the different type of reductions (fleet reduction and/or days at sea) and, in addition, the different impacts on the sector of achieving the management objective in 2015 or in 2020. These socio-economic evaluations would require further studies and evaluations. The task of the management option falls exclusively to the decision makers, and therefore to the EC in the formulation of the management proposals.

The RAC MED therefore expressed serious concern regarding the decision making process which, in spite of the modifications brought about by the Lisbon Treaty, is still based on mechanisms established to set up fishing opportunities based on the advised fishing mortality.

The RAC MED believes that it would be beneficial to:

- accelerate, where possible, the time required to analyse, assess and create proposals where data from the MS are concerned, for the definition of fishery opportunities;
- strengthen collaboration between fishers and researchers, as already emphasized in the CFP reform, by means of meetings to share points of view planned in the context of the RACs for STECF and the stakeholders;
- take fully into account scientific recommendations and incorporate them without delay within the context of comprehensive management plans for a specific fishery (rather than setting overall measures for the whole region);
- gain thorough knowledge of the impact on fishery stocks of the measures contemplated in the regulations in force;
- carry out specific studies able to define the various effects produced by managerial choices in order to achieve the scientifically recommended fishing mortality as well as the impact on fleets and employment.

We hope that this note has provided useful elements for reflection and discussion.

Yours sincerely.

MEDAC OPINION TOWARDS MORE SUSTAINABLE FISHING IN THE EU: STATE OF PLAY AND ORIENTATIONS FOR 2021

39

Rome, 3rd August 2020

Whereas

European Commission invited MS, ACs and stakeholders to reflect on policy orientations for 2021 set out in the Communication “Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2021” (COM(2020)248) and to provide feedback to the Commission by 31 August 2020;

According to the Communication in the Mediterranean Sea the Fishing Mortality indicator (F/F_{msy}) remained at a very high level for the entire 2003-2017 period and the biomass remained essentially unchanged since 2003, although since 2012 there may have been a slight increase;

The available stock assessments carried out by STECF and GFCM highlight an exploitation status at rates on average well above the sustainability objective of the Common Fisheries Policy. Therefore, EC asks for other vigorous conservation efforts in the Mediterranean Sea, notably with the implementation of the Western Mediterranean MAP for demersal fisheries and many actions taken to deliver on the MedFish4Ever and Sofia Declarations, such as the GFCM Adriatic multiannual plan for demersal fisheries adopted in 2019;

On the other hand, number of vessels, GT and KW in the EU fleet continue to decrease, and so the total employment in the EU fleet in full time equivalents (FTE) has been decreasing on average by 1.2% per year since 2008;

The economic performance of the EU fleet continued to be very good, but not for the Mediterranean and Black Sea, where profitability levels are lower than in other sea basins;

Projections for the economic performance of the Mediterranean fleet in 2020 are highly negative due to the COVID-19 health crisis;

Based on the orientations contained in the Communication, MEDAC, believes that:

According to the Communication report, the instability of dataset used in estimating F/F_{msy} trends and the reduced availability of data may have an impact on the reliability of the state of play of the assessed species. Moreover, fisheries resources and the marine ecosystem suffer additional impact other than fishing activity¹, such as from pollution, commercial traffic, climate change, marine litter, population pressure and anthropization.

The serious damage to the fishing enterprises and to workers caused by the health emergency COVID-19 shall be taken into account in the fishing opportunities policies for 2021 and, as far as possible, avoid further limitations to fishing activity. Moreover, the cessation produced by fishing vessels due to the COVID-19 crisis must be considered, especially when the management of fishing effort for days of activity has begun in the new MAP².

Regarding the Multiannual plan for demersal species in the Western Mediterranean Sea and the MAP for demersal species in the Adriatic Sea, MEDAC does not deem appropriate to foresee further implementations (page 14 of the Communication “3. Specific actions for the Mediterranean and Black Seas”) until the inevitable socio-economic consequences of COVID-crisis are not fully

assessed. This quantification will have to take into consideration all the sector, including also fishing enterprises ceasing the fishing activity, due to this unforeseen crisis caused by COVID-19³. The MEDAC recommends that the EC takes action to carry out studies that can quantify the impact of COVID 19 on the fishery sector, and on effects that the lockdown and reduced fishing pressure may have had on the recovery of stocks and vulnerable marine species. Then, EC should also take into account the real effort reduction that trawlers will implement due to COVID 19 crisis.

MEDAC draws EC attention to the constant loss of jobs and on the progressive ageing of employees, both on the sea and at land, often caused by the reduction of the fleet⁴ for the implementation of management plans. On the top of this critical situation, please find attached graphs resulting by the responses of the members to a questionnaire drafted by MEDAC, related to the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on the sector.

In particular, MEDAC asks for providing in the Communication the percentages of MS commitments on effort reduction for each EU Mediterranean country in the next years, if available, not considering only the Italian case (pg.14).

Finally, MEDAC invites EC to fully implement existing EU legislation aimed at tackling the drivers that causes biodiversity loss and to implement studies on factors that have an impact on the marine ecosystems and habitat, as well as studies on recovery options that can increase biodiversity, improve the health of fish stocks and the resilience of the Mediterranean Sea to climate change and other sources of impacts.

¹ Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReact, WWF do not agree with “other than fishing activity”

² Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReact, WWF support the replacement of the sentence with the following: “The serious damage to the fishing enterprises and to workers caused by the health emergency COVID-19 has been promptly taken into account by the EU and contributions to transition the fishery sector through the economic crisis connected with the pandemic, are being released by the Commission and Member States”.

³ Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReact, WWF do not agree with this sentence because the economic impact of COVID-19 should not come at the expenses of the ecosystem. It is ok to assess the economic impact of the pandemic to the industry and to transition fisheries throughout the crisis with economic support by EC and MS, however management measures agreed, should not be changed.

⁴ Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReact, WWF add the “fish stock crisis” to the “reduction of the fleet”

40 MEDAC DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE MAXIMUM SUSTAINABLE YIELD (MSY) IN MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT. SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Rome, 26th May 2021

During the WG1 meeting, held on 16th April, the scientific expert Fabio Fiorentino was invited by the MEDAC to present a communication entitled: “Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in Mediterranean fisheries management. Some food for thoughts” the aim being to provide a better understanding of the critical issues surrounding current stock assessment activities, as well as proposals for assessment techniques to supplement the scientific information currently available which underlies management decisions.

The observations which emerged from the presentation included the fact that MSY is sensitive to variations in temperature and climate as well as to trophic interactions; that it can differ among target species included in the same fishery activity (mixed fisheries); that one fishery activity may influence the targets of another fishery activity.

It was also observed that the stock assessments and the associated management decisions in the Mediterranean were based on monospecific maximum sustainable yield estimation (Hjort, Russell, Graham, 1930 et seq.), not considering trophic interactions among species, between different types of fishing gear and with the surrounding environment over time (Ricker, 1954 and 1975; Travers-Trolet et al., 2020).

The scientific experts consulted by the MEDAC (Fiorentino and Libralato, 2021) for the purpose of evaluating the best management strategies in the presence of mixed fisheries, as in the case of the Mediterranean, indicate the following methods:

- “Pretty good yield” (Hilborn, 2010 and Rindorf et al., 2017), the adoption of measures aimed at achieving a compromise between fishing mortality at the low end of the PGY F-range for less robust species and fishing mortality at the high end of the PGY F-range for more robust species;
- in the absence of trophic interactions between species, the application of effort reduction corresponding to the FMSY of the mixed fishery target species and the adoption of other management measures to protect by-catch species. Management measures could include areas closed to fisheries (Russo, 2019) or the improvement of selectivity (Vitale et al., 2018), thus endeavouring to improve the exploitation pattern (MareFrame Project);
- In the presence of significant trophic interactions between species, the assessment and management actions should also take the results obtained using approaches which include interactions between species into due consideration.

The scientific experts underlined that the above mentioned issues related to MSY should be contextualised in the wider framework of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, taking into due consideration the ecological, economic, social and institutional dimensions (Fiorentino, 2021).

The MEDAC acknowledges the fact that the fisheries sector needs to be steered towards the criteria which would ensure achievement of full sustainability, without delay. An ecosystem-based approach shall allow managers to take into account multiple factors, including those independent from fisheries, and provide tools to mitigate the impact that management measures adopted for target species have on other stocks, especially when considering mixed fisheries. Management strategies indicated in this paper, represent a basis for discussion within the members of the MEDAC to address the complexity of mixed fisheries.

Whatever the approach in managing mixed fisheries is adopted, managers should deeply evaluate the socio-economic impacts, when proposing management scenarios to stakeholders.

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41 MEDAC ADVICE REFERRING TO MSY, FISHING OPPORTUNITIES, GFCM DECISION

Rome, 29th July 2021

Referring to

- DG MARE Ref. Ares(2021)4143172 – 24/06/2021 reply letter to MEDAC discussion paper “Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in Mediterranean fisheries management. Some food for thoughts”
- The COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL COM (2021) 279 final “Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2022”
- The Proposal of measures submitted to the SAC meeting (June 2021) towards the 44th GFCM Plenary session (November 2021)

The MEDAC emphasizes that the thoughts expressed in the discussion paper “Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in Mediterranean fisheries management. Some food for thoughts” (Ref. 115/2021, 26 May) are consistent with the MSY objectives embedded in CFP: although the art. 2 of CFP reports the objective to restore and maintains the populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield, the consideranda 8 recommends that “management decisions relating to maximum sustainable yield in mixed fisheries should consider the difficulty of fishing all stocks in a mixed fishery at maximum sustainable yield at the same time [...]”. Therefore, it seems that the CFP can accommodate concepts derived from MSY and adapted to mixed fisheries, as those proposed in the cited discussion paper.

Furthermore, considering that the effects of management measures taken in 2019 and 2020 will possibly be evident only in next year’s data (as monitoring indicators currently available cover the period to 2018), whatever the approach in managing mixed fisheries is adopted, managers should deeply also evaluate the socio-economic implications of future management actions.

For instance, MEDAC encourages that future actions, such as:

- the additional effort reductions to reach MSY for all species target of the EU MAP in the Western Mediterranean by January 2025, especially considering the aspects related to MSY in mixed fishery,
- the implementation of the GFCM measures in the Adriatic Sea both for demersal species and the forthcoming transitional period and MAP for small pelagic species,
- should be carefully evaluate the trade-offs between ecological risks and benefits and socioeconomic impacts and impairments.

As a final remark on the reply letter to MEDAC, - the establishment of the “Torre Guaceto” MPA is remarkably an interesting and positive experience regarding co-management of small-scale fisheries (Russi, 2020). However, such experience was achieved by a strong involvement of fishers in order to control the fishing effort, surveillance of activities in the MPA and adoption of more selective fishing gears, but without reference to MSY which necessarily would require an evaluation of stock size and yield under different fishing pressures.

Overall, the MEDAC proposal of a FMSY objective adapted to a mixed fishery considering other ecological aspects, including the prey-predator relationship, is referred to a wider context, such as the fishing opportunities for 2022 and the EU proposal of measures towards the 44th GFCM session reported above.

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TOPIC: European Fisheries Funds

RAC MED OPINION ON THE PROPOSED REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND (EMFF)

42

Rome, 27th March 2012

The Executive Committee, met in Rome on 27th March 2012, adopted the opinion proposed by the Working Group 1 (WG1), held in Rome on 28th February 2012, to discuss the proposal for a regulation on the EMFF, with particular emphasis on the aspects which could be critical for Mediterranean fisheries. The RAC MED expressed the following considerations.

The RAC MED stated its appreciation of the presence of several innovative features in the regulation proposal which differ from the directions taken by the EC to date. Among these there is the particular importance given to aquaculture; the measure that includes the fishers' spouse (thus the family unit); the increase in the contributions to small scale fisheries from 60 % to 75 %; the possibility to modernize vessels, albeit only in the context of health and safety on board.

The RAC MED also expressed its support for the attention that the EMFF shows towards employment, training, enterprise start-up, eco-innovation, promotion of social dialogue and cooperation between fishers and researchers. The RAC MED was unanimous in its appreciation of the abolition of the convergence criteria for the renewal of the redistribution of resources between the various regions.

It was stated, however, that many of the abovementioned positive aspects could be significantly limited by the time scale and the changes that have been activated by the Reform of the CFP that is still under discussion. In particular:

- The fact that the EMFF regulation proposal aims to simplify current practices is positive, however the use of the various structural funds to complement each other could have the opposite effect, accumulating the flaws and complicating the management of each single fund. Furthermore, the introduction of new procedures could cause a further increase in costs for national administrations when implementing them.
- The fact that just one body would make the payments should logically lead to one single way of accessing the funds and one single way to account for expenditures.
- The introduction of Transferable Fishery Concessions (TFC), the risks of which, together with the critical aspects, have already been documented in the opinion expressed by RAC MED on the CFP Reform (prot.n.266 of 28th October 2011), could lead to an extremely significant rate of fleet reduction in a very short time, as highlighted in the forecasts expressed in the recent EC "non-paper". This is also related to the general economic crisis which is particularly serious for the fisheries sector given the continued increase in fuel prices. The TFC system could cause a sudden, severe increase in unemployment without developing any accompanying measures for the crew. Furthermore, within the measures set out by the Reform and by the EMFF, the difference between vessel owners and the crew employed to work on the vessel should be taken into consideration. This fast-changing situation could make a system of "social shock absorbers" necessary, as well as rapid intervention on matters of diversification and requalification, as planned by the EMFF, which do not appear to be contemplated adequately.

- The attention paid to employment, youth etc. could in actual fact be just a good intention that is not accomplished. The RAC MED therefore expressed its opinion that abandoning demolitions with immediate effect is not appropriate and that a period of “phasing out” would be more suitable so as to allow for a more gradual transition towards the new system of TFCs or mechanism to reduce fishing capacity, many aspects of which are still unclear where the Mediterranean is concerned (the definition of concession in relation to fishing effort).
- The definition given in article 6.1b is misleading, it should be more clearly specified that the issue is reconversion and not diversification, with no limits where vessel size is concerned; and referring to art. 32.6 the financial assistance to retrofit vessels used for coastal fishing is not enough to reconvert those vessels to other activities (art.32.6).
- It is necessary to improve the definition of the kinds of measures that will be possible and admissible where the consolidation of fishery operators’ incomes is concerned.
- It is necessary to establish an EC definition of fishing tourism in order to create a standard judicial basis on which each Member State can base its independent legislation on this matter. This definition should clearly indicate that fishing tourism is an activity carried out by professional fishers and as such is a legitimate part of their work. The RAC MED opinion (prot.124 of 5th May 2011) already stressed that fishing tourism should not be considered as a branch of recreational fisheries.
- Considering the eco-biological importance of the temporary fisheries closure periods, abandoning this measure would not be a rational step in the application of policies that aim to replenish stocks. It could be argued that the temporary fisheries closure period as a fisheries management tool needs some refining and improved criteria for its implementation but it should not be abolished.
- Financial support for the replacement or modernization of main or auxiliary engines should be granted for small scale fisheries vessels (art.39.2)
- The RAC MED expressed its disapproval of the abolition of financial support for some interventions, such as art. 41 comma 4 which does not allow for the allocation of funds for the construction of new ports; and where article 33 is concerned, the proposal was made to add and ad hoc intervention that could be financed in order to invest in measures for safety on board.
- The condition that requires all the catch to be brought ashore risks reducing profits for the fishers (see the RAC MED opinion on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy prot.266 of 28th October 2011), due to the reduction of space on board and the volume of the refrigeration units.
- The RAC MED underlined the importance of reexamining the definition of small scale fisheries, as already stated in the Opinion of 28th October, given that a single parameter is not regarded as sufficient, especially considering the differences between the fleets that operate in the Mediterranean and those in the seas of north Europe.
- The RAC MED proposes that the EMFF could foresee the financing of environmentally sustainable projects between commercial fishermen and recreational ones, in order for recreational fishery to encourage greater attention for a responsible and sustainable activity.
- Another critical aspect is the introduction of conditionality, not so much the principle itself but rather the potentially serious consequences of its literal application in the face of major violations and penalization for the operators should the Member States, and not the operators themselves, not comply.
- The introduction of a principle of conditionality is a significant improvement over previous instruments. However, as already stressed in the past, in addition to complying with the rules

of conservation, conditionality should be also applied to the working conditions and to the application of labor legislation and to collective employment agreements. Although the European Commission states that there are legal obstacles to the extension of compliance to social legislation, it is worth noting that, in some Member States and at European level in other sectors, this principle is already applied to the fisheries sector.

- An excessive use of delegated acts in some parts of the EMFF regulation proposal leads to an insufficient definition of the measures to be implemented and consequently to uncertainty as to how the EC will carry out these measures, which could mean that decisions are taken once implementation is already underway.

In the context of the procedures of co-decision that have been set up, the RAC MED hopes that the issues which have arisen will be adequately examined and thus adapted in such a way that the EMFF will become better able to respond to the crucial changes that are being introduced by the reform to the CFP and to the real needs of the fishery operators.

N.B.: this Opinion was fully supported by all the participants in the RAC MED except OCEANA and WWF.

OCEANA was against the construction of new ports and all the measures that would increase fishing capacity, directly or indirectly. OCEANA wished to see the funds invested in scientific activities and underlined its opposition to engine revision and an increase in engine power.

WWF expressed its objection on some issues, and considers that the financial support given to aquaculture in the CFP proposal it is absolutely disproportionate. WWF is concerned by the diversification of fishermen towards aquaculture and on the over dimensioning of aquaculture. WWF considers that TFCs should not be the only mechanism to reduce fleet capacity and hopes that the proposal would be amended accordingly. WWF believes that temporary fisheries closure periods should be dealt with in management plans irrespective of EMFF funding. WWF believes that the CFP proposal should make funding for fleets, vessels and gears conditional upon adequate assessment of fishing capacity in relation to available fishing opportunities. WWF believes that conditionality is necessary and that the elimination of overcapacity should be a precondition for granting funding for onboard vessel improvement. WWF considers that the delegated acts are a necessary system which will improve transparency to the EMFF measures.

RAC MED OPINION ON THE DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK (EMFF)

Rome, 20th September 2013

43

To Tihomir Jakovina Minister of Agriculture (Croatia); Nicos Kouyialis Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (Cyprus); Frédéric Cuvillier Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (France); Athanasios S. Tsiftaris Minister of Rural development and food (Greece); Nunzia De Girolamo Minister of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (Italy); Roderick Galdes Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (Malta); Franc Bogovič Minister of Agriculture and the Environment (Slovenia); Miguel Arias Cañete Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment (Spain); MS Administrations; PECH (Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament); Opinion committees to EMFF (BUDG, EMPL, REGI); EC DG MARE

Dear Ministers,

Following your agreement on a 'full general approach' on the upcoming European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the Regional Advisory Council for the Mediterranean (RAC MED) would kindly ask you to reconsider your proposal to reduce the amount earmarked for data collection (Art. 15.4).

The fisheries in Mediterranean waters suffer from a lack of data that hampers their scientific evaluation and often does not allow assessments to be conducted using the best science available. Furthermore, in the context of the upcoming landing obligation, missing reliable data on current discard levels were repeatedly noted. This means that STECF and the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (SAC/GFCM) will face severe challenges to provide suitable advice on the total amount of catches in future assessments.

Fishery organizations, Member States and NGOs are combining efforts to manage Mediterranean stocks in a sustainable way by collaborating within the frame of national project and also with the GFCM. Additional efforts are envisaged to apply a multi species approach to these waters that will require appropriate data. Additionally, being aware of future data requirements such as data needed for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) or for the project Marine Knowledge 2020, a reduced budget for data collection will be detrimental not only for the fisheries of the RAC MED.

Development of sustainable fishing in the EU will require good knowledge of our seas, our ecosystems, and our fisheries and other activities, which implies a strong and solid data collection in EU.

- For all the reason stated above, the RAC MED asks you to withdraw your proposal to reduce the budget earmarked for data collection under article 15.4 compared to the initial proposal of the European Commission and at least keep it at 360 Mio Euro.
- We further ask you to consider increasing the amount for data collection above this amount, or to provide Member States with the opportunity to shift additional funding from measures under Article 15.2. to data collection activities.

Origin of the opinion: Opinion already adopted by SWWRAC, and being adopted by other RACs, validated by the RAC MED Executive Committee in its current form via written procedure on 20.09.2013.

44 MEDAC LETTER ON THE DRAFT DELEGATED ACT EMFF

Rome, 2nd May 2017

To Andrew MATHISON (EC – DG MARE)

Dear Andrew Mathison,

Thank you for giving the MEDAC the possibility to send comments to the Proposal for a Delegated Regulation on amending Regulation (EU) 508/2014 as regards the indicative distribution of funds among the objectives set out in Articles 82 and 85. First of all, it has been impossible to comply with the very short deadline (10 days) considering that this time period encompassed national holidays in all relevant countries.

In this context, we would like to raise the possibility to reiterate our position referring to the funding of the Advisory Councils, clearly stated in the recent letter sent to the DG MARE, asking for additional funding for interpretation and translation costs that should be accounted separately in the annual budget of those Advisory Councils that have to deal with more than 3 working languages.

The MEDAC is concerned with the proposed cuts to the control and enforcement budget and believes that this approach will not deliver positive results on the management of fisheries in the Mediterranean. IUU fishing and the implementation of the landing obligation among others, are issues that will need to be addressed in the region with joint efforts, including monitoring and control. Furthermore the MEDAC deems appropriate to invest in scientific advice and knowledge as this area is crucial for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and robust Multi Annual Plans for the region.

Kind regards.

MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON POST-2020 EU FUNDING FOR FISHERIES AND MARITIME SECTORS

45

Rome, 2nd February 2018

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

a) What should be the priority areas of intervention?

On the first question, many responses have recalled the need for priority actions on **commercialisation**, for the valorisation of the product (creation of added value), stabilization of minimum prices at the first sale and therefore support for the profitability of the company.

Another consistent group of responses focused on the need to include the **environmental protection and the implementation of management plans** at regional level and for controlled access areas among the priorities. Moreover, this group recalls the achievement of CFP objectives, reaching MSY and full sustainability, and the reward for best practices for more restrictive measures of the rules in force and on the possibility for the Member States to adopt temporary and permanent cessation measures notwithstanding the limitations currently set by the EMFF (the latter position, however, it is opposed by NGOs).

The need for maintenance, reinforcement, greater participation of the sector organizations in the European decision-making process, assistance to communities dependent on fishing and aquaculture and greater support for the generational turnover with greater incentives for young people is then expressed by several stakeholders. In particular, for the aquaculture sector it is necessary to continue the effort of a bureaucratic simplification for the requests of development of the sector both for new plans and for the modernization of the existing ones, besides to put in place, in the regional context, the definition of the allocations zones for aquaculture (AZA).

A strong reference to the priority of developing **research and stock assessment, increasing and improving the data collection and extending studies and assessments also to recreational fisheries**. The scientific research, according to some members, should also focus on the innovation of the capture instruments and the improvement of selectivity and on other sources of impact other than fishing (climate change, pollution)

Another group of responses concerns the intensification and improvement of control activities, to be extended to recreational fisheries, and the fight against IUU fishing. This framework also includes a proposal for financial support for the installation and activation of VMS.

Opinions that are more isolated but not far from the widespread sensitivities of the stakeholders recall the priority of sustainable aquaculture development, administrative-bureaucratic

simplification, a redefinition of the SSF, more effective measures on solidarity in the event of natural disasters and environmental disasters, and information campaigns that make the image of the sector for public opinion more positive.

Perhaps more controversial positions have been expressed in support of the increasing production, the renewal and modernization of the fleet (with a reference to safety problems of navigation) and engines, flexibility in inspections. A negative opinion was also expressed on the development of fishing tourism as an alternative source of income for fishermen.

b) What should no longer be eligible for support?

This question has received few answers, one group simply replies that **nothing must be excluded a priori**.

A position refers to the need not to support **CLDD managed by public administrations**, while cross-cutting is the proposal not to grant funds to **companies that work with countries that do not comply with EU environmental and / or social standards** to prevent the distorting effect of alteration of the internal market to the detriment of European companies that produce or use "made in EU" products.

On the other hand, we hope that in future measures will be readmitted to support the fleet, both for its renewal and to more effectively encourage the businesses start-up run by young fishermen, all in a logic of compatibility with the principles of protection of fish stocks and the environment. The 40% group expresses **opposition to any support to fishing fleets** (except if it is aimed at reducing the fishing effort and habitat impacts) **and to subsidies to improve the sustainability of commercial fisheries which, instead, are used to support unsustainable jobs**.

A negative position was also expressed on public campaigns addressed to EU citizens **to promote seafood consumption** that should no longer be supported.

Some positions refer to the aquaculture sector to underline that intensive activities should not be sustained in strictly coastal and in-shore areas, encouraging practices that can better safeguard the aquatic environment.

2. REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

c) What are the main challenges encountered by your sea basin?

Today the Mediterranean is at the heart of European fisheries policy; the Malta Declaration MedFish4Ever, signed in 2017, demonstrates the commitment of all the governments of the basin to devise and implement fisheries management policies that guarantee its environmental, economic and social sustainability for present and future generations

The answers to this question concerned both general aspects for the Mediterranean and details for some areas or MS. In general, the answers concern a wide variety of topics.

It would therefore be necessary to support all forms of collaboration, even with non-EU countries, aimed at identifying common and shared management measures.

A first group has naturally indicated the main challenges in the **sustainability of fisheries for some resources**, but also the conformity of the CFP to the specific characteristics of the fishing fleets operating in the basin. There were several references to the **difficulties of managing fisheries in shared areas with fleets from third countries**.

Other main challenges concern:

- the pollution effects;
- the socio-economic sustainability of the sector;
- the IUU fishing;
- the implementation of the Landing Obligation;
- the competition in areas where there are other uses of the sea.

Other issues raised concern the lack of assessment of resources for SSF and recreational fisheries (coastal species), the need to revise the MCRS and technical measures, the implementation of an effective control, the impact of offshore aquaculture and the risks of genetic pollution, the impacts of the SSF on the sensitive coastal area and on the trawling on the seabed. Referring to marine aquaculture it is necessary the implementation of three European Directives: Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Framework Directive for maritime space planning.

Particular problems have been raised by Cyprus and Greece:

- *for Cyprus*
 - Mitigation from Invasive species (for example lionfish) and promotion of large scale well-funded methods for impacts on species expansion.
 - Activity of industrial vessels in coastal regions of Cyprus is no longer viable.
 - Long-term conservation of protected species is influencing the livelihood of SSF.
- *for Greece:*

The insular coastal areas constitute a disproportionate area compared to the mainland, where the overwhelming majority of fishing vessels and businesses are family enterprises. It is a reality where the distinctions between the SSF and medium-range fleet are particular and specific for each sub-area and do not lend themselves to horizontal rules "one size fits all".

d) Which EMFF instrument should be adapted on a regional basis to tackle these challenges?

Also in this case the answers were very different, but a consistent group is oriented to the **total regionalisation** of the instruments.

Where there are particular problems, such as in Cyprus, there is a strong reference to the solution of local problems and the development of infrastructures dedicated to this, as well as to opportunities linked to tourism.

Some positions underline, with regard to shellfish farming and, more generally, the production areas of bivalve molluscs, the necessity to set up management committees to manage the protected areas for molluscs, as provided for by the Water Directive, as is the case for other types of protected areas. In support of a broad regionalization of the instruments are also indicated topics such as:

- Funding research on recreational fisheries, including socio-economic aspects;
- Compensating SSF for respecting a minimum distance from shores;
- Assessment of coastal SSF and RF and the most relevant coastal species;
- MAP implementation with a bottom-up approach;
- Improve gear selectivity.

e) What kind of flexibility should be granted to Member States demonstrating a good management of their fisheries?

As it is easy to imagine, the professional fisheries sector answers this question by requiring maximum administrative and procedural flexibility in managing the fund.

Someone, however, links this flexibility to the **achievement of sustainability objectives** shared with the EC, while others specify that "**flexibility and simplification should be granted on a country level**" (that is because the fisheries sector legislation and management, and the productivity and threats are not the same for all countries within the same basin). In particular, some believe that the measures of temporary and permanent cessation and modernization which must not only continue in the future but, entrusting their implementation to the competence of MS, are necessarily adaptive to take into account the ongoing developments, depending on the different bio characteristics - ethological values of the various stocks and of the different fishing activities in a multispecific context such as the Mediterranean one.

The position of the members representing 40% group is totally opposite asking for "**the minimum of flexibility**", arguing that it is important to enforce compliance requirements until "good management" becomes the only way to go.

A third way is supported by other components of 40% that indicate in **co-management** the best way (co-management between fishermen, NGOs, research, public administrations), also at the decision making process level.

f) How can future funding be even more closely aligned with CFP implementation, for example fisheries management measures?

A common answer among members representing 60% of the MEDAC stakeholders for this question is that **the opinion of the fishermen should be taken into greater consideration**, avoiding criteria laid down by political guidelines. In particular, it is requested to increasingly encourage participatory practices that foster the elaboration of management measures with an inclusive approach and co-management: to increase financial support for ACs to enable them to do more by fostering collaboration with research, not only scientific but also technical and socio-economic, to support their opinions and support forms of co-management that encourage coexistence between public and private stakeholders, in all those areas where it is necessary to carry out ad hoc interventions (such as the recent measures on Pomo Pit and the Channel of Sicily). Others, both in the professional fisheries and 40% sectors, indicate management measures such as the temporary cessation of fishing activities (by species and by the capture system) and others a generic **aid to the implementation of the management measures**, but revising the eligibility criteria and facilitating presentation of dossiers (simplification). As stated in section 1.a) funding temporary and permanent cessation are not supported by NGOs.

From 40% members, there is also a reference to the urgency of assessing and protecting the coastline and the need to support the implementation of MAP measures.

3. SUPPORT FOR SMALL SCALE COASTAL FISHERIES (SSCF)

g) How can EU public support tackle more efficiently these three challenges (lack of investment, lack of quota, lack of innovation)?

The prevailing aspect of the answers to this question leads to the general lack of knowledge of the SSF and therefore to the need to fill in the knowledge gaps to analyze its needs and to identify the actions to be taken, as well as to adapt its definition, so that it is closer to the reality. In this context, data quality must be improved, and the procedures of European funds simplified.

Management indications consist in adapting the zones dependent on the SSF fleet, in allocating seasonal quotas (tuna) to increase the diversification of the catches, even if others reiterate on the occasion their opposition to the introduction of quotas in the Mediterranean. The lack of innovation in the SSF is indicated as a critical factor, to be overcome through the solution of problems already indicated (market). The lack of investment, connected with the lack of innovation, is also due to the Authority's inability to monitor and control the activities of the SSF. Close collaboration with scientific research is also necessary to identify more efficient, more selective and less impactful practices. Innovation and modernization are necessary to reduce impacts but improving livelihoods.

Market policies that encourage the inclusion of fishermen in a more transparent market, starting with direct sales, the implementation of leopard-like fisheries policies covering individual species in a manner appropriate to their biological cycle, the modernization of fishing techniques and processing are further indications from both the catch sector and 40%

h) Which kind of preferential financial support would be relevant for SSCF?

For SSCF, it would be relevant:

- Commercialization support;
- Security on board;
- Investments in coastal areas;
- Tax relief related to innovative investments;
- Implementation of collective systems of logistical support for fishery;
- A social security and welfare system to better cover risks and additional measures on social welfare (social shock absorbers, etc.);
- Fleet renewal;
- Products promotion;
- Positive communication on the sector;
- Prize for catches fully assessment and for significantly reducing unwanted catches;
- Technical innovation with 100% financing (to overcome inability to anticipate and co-funding).

MEDAC LETTER ABOUT CHANGES TO THE EMFF

Rome, 18th June 2020

To Charlina Vitcheva (Director-General EC – DG MARE)

Dear Director General,

During the MEDAC WG1 meeting held on 3rd and 4th June, while discussing the latest legislative developments, some issues emerged in relation to the initiatives being taken by the European Union to tackle the consequences of COVID-19 in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. In particular, these issues concerned Regulation (EU) 2020/460 and Reg (EU) 2020/560, adopted specifically

in order to meet the cash-flow needs of fishery and aquaculture enterprises in the face of a health emergency.

Given that there was not enough time during the WG1 meetings to raise all the matters we feel it is necessary to present to the Commission for the purpose of ensuring the effective application of the same regulations, we have taken the liberty of writing them down, in order to make it possible to achieve the aims that have been established:

1) Regulation 2020/460

Recital 8) states that “In order to ensure that Member States have sufficient financial means to make the investments needed without delay, it is appropriate for the Commission not to issue recovery orders for amounts recoverable from Member States for the annual accounts submitted in 2020. Member States should use the amounts not recovered to accelerate investments related to the COVID-19 outbreak and eligible under Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (2) and the Fund-specific rules.” This consideration is taken up again in the body of the Regulation under article 2, point 5), where, amending article 139 paragraph 7 of Regulation 1303/2013, it is envisaged that the European Commission shall not issue recovery orders for the amounts recoverable from Member States “for the accounts submitted in 2020”. We ask you to confirm that this refers to the accounts submitted by the competent national authorities by 15th February this year and relating to financial period from 1st July 2018 – 30th June 2019.

2) Regulation 2020/560

With reference to article 1, point 8, which amends parts of article 66 regarding the production and marketing plans of Producer Organisations, we ask:

- a) for confirmation that, as the economic context has changed due to COVID19, it is possible to allow for changes and/or additions to the plans presented last November for the year 2020: many activities planned at the time are no longer feasible as a direct result of the health emergency;
- b) whether it is possible to allow MSs to let POs that had not submitted a Plan for 2020 present new production and marketing plans according to the procedures set out in article 2 of Regulation (EU) 1418/2013;
- c) whether it is possible to include the costs relative to sanitising workplaces and the purchase of personal protective equipment should any Plans be amended or supplemented;
- d) whether it is possible to include, in any amended or supplemented Plans, the costs relative to the purchase/leasing/rent of structures/equipment/machinery for the purpose of tackling COVID-19 and its consequences. Specific reference is made to the eligibility of expenditures for the purchase/leasing/rent of premises (on the basis of the depreciation charge for the period in which the project takes place) in order to have more space available and therefore allow for the required distancing; refrigerated storage capacity should there be any further lockdowns which make it necessary to store fisheries products; conveyor belts on board and/or on land in transformation/storage/sales structures to facilitate distancing, etc.
- e) whether the actions within the 2020 production and marketing plans, as amended/supplemented to tackle the consequences of the COVID19 emergency, thus taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the changes to article 66 of the EMFF, can be completed by 31st December 2021 and paid for by 30th June 2022 in order to make it possible to ensure that these actions are carried out

in the most effective way possible;

e) whether the Commission Recommendation of 3rd March 2014 on the establishment and implementation of the Production and Marketing Plans pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, can consequently be deemed to have been supplemented by the cases detailed above.

We thank you in advance for your kind attention to this letter, the aim of which is solely that of promoting the best possible implementation of the new regulations amending the EMFF.

Kind regards.

WG 2 - Working Group

about Large Pelagics (BFT-E - SWO-MED and
other species managed by ICCAT)



Calabria, Italy © Ilaria di Biagio



Milan, Italy © Elisabetta Zavoli

WG 2 - Working Group about Large Pelagics (BFT-E - SWO-MED and other species managed by ICCAT)

TOPIC: Bluefin tuna

RACMED OPINION ON BLUEFIN TUNA

26th October 2010

47

The MED RAC Executive Committee adopts, through written procedure, the document of the blue fin tuna working group held in Brussels on the 22nd October, in preparation for the upcoming ICCAT meeting in Paris, where, based on the assessment of current stocks, fishery management recommendations - including the catching quotas for the period 2011 - 13 will be defined,

Whereas

- 1) The management measures already adopted in previous years, during which the ICCAT recommendations have already led to a major reduction of the fishing effort (affecting all segments of the fleet), and in catches (down from 32,000 tonnes in 2007 to 13,500 in 2010) both in the allotted annual timeframe (for purse seiners and long liners above 24 m), and in the systems used to search for tuna (ban on aircraft);
- 2) The resulting reduction in fishing fleets, which in some Member States do not exclusively fish blue fin tuna, though this is the main source of income;
- 3) The mandatory control and monitoring systems (on-board observers, declarations, VMS) and the control regulation allowing the EC to halt fishing when stock levels show signs of suffering;
- 4) The already difficult adjustment of the European blue fin tuna sector to current limits, an adjustment that has already led to the scrapping of large numbers of vessels in recent years, with a subsequent loss of jobs;
- 5) The large investment made by ship owners still operating in the sector, their unwillingness to scrap ships often only just recently built, and the economic viability of an activity that, despite the crisis, is maintaining employment levels and responding to the high demand from the European market;
- 6) According to the 2010 annual report of the SCRS assessing blue fin tuna stocks presented at the ICCAT 4-8 October meeting in Madrid, a net recovery of stocks and a reduction in mortality can be observed, no mention is done of a risk of collapse; the report also mentions that maintaining current quotas would enable the optimal biomass to be reached in 2022, thereby complying with EC objectives and commitments;

RAC MED requests the European Commission

To take into account the above and in particular the results of the stock assessment report carried out by the SCRS of ICCAT, and to propose at the next Council of Ministers scheduled for October 26 in Luxembourg that the EU takes a favourable position at the ICCAT meeting in Paris, maintaining the 2010 catch quota (13.500 tonnes) for the period 2011-2013.

Considering the adverse weather conditions, it also requests the EC to reconsider the fishing season schedule, and to provide fishing enterprises with the opportunity of fully utilising the total number of fishing days allowed for purse seiners and long liners above 24 m.

Last but not least, RAC Med expresses its dismay at the lack of any consultation and information on the subject to date from the European Commission, just days before the next Council of Ministers and less than a month before the plenary of the ICCAT meeting, and expresses its perplexity that it has had to learn from news agencies of the guidelines announced by the Commissioner in Parliament.

RAC Med hopes this is not due to any lack of consideration on the part of the Commission for dialogue with the sector, which would be contrary to the principles of the Treaty of Lisbon, and hopes that the EC will intensify its meetings and discussions with all stakeholders in the fisheries sector in the coming days.

This opinion has been endorsed by working group participants, with the exception of the WWF, which expressed an opposing opinion, and the Confederación Española de Pesca Marítima de Recreo Responsable which expressed its reservations on mentioning explicitly the quota of 13,500 tonnes, a decision which it considers should be referred to ICCAT.

48 RAC MED OPINION ON BLUEFIN TUNA

Rome, 24th October 2011

The Executive Committee of RAC MED, which met on 20th October 2011, adopted the opinion* of the Working Group on bluefin tuna, held in Malta on 21th September, to analyse the status of the stocks on the basis of scientific data available from the 2011 survey and to formulate a position for the future survey of bluefin tuna, considering that the annual ICCAT meeting in Istanbul is imminent.

Considering

That RAC MED had already produced an opinion in 2010 (prot. 164/AV);

Hopes

That there will be coordination between the three independent marking systems presented in the course of the Working Group (GBYP-ICCAT; WWF “The Med Trail Tuna project”; APCCR) in order to obtain as much information as possible on the migration of tuna;

Gives emphasis to

The considerations already expressed in the 2010 opinion, in particular the need to take into due account the initial results of the ICCAT research programme for bluefin tuna in the Atlantic (GBYP), which will gather data on fishing activities targeting bluefin tuna and will improve statistic data on this species. Such results are demonstrating that some indexes are beginning to rise thus giving an indication of progressive recovery of stocks. These same results are confirmed by various professional representatives, present during the Working Group, who operate in different areas of the Mediterranean basin and declare that stock levels are improving;

Requests

- That the purse seine fishing season be postponed from 1st to 30th June in order to improve the sustainability of the stocks both from a socio-economic and eco systemic point of view;
- Further explanation of the fact that the 5 day extension of the 2011 fishing period was not granted, as requested on several sides including RAC MED, even though the quota had not been reached;

- That suitable action is taken to resolve the problem caused by accidental catch of tuna by vessels involved in other fisheries and targeting other species and not bluefin tuna;
- A ban on the sale of bluefin tuna caught in the framework of recreational and competitive fisheries, obliging those involved to put the live specimens back into the sea during sports fisheries events;
- That those live specimens released during recreational and competitive fisheries are not part of the catch quotas established;
- A ban on any kind of commercial activity ensuing from the capture of bluefin tuna in the context of recreational and competitive fisheries;
- That the data collected for statistical purposes by ICCAT on bluefin tuna caught during recreational and competitive fishing activities should be out together in a single category called “rod and reel” so as to harmonise the information that ICCAT receives from contractors;
- That the forthcoming ICCAT annual session takes into consideration the fact that the resource is not in distress when formulating any recommendations or modifying the recommendations currently in force.

**The present document has been adopted by the working group members with the abstention of KGZS, as Slovenia doesn't have any quota and CEPESCA. WWF and Oceana voted against.*

MEDRAC ADVICE ON BLUEFIN TUNA

Rome, 17th October 2012

49

The MED RAC Executive Committee adopted, through written procedure*, the document approved by the Participants of the Working Group 2 (WG2). The WG2 met in Athens on October 9 to monitor the stock condition on the basis of the results of the ICCAT SCRS annual meeting and of the inspections carried out by the EFCA during the 2012 Bluefin tuna campaign, which showed a considerable reduction of the number of infringements reported for EU vessels. The Executive Committee, while confirming what already adopted in last year opinion (Ref. N. 254/AV 24th October 2011),

Considering

That the Executive Committee favorably welcomed the last SCRS advice on the stock of the east Bluefin tuna stating:

- *“Although **the situation has improved** regarding recent catch, there are still uncertainties about population structure, migratory rates, key modeling parameters for bluefin tuna productivity and the level of IUU catch (although the Group believed that the level of IUU has strongly decreased since 2008.”*
- *“The implementation of recent regulations through [Rec. 09-06, and previous recommendations] has clearly resulted in **reductions in catch and fishing mortality rates**. The Committee notes that maintaining catches at the current TAC (12,900 t) or at the 2010 TAC (13,500 t) under the current management scheme will likely allow the stock to increase during that period and is consistent with the goal of achieving FMSY and BMSY through 2022 with at least 60% of probability, given the quantified uncertainties.”*

Requests

- to adapt TAC according to the recent scientific results reported above (unanimously agreed by the EXCOM members with the only exception of ETF*);
- to avoid the further reductions of the fleet planned for year 2013, according to the Council Regulation 302/09, chapter III art. 5 (Fishing capacity measures), par. 9, maintaining the actual fishing capacity at 2012 levels and ensuring satisfactory employment levels;
- that the purse-seiner fishing season be shifted forward by 10 days, i.e. from 26th May to 24th June;
- to revise the percentage established by the ICCAT Recommendation 10-04 for by-catches, which is currently no more than 5% of the total catch, since small-scale fishing dedicated to the capture of other target species is often involved accidentally in catching Bluefin tuna that cannot be discarded or landed in any case;
- to readmit the use of aircraft for searching for Bluefin tuna in order to promote economic sustainability of the fisheries dedicated to Bluefin tuna and to increase selectivity avoiding juveniles catches with the eventual participation of observers that might carry out scientific monitoring;
- to admit “catch and release” at the European level not only for sport fishery but also for recreational fishery.

*ETF voted against as its suggestion to add the following paragraph was not accepted by the other EXCOM members: “With the adjustment of the TACs we ask for the commitment to the return-to-work fishermen excluded from the production cycle due to the reduction of fishing quotas carried out in previous years. The EXCOM didn’t support this proposal because it is not something related to the EU decision-making level.

*The present document has been adopted by the Executive Committee members with the exception of WWF and OCEANA that voted against. They are convinced that it is extremely important to maintain the current management measures to allow full recovery of the stock within the timeframe of the ICCAT recovery plan, for the benefit of the stock and the fishery. Furthermore, they also want to highlight that scientist call to maintain the current situation by pointing out that “A period of stabilization in the main management regulations of the rebuilding plan would allow the SCRS to better estimate the magnitude and speed of recent trends in F and SSB in the coming years”. Due to the reasons expressed in the previous paragraph, WWF and OCEANA cannot share the requests expressed in the advice in relation to maintaining the current fleet capacity levels, which according to the SCRS is well in excess to the capacity needed to match the current TAC, to shift the purse seine fishing season, to revise the current percentage of allowed BFT by catch, and to readmit the use of aircraft in support of the purse seine fishing activity.

*There has not been consensus among the participants of the Executive Committee on the EAA suggestion of the following paragraph: “Recreational fishing for tuna should be managed in its own right independent of other tuna exploiting interests. Fish stocks are a public resource - and should remain so. The public’s access to the bluefin tuna resource (vis-à-vis a recreational fishing quota) should be ensured independently of TACs allocated to commercial exploiters. In particular to secure that recreational angling for tuna, the last sector to start fishing season, is not closed for reasons that other sectors have used up and exceeded their quotas or wish additional quota or to secure that a few individuals fishing illegally don’t cause the fishing season to end before scheduled”. The EXCOM didn’t support this proposal for the reason that quota allocation among fishing sectors and segments is a national issue.

50 MED RAC ADVICE ON BFT AND SWO-MED

Rome, 17th October 2013

The Executive Committee adopted the advice proposed by Working Group 2 which convened on 15 October in Paris addressing the issue of BFT and SWO-MED and attaches two separate and distinct positions from the recreational fishing component and WWF¹ whereas the members representing professional fisheries drafted the following opinion.

In light of the results of the SCRS Plenary Session of 2013 and in particular on Bluefin Tuna:

- “Nonetheless, the perception of the stock status derived from the 2012 updated assessment has improved in comparison to previous assessments, as F for both younger and older fish have declined during the recent years.”
- Although care is needed when considering estimates of catch using capacity measures, the Group’s interpretation is that a substantial decrease in the catch occurred in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea through implementation of the rebuilding plan and through monitoring and enforcement controls.”

The professional fisheries representatives of RAC MED deplore the fact, that despite the huge amount of financial resources already spent on assessing the state of stocks, and a new stock assessment planned for 2015, still does not make it possible to reduce the current high degree of uncertainty. Moreover, the capture quotas of Bluefin Tuna are still not being increased despite the conspicuous increase in the fishery resource, which entails severe damage for various sectors, in particular those which are economically most fragile (such as artisanal fisheries) and exacerbates the competition between various capture systems (purse-seining, artisanal fisheries and recreational fishing). In consideration of the fact that this undermines confidence between fishers and European institutions, they express the hope that:

- -an increase, however small, be established for the capture quota;
- that control and inspections bring about a clearer and unambiguous framework and also be applied to recreational fishing;
- that research times may be accelerated so as to make up for the delays and uncertainties which have accumulated, ensuring that the decision-making process be given a more transparent basis;
- that research make the requisite assessments of the effect of the BFT population in the food chain and of feeding competition with other species;
- that improved direct cooperation be established between SCRS/ ICCAT and tuna fisheries operators.

Referring to Mediterranean Swordfish taking into account that:

- available scientific data do not take into account the effect of measures already foreseen in the ICCAT
- Recommendation 11-03 and some of the measures only entered into force last year and others are in the course of implementation;
- further restrictive measures might reveal themselves to be needless harassment before the effects of those currently applied are properly evaluated;

We invite the European Commission to avoid taking any new measures with regard to Mediterranean swordfish until it has which can gauge recently implemented measures.

¹ The two positions mentioned are attached.

WWF POSITION PAPER

East Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna

Meeting of ICCAT, Cape Town, South Africa: 18-25 November 2013

Background

The millennia-old bluefin tuna fishery in the Mediterranean entered a phase of rapid and intense deterioration the last decade of the 20th Century when the new practice of farming wild-caught tunas, formerly unknown in the Mediterranean, mushroomed without control. This generated a perverse overfishing spiral as the growing demand for live large tunas fuelled the massive development of the industrial purse seine fleets and their expansion over virtually all Mediterranean waters where the bluefin tuna gathered to reproduce.

WWF was first to warn about this new threat and since 2001 has led the international campaign to avoid the collapse of the bluefin tuna population and to ensure a rational and sustainable fishing activity.

After several years of open mismanagement and reacting from the clear calls from science and civil society worldwide to avert an upcoming collapse of the fishery and the stock, ICCAT adopted in 2006 a first recovery plan for the species. This first plan still fell very short from following scientific advice and it has been increasingly strengthened and refined along the years - particularly since 2009, coinciding with a proposal to list the species in the App. I of the CITES Convention. As a result, there is consensus now in ICCAT that total catches have substantially declined the last few years. ICCAT CPCs in 2012 acted responsibly and set a TAC for 2013 and the following years at the scientifically recommended level.

However, there is still concern on the potential for illegal fishing due to overcapacity and loopholes plaguing traceability and control. In 2013 ICCAT SCRS “remains concerned about current capacity which could easily harvest catch volumes well in excess of the rebuilding strategy adopted by the Commission”, in line with recent WWF studies. The analysis of bluefin tuna catch documents for the 2012 fishing and farming season submitted by WWF to both the SCRS and the Committee on Compliance (CoC) demonstrates that implementation of the current Bluefin Tuna Catch Document (BCD) is very far from ensuring traceability. It also highlights a radical overhaul of this scheme is needed, along with an improvement in the underwater quantification of fish for farming, to seriously address IUU.

In 2013 ICCAT SCRS has not performed a new stock assessment for the East Atlantic and Mediterranean stock of the bluefin tuna. Consequently, the advice based on the assessment update carried out in 2012 still holds. Accordingly, ICCAT SCRS in 2013 advises against any substantial change in the current TAC (“the Committee cannot give robust advice that would support a substantial change in the TAC”) and notes that “maintaining catches at around recent TACs” (12,900t-13,500t) will likely allow the stock to fully recover by 2022. 2

Recommendations

WWF recommends ICCAT CPCs to

1. Maintain the TAC at the 2013 level (13,400t). In the absence of new scientific data that would support otherwise, ICCAT SCRS advises against a substantial change of the TAC this year (“the Committee cannot give robust advice that would support a substantial change in the TAC”). It's been a long and huge concerted effort to turn the Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery from a global icon of overfishing into an international example of science-based managed fishery. The credibility of ICCAT and that of its CPCs now depends on the continued reliance on scientific advice until achieving the full recovery of the stock and beyond. Any step back now by disregarding science would bring ICCAT back to the dark years, when bluefin tuna management was called a “travesty of management”. WWF calls on ICCAT to keep the annual TAC at the current level (13,400t) until there is a new scientific assessment available as well as new specific recommendations issued from SCRS.
2. Review and strengthen the current fishing capacity reduction plan to bring real catch capacity down to the level of fishing possibilities. ICCAT SCRS warns that current capacity levels “could easily harvest catch volumes well in excess of the rebuilding strategy adopted by the Commission”. ICCAT first adopted a fleet capacity reduction plan for the BFT in 2008 (ICCAT Rec. 08-05) which was further refined in 2010 (ICCAT Rec. 10-04). The current plan ends in 2013, when it's assumed to have phased out all fishing overcapacity. However, a recent assessment (SCRS/2011/158)

shows the current plan is based on average catch rates per fleet segment which are strongly underestimated, resulting in an end situation of still huge overcapacity (worth over 200% the TAC). This is consistent with the warning from the SCRS this year. WWF calls on ICCAT to extend the current capacity reduction plan using updated, more realistic estimates of potential catch rates so as to ensure overcapacity is fully removed.

3. Radically reform the current quantification and traceability of fish from the catching purse seine vessels and throughout the farms. According to the study WWF submitted this year to ICCAT SCRS (SCRS/2013/208) and ICCAT CoC the current implementation of the BCD scheme is highly dysfunctional as it fails to adequately trace both the origin and biomass of fish throughout the fishing and farming process. The finding that real fattening ratios can't be derived from the analysis of BCD data clearly exemplifies the magnitude of the problem, which has a potential to result in the uncovering of unreported catches. WWF calls on ICCAT to 1. Adopt urgently a technical procedure that ensures the accurate quantification of fish caught and caged in farms on a routinely basis. 2. Ban the mixing in a same farming pen of fish originating from different fishing hauls. 3. Put an end to the current practice of using joint fishing operations (JFOs) as a way to jointly manage individual quotas irrespectively of whether the concerned vessels operate jointly in the water or not. 4. For every vessel involved in a JFO, adopt the obligation to report its individual catch in every fishing haul under a unique BCD number. Currently, for a given fishing haul, catches attributed to all vessels of a same nationality belonging to a same JFO are pooled under a single BCD of such nationality while referred to a single vessel's catch that can be of a different nationality.

4. Fully support ICCAT SCRS in its endeavour to developing a new methodology and gathering new data leading to a much more reliable and robust stock assessment in 2015. In line with ICCAT SCRS in 2013, WWF recommends "the continuation of enhanced data collection program and the replacement of current assessment methods with appropriate approaches that take unquantified uncertainties into account". SCRS is working hard since 2012 to put together the necessary tools to carry out a new stock assessment in 2015 based on "new assessment modelling approached and inputs", as provided for by ICCAT Rec. 12-03. WWF calls on ICCAT for the maximum support to the SCRS tasks described above and warns against the negative effect a request for an update of the 2010 assessment in 2014 might have on SCRS to divert resources from the ambitious 2015 assessment. WWF strongly recommends allowing SCRS to focus all its resources in 2014 and 2015 to fulfil its mandate to deliver the more reliable stock assessment ever of this stock by 2015.

WWF's vision for the East Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery is that of a stock sustainably managed to the benefit of the marine ecosystems, fisheries communities and consumers. Today we might be closer to this, something that would have seemed unthinkable only a few years ago. WWF calls on the responsibility of both ICCAT CPCs and the fishing industry to build on this momentum and keep recovery ambitions high. Big achievements are long in the making but in only an instant can be lost.

POSITION OF THE RECREATIONAL FISHING, SPORT FISHING AND ANGLING ORGANIZATIONS URGE CHANGES IN THE ALLOCATION OF BLUEFIN TUNA QUOTAS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

The recreational fishing, sport fishing and angling sector, with a long tradition, is the largest of all the sectors involved in the Bluefin Tuna fishery.

In recent years, ICCAT has established conservation measures and a recovery plan for this species that are bearing fruit. Indeed, both the commercial and recreational sectors are witnessing clear improvements in the number of individuals and an increase in their sizes.

Recreational fishing is seriously involved in recovering the species, and working hard side by side with scientific institutions. Conventional tagging, electronic tagging and sampling of individuals which were determined by scientists from the research centres that collaborate with ICCAT (both in the Mediterranean and Atlantic) have been carried out without receiving or requesting any financial compensation.

Some of the institutions are working with ICCAT, Instituto Español de Oceanografía, AZTI Tecnalia, IFREMER or WWF among others.

All anglers want in return for this voluntary effort is to be treated equally as participants in the tuna fishery. Many of our members have experienced firsthand the increased controls on the tuna fishery, which we welcome and find very positive.

Our organizations find that they are treated differently by the authorities in different Member States, Tuna allocation to recreational sector often is not enough to cover the basic needs of the sector. Allocation percentages ranging from 0% to 1.5 % have been established. Meanwhile, aware of positive socioeconomic effect it has on the economy, the U.S. allocates 20 % of the tuna quota to recreational fishing (just as an example).

Recreational fishing has quite different objectives than commercial fishing. One of them is the attraction of fighting the strongest fish of the Mediterranean Sea.

For improved and more equitable management of tuna fisheries our organizations request the EU to adopt the following recommendations:

- Tuna catch authorization:

Any recreational fishing boats targeting tuna should obtain a specific authorization from the authorities of its country that allows for detailed data monitoring of the fleet.

- Fishing season:

Catch and release should be allowed all year round . Landings should be allowed within the period given by ICCAT (currently from June 15 to October 14). During the ICCAT opening season the take of tuna should only be allowed for tuna equal to or bigger than 115 centimetres or 30 kilos. The fishery closure should be established whenever the quota set for the recreational fishing sector is used up. Tuna returned to the sea alive should not be counted against the quota allocated to the recreational sector.

- Allowable catch for boat:

Each vessel should be allowed to land a maximum of two legal-sized catches per year. This catches should be properly communicated through a catch statement, a seal or the control system established by the competent authorities.

- Specific quota allocated to the recreational fishery sector:

The national recreational sectors access to tuna quota is an issue clearly in need of improvement. Nationally, the recreational sector should be secured a part of the quota, which reflects the sector needs and socio-economic importance.

The recreational quota should be secured and clearly separated from the quotas allocated to other sectors. This to stop the other sectors using the recreational quota, and/or that these sectors' over-use its own quota and then take from the recreational quota as happened again this year in Italy.

P.S. Often the recreational fishing sector is considered inferior to other interests that exploit fish, or is even seen as a threat to them. We consider this a serious mistake in light of the enormous economic contribution and the many jobs created and sustained by the recreational sector.

Socio-economic studies can help to change this mistreatment of a sector that offers more benefits and income from fish caught than any other sector. Decision makers need this information to be able to make informed decisions to achieve sustainable fisheries management and for best use of the resources. Taking this into account we urge the Commission to fund a socio-economic study of the recreational fishing sector for tuna to provide the managers and decision makers with more and better information.

We also urge ICCAT and the EU to only allow Catch & Release in sport fishing competitions as requested by the RAC MED¹

¹The RAC MED has already requested the obligation of Catch and Release during sports competitions in the opinion ref. n.245/AV of 24th October 2011 (http://www.racmed.eu/images/stories/avis/TR/254_Parere_TR_2011_ENG.pdf)

Signed by Big Game Italia, CEPRR (Confederación Española Pesca Recreativa Responsable), EFSA (European Federation of Sea Anglers) EAA (European Anglers Alliance), FIPS-M (Fédération Internationale de Pêche en Mer), FIPSAS (Federazione Italiana Pesca Sportiva e Attività Subacquee), IFSUA (International Forum for Sustainable Underwater Activities)

MEDRAC LETTER ON THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF LANDING OBLIGATION

51

Rome, 1st August 2014

To Lowri Evans (Director General, EC – DG MARE); Dovile Vaigauskaite; Stamatios Varsamos;

Dear Ms Evans,

Referring to the letter (Ref: Ares(2014)2367422) received on July 16, relative to the regulations on Bluefin tuna in the ICCAT area, MEDAC makes the following observations.

Given that:

- Regulation n.1380/2013, article 15, establishes an obligation within the EC legal framework to land all catches subject to a quota (and/or minimum size in the Mediterranean ex Regulation n. 1967/06) and that the Bluefin Tuna (BFT) has a quota;
- Section 32 paragraph 1 of ICCAT Recommendation 13/07 states that "Catching vessels not fishing actively for Bluefin tuna are not authorized to retain at any time following each fishing operation, Bluefin tuna exceeding more than 5% of the total catch by weight or number of pieces."
- Section 32 paragraph 2 of the same recommendation, 13/07, also affirms that this ban, i.e. the ban on keeping more than 5% of the total catch on board, does not apply to CPCs whose domestic legislation requires that all dead fish be landed.

MEDAC considers that:

1) In order to ensure clarity of interpretation and to discourage any conduct not in line with the principles of sustainable fisheries, the delegated act will comply with, in its implementation, the provisions within Recommendation 13/07, in order to ensure that all catches of Bluefin tuna, if dead, are landed, with the difference that:

- those below 5% (by-catch), once declared and included in the national quota, may be marketed in compliance with applicable provisions of the law in force;
- those above 5% (by-catch), once declared and included in the national quota are subject to confiscation.

2) In order to ensure full compliance with the applicable ICCAT provisions on the issue, Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No. 302/2009 of 6 April 2009 should be changed where a multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean is concerned, amending Regulation (EC) No. 43/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1559/2007.

When undersized specimens are caught as a result of direct fishery activities, as by-catch or as a result of recreational fisheries, if these specimens are dead then they must be destined for uses other than human consumption

MEDAC ADVICE ON BFT-E and SWO-MED

52

Rome, 16th October 2014

The Executive Committee members adopted the advice proposed by Working Group 2 which convened on October 10 in Split addressing the issue of BFT-E and SWO-MED to monitor the stock condition on the basis of the results of the SCRS annual meeting. The ExCom adopted this document by consensus with the exception of the recreational fisheries associations.*

*ExCom members: CEPRR, EAA/IFSUA and FIPSAS/CIPS that share the seats.

Considering

That the ExCom favourably welcomed the last SCRS advice on the stock of the east Bluefin tuna stating:

- "The implementation of recent regulations through [Recs. 13-07, 12-03, 10-04, 09-06, and previous recommendations] has clearly resulted in reductions in catch and fishing mortality rates, and in a substantial increase in the spawning stock biomass"
- "The Committee noted that maintaining current TAC or moderately and gradually increasing over recent TACs under the current management scheme should not undermine the success of the rebuilding plan and should be consistent with the goal of achieving FMSY and BMSY through 2022 with at least 60% of probability. .."

"Such stepped increases should be reviewed annually by the Commission on the advice of the SCRS..."

The Executive Committee members agreed to:

- increase the TAC over the next years, according with the recent scientific results and as suggested by the latest SCRS reported in Section 6 "BFTE-6 Management recommendations" in order to maintain the MSY according with the results reported above;
- balance the eventual increase of TAC among all the ICCAT Contracting Parties, according to the current allocation key
- strengthen the current ICCAT traceability system.

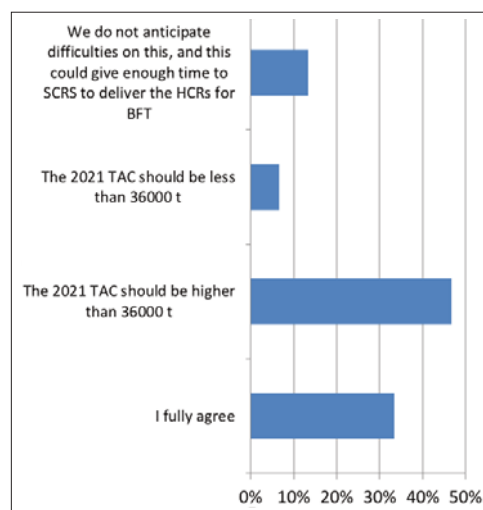
Moreover, the ExCom hopes that the possibility to outline new rules for the small-scale fishery could be considered, complying with sustainability principles of the CFP (Reg. 1380/2013), in order to give back more feasibility in terms of access to the resource.

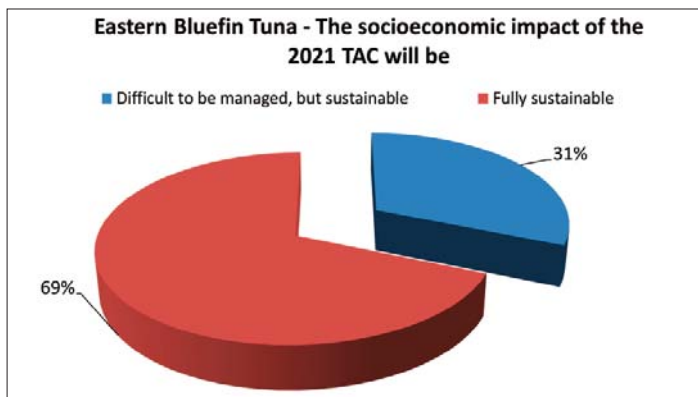
The ExCom also agreed on the need to ensure that the management plan for SWO MED allows to achieve the objectives laid down in the CFP and to ask the SCRS to include them in the next ICCAT stock assessment. Moreover, the ExCom acknowledged the SCRS observations related to the high percentage of juveniles catch of SWO-MED and agreed on the need to avoid this harmful practice. The ExCom also recognized the need to revise the "potential excess in fleet capacity" reported by SCRS in Section 6 "SWO-MED-6. Management recommendations".

53 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON THE PREPARATION OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN ICCAT IN 2020 (DG MARE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

1st October 2020

OPINION on Eastern Bluefin tuna - Given the uncertainty associated with recruitment estimates, the Committee recommends that the 2020 TAC of 36000 t be maintained for 2021

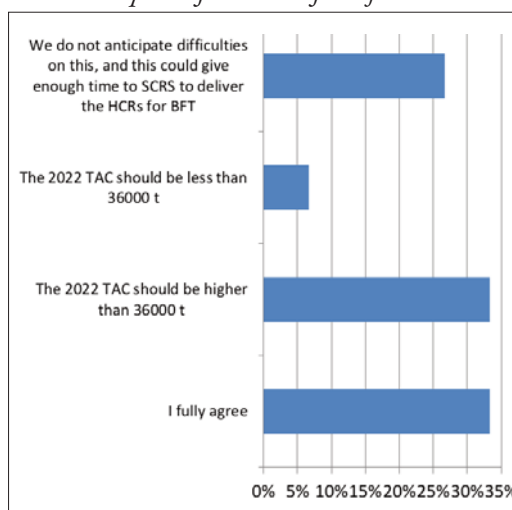


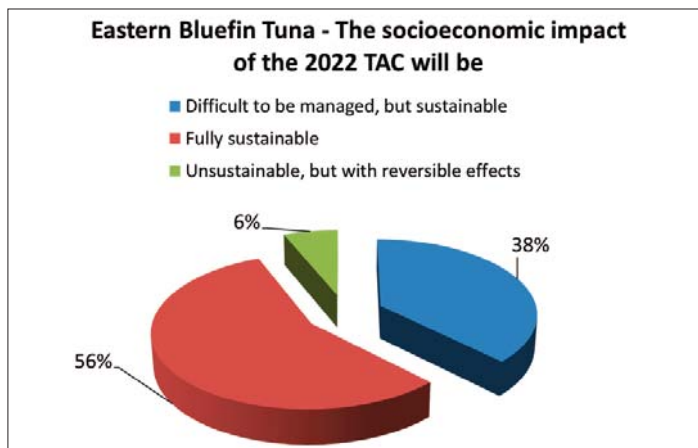


Eastern Bluefin tuna - Comments on the recommended 2021 TAC

- *May increase the TAC as there is over-stocking*
- *In the sea there is certainly an increase in bluefin tuna, at least close to the coast. Perhaps the affectionation on sardine and anchovy is very high and leads the population of bluefin tuna to come close to the coast searching of other prey. The TACs can be increased, and open the recreational fishing of BFT.*
- *There is no consensus at the French level on the development of the bluefin tuna TAC in 2021. We encourage the Commission to continue working on the evolution of the recommendation.*
- *It appears that the available data indicate that the biomass of bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean has increased since 2010 and that it has not there is no reason to fear overexploitation within the current TAC (36,000 tonnes in 2020). However, the uncertainties weighing on the estimate of recruitment mean that this TAC of 36,000 tonnes is only based on short-term production, making it impossible to estimate the reference point B0.1, i.e. - say the level of Biomass at the level of maximum sustainable yield (MSY). If we base ourselves on long-term productivity, which has resolved the problems of uncertainty in recruitment since 2008, then the catch at F01 is 33,830 tonnes, which is why we wishes to follow scientific advice allowing 'reach this goal.*
- *It must be increased in order to give more quota to the artisanal sector.*
- *Keeping the TAC unchanged from 2020, with significant positive signs of recovery, would effectively limit the possibility of resolving problems related to small-scale coastal fishing, which for years has been waiting for the recovery of the sector and it would interrupt the virtuous path of increase of the fleet concerned undertaken up to now.*
- *Uncertainties in the stock assessment are higher than i 2017. This is concerning when realizing that E-BFT is probably one of the most data-reach stock. The same data used for the stock assessment will have to be used to identify and adopt HCRs that should be the tool to adjust TAC according to the stock status.*
- *It is evident that bluefin tuna is everywhere in the sea and even in the ports. Often fishers have to make special maneuvers to avoid catches of bluefin tuna.*

OPINION ON Eastern Bluefin tuna - Given the uncertainty associated with recruitment estimates, the Committee recommends: the 2020 TAC at 36000t also in 2022 (with revision of the 2022 in 2021)

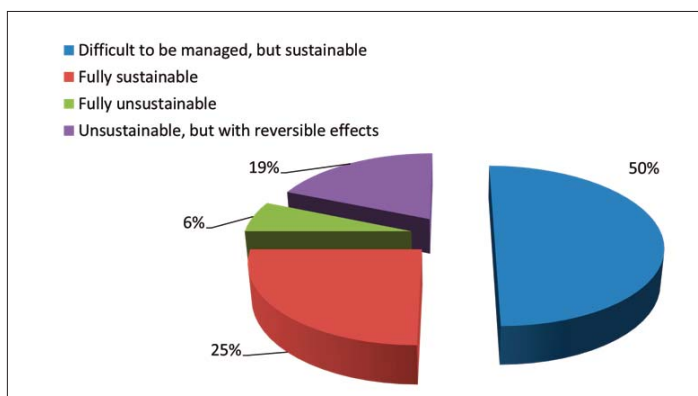




Eastern Bluefin tuna - Comments on the recommended 2022 TAC

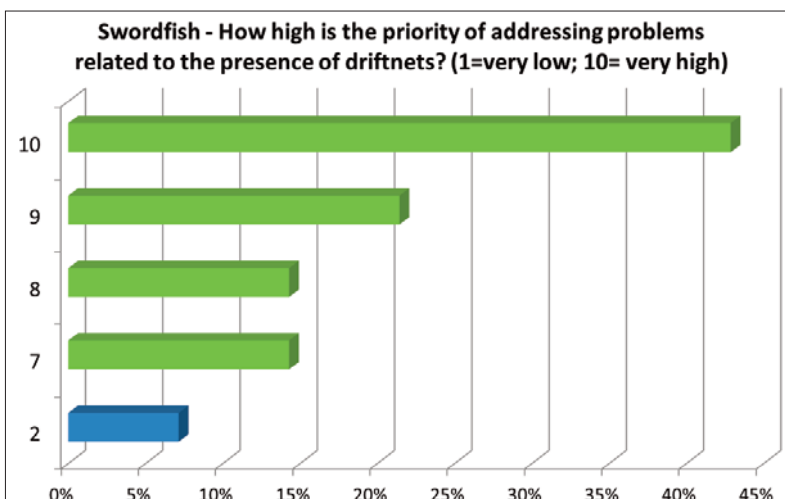
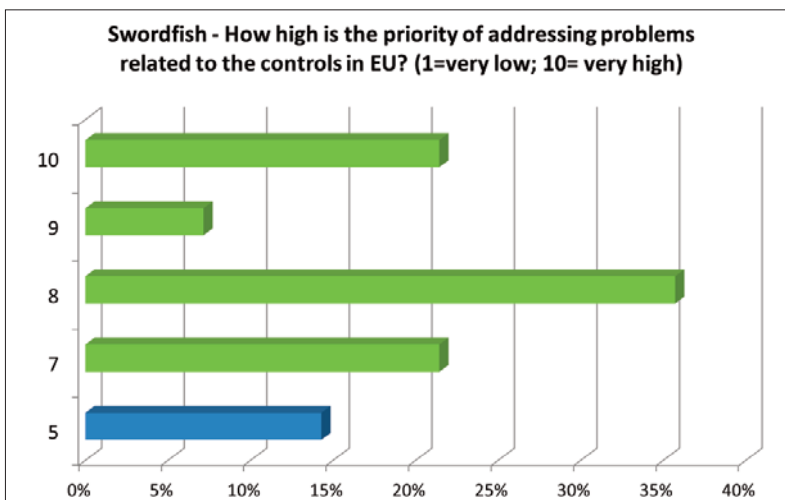
- *There is no consensus at the French level on the development of the bluefin tuna TAC in 2021. We encourage the Commission to continue working on the evolution of the recommendation.*
- *It appears that the available data indicate that the biomass of bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean has increased since 2010 and that it has not there is no reason to fear overexploitation within the current TAC (36,000 tonnes in 2020). However, the uncertainties weighing on the estimate of recruitment mean that this TAC of 36,000 tonnes is only based on short-term production, making it impossible to estimate the reference point B0.1, i.e. - say the level of Biomass at the level of maximum sustainable yield (MSY). If we base ourselves on long-term productivity, which has resolved the problems of uncertainty in recruitment since 2008, then the catch at F01 is 33,830 tonnes, which is why we wishes to follow scientific advice allowing 'reach this goal. It must be increased in order to give more quota to the artisanal sector.*
- *Keeping the TAC unchanged from 2020, with significant positive signs of recovery, would effectively limit the possibility of resolving problems related to small-scale coastal fishing, which for years has been waiting for the recovery of the sector and it would interrupt the virtuous path of increase of the fleet concerned undertaken up to now.*
- *Uncertainties in the stock assessment are higher than i 2017. This is concerning when realizing that E-BFT is probably one of the most data-reach stock. The same data used for the stock assessment will have to be used to identify and adopt HCRs that should be the tool to adjust TAC according to the stock status.*
- *We believe that the best way is a constant small increase every year with a continuous monitoring activity.*

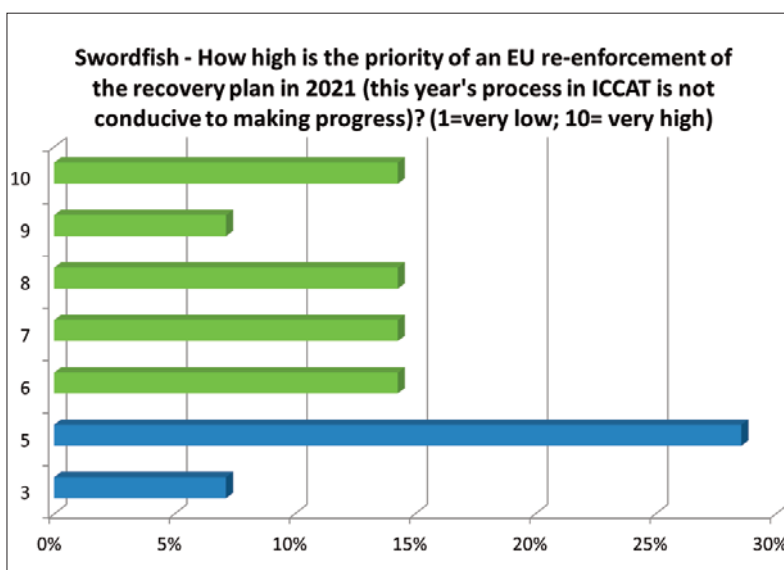
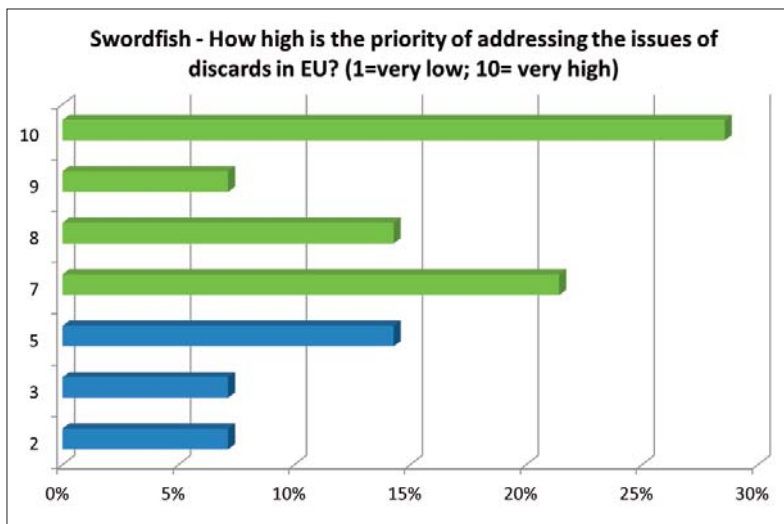
OPINION ON Swordfish - Provisional scientific advice: The probability of stock rebuilding by the end of 2028 is 60% if a TAC equal to 10,000 t is implemented. The socioeconomic impact of the forthcoming TAC will be



Swordfish - Comments on the TAC recommended by the provisional scientific advice

- Possibility of increase of juvenile discards due to change of closed period.
- It is essential to maintain sustainable levels of exploitation, but without penalising fishing enterprises which would see the level of economic sustainability of the activity itself disappear. It is, however, essential to ensure that discards are reduced and that illegal fishing with driftnets, which is also carried out by non-EU countries in the Mediterranean, is addressed.
- The current TAC frame adopted in 2017 (10.500 t reducing 15% in 5 years) was sometimes difficult to meet with landings (2018). A TAC that is hard to meet for a recovery plan, does not seem to be very effective in terms of reducing fishing mortality. Last scientific advice confirmed that TAC of around 10.000 t is still aligned with the targets of the recovery plan. The most urgent issue to be addressed is the juveniles mortality (estimated to be 24% of the total catches). Concerns about under reporting of discards, especially for undersized fish (estimated about 24% of total catches). Need to work in 2021 to reinforce the recovery plan (reduce discards, increase observers' coverage and data collection).
- We should follow the scientific advices to rebuild the Swordfish stock.
- To maintain the current levels monitored.





Swordfish - Comments on the EU re-enforcement of the recovery plan in 2021

- *As already mentioned, it is essential to address and resolve the problem of discards of large pelagic species, in accordance with Reg. EU 1380/2013, by addressing the planned harmonization of existing rules, as this principle is currently derogated from the current rules. It is essential to combat the phenomenon of illegal fishing with driftnets, carried out in the Mediterranean also by non-EU countries.*
- *Juvenile catches are flagged to be one of the most threat to the stock recovery. Reducing juvenile mortality through management/technical measures. Increase observer coverage with the aim to improve data collection. Specific joint control initiatives (EFCA and at national level) to tackle driftnets and IUU.*
- *We should reconsider all the ways to reduce the IUU and other measures to be adopted in order to rebuild the stock – i.e. the review of the ban period*

JOINT MEDAC AND SWWAC ADVICE ON MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION (MSE) FOR ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA

54

29th October 2021

On the first half of October 2021 the following meetings aimed at involving stakeholders on the process of MSE: the MEDAC WG2, the Ambassadors Webinars of ICCAT and the SWWAC WG on Pelagic Species.

Acknowledging the importance and the effort needed to involve stakeholders and national administration in the participatory process, the ACs involved reiterate¹ that:

- *“The joint workshop was a first step of stakeholders’ involvement and dissemination of information. It is important that consultation continues in collaboration with ICCAT and the EU as a Contracting Party, regularly throughout the process and by organizing as soon as possible informal webinars to collect the opinions from a heterogeneous platform of stakeholders with particular attention to the working languages and the simplification of the scientific information to collect informed feedback;*
- *The process of adoption of Harvest Strategy needs enough time in order to provide reliable simulations based on the best available science. Acquiring data and improving its quality must be continued and strengthened;*
- *Bottom-up approach and collaboration of stakeholders should be the basis in defining the future Harvest Control Rules (HCR) taking into account their interests and their experience as well as the typology of the fleet;*
- *Other factors, such as environmental changes, pollution, trophic dynamics and possible interactions with other species from other fisheries, needs to be taken in due account when defining Harvest Strategies.”* With regard to the ambassadors’ webinars, recently organized by ICCAT, we acknowledge the importance of having such an informative initiative put in place, nevertheless we found that a true participation and active stakeholders’ involvement in the debate was hampered by the high level of the technical contents of the meetings. Moreover, we fully understand that the working languages in ICCAT are limited to 3 (EN, ES, FR), however we recommend to consider providing simultaneous interpretation for other languages (Greek, Croatian, Italian and Portuguese) in order to facilitate a solid and fruitful discussion.

In this spirit and strongly welcoming and supporting the initiative to involve stakeholders in this process, the MEDAC and SWWAC would like to offer cooperation in the following ways:

- to co-organize such a meeting providing the additional working languages, that are not among the ICCAT official ones
- sharing the presentations ahead of the meeting with all the members offering ways to simplify the scientific content
- sharing the information on CMPs (Candidate Management Procedures) in a clear manner, in time to provide some advice before the ICCAT Panel 2 meeting scheduled on 12 November. When a discussion on MSE is scheduled.

¹ Ref. 145/2021 - JOINT ADVICE MEDAC and SWWAC On Harvest Control Rule Strategy (HCR) of Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna.

TOPIC: Swordfish

55 RAC MED OPINION ON MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH

Rome, 26th May 2011

The MED RAC Executive Committee adopts, through written procedure the document approved by the ad hoc working group on swordfish, held on March 22, 2011 in Barcelona, as requested by the EC, to monitor the stock condition and propose conservation and management measures,

Whereby

1. There is no sign indicating a dramatic decline in the Mediterranean swordfish stocks. This allows time to carry out further research to collect data on the catch and on efforts, and analyse different assessment methods, as seen in the Report of the 2010 ICCAT Mediterranean swordfish stock assessment of the SCRS.
2. The ICCAT Recommendation 2009/04 on the sustainable exploitation of Mediterranean swordfish is not easy to apply, because, at the moment, it is difficult to have a clear picture of the number of fishing vessels involved in catching swordfish in the Mediterranean basin, and it is unthinkable to propose any kind of measures concerning capacity without first having a clear census of all the fishing vessels involved in swordfish catches.

Adopts

with objections from the WWF, a number of proposals concerning, in particular, the following technical measures on the future management of swordfish fishing activities:

4.FLEET: It is important for all the Member States to make a census of the catching vessels actually engaged in fishing swordfish so that it will be validated, at a second stage, by the EU. For this purpose it is necessary to make a distinction between:

- A. Catching vessels actually engaged in active fishing swordfish, exclusively with long-lines and harpoons.
- B. Catching vessels not fishing actively (by-catch catching less than 2 tons per year)*
- C. Recreational fisheries' vessels dedicated to catch swordfish.

*objection expressed by Federcoopesca because the point 4B should address active seasonal fishing and not the by-catch one, in order to diversify it from point 5. CRPMEM LR and CNPMEM disagree with the coordinators' report on points 4/A, 4/B and 5 as they don't reflect what has been discussed in the group.

5.BY-CATCH: Taking into account that traditionally there were recorded some by-catches of swordfish from catching vessels engaged in other fishing activities in all the countries involved, it is deemed necessary to establish a limit for by-catches of the order of 5% (by weight or/and number of pieces.) for this fishing activities and of fleet.

6.MINIMUM SIZE: taking into account some deviations in the way of measurement of the length of the wordfish as well as the need to harmonize the relative size, an agreement has been reached

to propose the minimum size of 90 cm from the lower mandible to the fork with a tolerance of 10% as to the number of fish of smaller size on the overall number of swordfish of allowable size caught in each sea trip.

7.HOOKS: bearing in mind the provisions of the EC Technical Measures Regulation 1967/2006 aiming at harmonization, a more limited maximum number of hooks is being proposed and accepted, that is 2.800. Furthermore, the length of the hook cannot be less than 7 cm. It is authorized a second series of tied and not set-up fishing hooks for fishing trips of more than 2 days.

8.CLOSED FISHING SEASON: the important socio/economic impact of this issue on the sector is very strong if it is not accompanied by any parallel measure of aid. The participants ask for this issue to be taken into account by the Commission since this fleet has received a double blow both for the fishing of blue-fin tuna and for the fishing of swordfish.

There are various points of view as to a ban or a temporary seasonal ban on fishing as well as to whether this ban should concern the type of fishing or the fishing gear ("long-line"). Finally an agreement is reached on the maintenance of the existing status quo and on the continuation of the ban for the months of October and November.

9.DECREASE OF THE FISHING CAPACITY AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES (TAC): All the participants arrived at the conclusion that it is impossible to conduct a study on whether it is possible to arrive at a certain decrease of the fishing capacity since today's situation as to fishing in the Mediterranean is unknown. As a result and since we do not have this "picture", we cannot examine this probability.

Several participants consider that this type of fishing does not need the establishment of TAC. As a result it is necessary to wait for the results of the implementation of the measures above.

Furthermore, it is necessary to improve the transfer of data from all the member countries practicing this type of fishing. The operation of this sector is rather problematic and this prevents the adoption of any decision concerning these two measures.

Let us add, that any decision on TAC would be also problematic since it would validate data from a fishing activity that has been practiced by illegal fleets, as an example the case of Morocco that shall prohibit, by the end of the year, fishing with driftnets.

10.GENERAL REMARKS: The participants confirm that there is a need to base themselves from now on reliable and solid data concerning fishing vessels and catches.

In the same framework and given the characteristics of the Mediterranean, it is necessary both for this and for the other types of fishing that are practiced in these waters, to start a harmonization process of all the legislations both of the community and the extra community countries who have fishing activities. We should not limit ourselves to the adoption of common management plans.

56 MEDAC OPINION ON SWO-MED*Split, 20th April 2016*

The Executive Committee members adopted the advice proposed by Working Group 2 (WG2), which met on 15th March in Almeria to discuss swordfish fisheries management in the Mediterranean (SWO-MED) in particular, and to identify alternative management measures or integrations to those already in force, made the following proposal:

- Considering that in July a session of the ICCAT Scientific Committee (SCRS) will be held with the aim of assessing Mediterranean swordfish stocks and
- Considering that, most probably, on the basis of the results of this session a new proposal for a recommendation will be prepared, which could substitute/amend ICCAT recommendation 13-04
- Considering that, should this recommendation come into force it could have a significant impact on fisheries activities and on the conservation of this stock,

The Executive Committee members adopted a series of proposals, in particular concerning certain technical measures relative to the future management of swordfish fisheries:

- **Temporary suspension of fisheries activities**

In the ICCAT recommendation 13-04, two periods are indicated for the suspension of fisheries targeting swordfish: one in the two-month period of October and November and another period lasting one month to be chosen between 15th February and 31st March. The MEDAC * advocated combining the two periods as a more productive solution, specifically suggesting a consecutive three-month suspension of swordfish fisheries from January until March, to avoid de-rigging and re-rigging gear types twice when the fishing activities change. In the months of October and November drifting longline fisheries can cause unwanted catches of juvenile swordfish, it was therefore suggested that longline fisheries for albacore could be limited in these two months; to further counter this phenomenon, the proposal was made only to allow mesopelagic longline fisheries that work at depth and therefore only catch adult specimens and not juveniles. These proposals could be supported by ad hoc research that would provide sufficient scientific data.

*During the Executive Committee held in Split on the 20th of April 2016, WWF, Oceana and Archipelagos voted against this proposal as it is not based on scientific evidence or advice. Also, these organisations highlighted that any proposal for the management of Mediterranean swordfish should be aimed at recovering this stock, reported as overfished and in overfishing and falling in the red quadrant of the Kobe matrix. Indeed, it is within ICCAT and EU obligations to recover stocks to sustainable levels within the short term.

- **Total Allowable Catch**

The MEDAC* endorsed the opinion that swordfish fisheries cannot be managed by the introduction of a system of TACs and Quotas, given that the report of the Scientific Committee of 6th October 2015 (SCI-021/2015) made no mention of the possibility of TACs and Quotas among the potential management measures, it only suggested the collection of additional data to verify whether the measures adopted were sufficient or not for the sound management of swordfish fisheries.

* On the other hand, OCEANA claimed on the need for a recovery plan as to allow Mediterranean swordfish stock to recover and to maintain the fishery sustainable over time. Oceana considers that, among other measures, such a plan should:

- Cap the catches through the adoption of a Total Allowable Catch (TAC);
- Align the minimum conservation reference size to the initial mature size of this stock, as defined by the ICCAT manual (i.e. move minimum landing size from 90cm LJFL to 142cm LJFL);
- Reduce fleet capacity and adjust effort to fishing opportunities.

Archipelagos noted that the introduction of TACs and Quotas can contribute to the success of Med SWO recovery measures, provided that their national allocation is based on an equitable system of non-transferable quotas that fully reflects the criteria established in Art.17 of the reformed CFP.

MEDAC LETTER ABOUT IUU FISHING OF SWORDFISH

Rome, 2nd July 2020

57

To Charlina Vitcheva (Director-General, EC – DG MARE); Pascal Savouret (Executive Director, EFCA)

Dear Director General,

During the last MEDAC Working Group 1 meeting, which was held online on 3rd and 4th June, the results of the ICCAT stock assessment relative to Mediterranean Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) stocks were presented. On this occasion, and over the following days, some Spanish, French and Italian members of the Advisory Council reiterated their complaints regarding illegal fisheries carried out by some vessels from the Moroccan fleet, which employ driftnets to capture Mediterranean Swordfish in the Western Mediterranean.

Given that

- This IUU activity is not currently monitored in the Alboran Sea (Ref.43/2020 MEDAC);
- during the aforementioned MEDAC online meeting on 4th June, the representative of DG MARE invited the parties concerned to submit evidence to demonstrate their claims;
- the MEDAC and its members are not authorised to investigate these reports of IUU fishing further, compliance with regulations both in EU waters and beyond is, however, considered highly important so that all parties involved operate under the same conditions (level playing field);

Kindly find attached the documentation provided so far by the sector operators, the hope being that in the area in question, the Alboran sea, it may be possible for DG MARE to intensify controls in order to monitor and, if necessary, report any illegal fishery activities using driftnets.

The documentation includes: two videos, one of which relates to the vessel “Elmamoun-2” (detected at 36 ° 06.350 N and 002 ° 43.716W) and another whose coordinates are shown in the sequence of images), as well as a photo of the fishery products resulting from their activities in the fish market in Tangier. The photo attached highlights the problems related to how fish are stored and the minimum landing size.

We sincerely hope to be able to count on your support in combating illegal fishery activities, which risk making the measures applied so far to protect swordfish stock futile; please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

WG 3 – Working Group about the Green Deal



Marine National Park of Zakynthos, Greece © Claudia Amico / WWF Mediterranean / FishMPABlue



Delta del Ebro, Sant Carles de la Ràpita, Spain © Pau Llibre /FNCCP

WG 3 - Working Group about the Green Deal

TOPIC: Green Deal, Blue Economy and CO2 Emissions

MEDAC OPINION ON INVASIVE SPECIES AND ALGAE

Rome, 14th October 2020

58

Invasive alien species (IAS) are foreign organisms introduced artificially, accidentally, or intentionally and which eventually adapt to and even colonize their new environment. IAS can have severe ecological effects on the invaded environments. They may lack natural predators in their new environments, allowing them to quickly increase their abundance and spread. They can carry diseases, out compete, or prey on native species, and even alter food chains, because they are favoured by the climate change and the new environmental conditions. These impacts can lead to local or global extinctions of native species.

Globalization and the ease of connections facilitate the movement of species from their place of origin to new areas, a phenomenon which is further intensified by global warming. They may arrive accidentally through transport, or voluntarily and intentionally when they are introduced by humans for activities such as hunting or fishing.

Ships' ballast water is apparently proving to be the most common involuntary vehicle for transporting certain invasive species to other areas. These waters are used by ships for navigation, and species can be released when they are discharged in the ports where these vessels dock at the ends of their journey. Some scientists consider this to be the main vector of introduction of invasive alien species, and efforts should focus on more specific regulation of their control.

Since 2016, the presence of an extremely aggressive foreign alga (*Rugulopteryx okamurae*) was detected in the **Strait of Gibraltar** (Altamirano et al. 2016, 2017) and has since rapidly spread along southern coast of Spain, with confirmed populations from Cádiz until Almería provinces (Muñoz et al. 2019). The species occupies sea bottoms with coverages ranging from 80-100%, producing important environment and economic impacts, mainly in fisheries and tourism sector. The habitat of this species includes rocky bottoms from rock-pools until depths more than 30 m, but also can fix on other surfaces, like on crustaceans, manufactured materials and even other algae (García-Gómez et al. 2018). A high reproductive performance, mainly related with vegetative propagation due to propagules, has been suggested as a key factor explaining its high dispersal and invasive capacities (Altamirano et al. 2016, 2017, 2019) which maybe favoured by new introductions from the discharge of untreated ballast waters into the sea and by fishermen's inexperience in dealing with drifted material of the species entangled in the nets. Furthermore, Mediterranean waters exhibit a high environment favourability for the presence of the species (Muñoz et al. 2019), so it can be expected that other European Mediterranean countries may suffer the invasion of this species as well. Economic impacts on the fishing economy in the affected area are severe, due to drastic reduction of the captures of many species, damage to nets and traps and cleaning works.

In the case of **Andalusia, it currently extends from Huelva to Almería**, variously affecting different types of fishing, from longline fishing to fishing with nets and traps, and it has even been detected when trawling in deep waters. The impact of this alga on the fishing economy in each area

is severe and gradual, with a reduction of over 90% in the catches of different species in the case of the small-scale fishing fleet.

The American blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) was first sighted off the coast of **Catalonia** in around 2012, and **now extends as far as the Gulf of Cádiz**, where specimens have been observed and caught. This crustacean follows a similar pattern to other invasive species: it grows exponentially until it reaches an equilibrium due to the lack of food resources or the appearance of predators, with the logical effect on other species with low commercial value, in this case octopus.

The blue crab is an invasive species that is apparently impossible to eliminate from Mediterranean ecosystems; the only way to maintain these populations at manageable levels is maximum fishing pressure. It has become a target species in the sector, even in terms of marketing. A new model of action has been deployed against this invasive species that is now part of the circular economy, to maximise marine resources.

The appearance of these species poses a highly significant problem in the eastern Mediterranean, and they are gradually advancing westwards. Major changes have been detected in small-scale fisheries in Cyprus due to the emergence of various invasive species. *Lagocephalus scalaratus* is a main invader in the area creating problems such as damaging fishing gears by actively feeding on the commercial species caught by these and by decimating cephalopod populations. Other invasive species such as the Siganid species have a high commercial value in Cyprus and have entered the market for 3 decades now. *Pterois miles*, the invasive lionfish is proving to be a particular health risk to fisherman with fisherman being stung more frequently and with more severity as individual get larger in size.

Mnemiopsis leidyi is an invasive gelatinous organism of the phylum Ctenophora, originating from the Western Atlantic Ocean. Its accidental introduction through ballast waters in the early '80s has seriously altered fragile ecosystems of the Black and the Caspian Sea leading to the collapse of many important fisheries. Thus, the presence of *M. leidyi* in the **North-eastern (NE) Adriatic and Western Mediterranean** since 2009 (Boero et. al 2009; Fuentes et al., 2010) has risen concerns about the possible effects on fish stocks and the ecosystem of this semi-enclosed sea. The most recent observations include transitional environments, such as lagoons (Marambio et al., 2013; Thibault et al., 2014). The presence of *M. leidyi* in the S'Ena Arrubia Lagoon represents the first report in Sardinia and the first report of the species in a transitional ecosystem along the Italian coasts (Diciotti et al. 2016).

The appearance of this invasive species in 2017 & 2018 might have disturbed the zooplankton structure and abundance in the NE Adriatic with a negative effect on anchovy stock (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), similar to the effect recorded in the Black Sea (Paliaga et al, 2019). Fishermen's activity is also extremely burdened by gelatinous mass, which complicates the operations of emptying the fishing gear. Furthermore, the massive accumulation of the gelatinous mass near the fishing barricades may affect the lagoon sea exchanges. According to the fishermen's reports, the masses of *M. leidyi* clogging the fyke nets affected the European eel fishing activities in the S'Ena Arrubia Lagoon in autumn 2015. This aspect, accurately discussed by Palmieri et al. (2014) concerning the jellyfish blooms in Northern Adriatic, underlines the potential socio-economic harmfulness of this species. More than 700 non-indigenous marine plant and animal species have been recorded so far in the Mediterranean, many of them are favored by the warmer conditions (Marbà et al., 2015; Azzurro et al. 2011). Of these, more than 600 have established populations in the Mediterranean (Galil et al. 2018). Lessepsian species represent more than 50% of the nonindigenous species in the Mediterranean (Galil et al., 2018). The eastern Mediterranean is the area displaying the most severe environmental effects of invasive species. Some tropical invasive species create heavy disturbances in ecosystems, like tropical rabbit fish, which devastate algal forests (Vergés et al., 2014).

Their communication route is assumed to be the Suez Canal, and – depending on their resistance – they are spreading throughout the Mediterranean and beyond the Strait of Gibraltar. Combined with rising water temperatures, these species may be causing the displacement of native species to other areas. The sighting and detection of several species began in 2010: common lionfish (*Pterois miles*), parrotfish (*Scaridae*), rabbitfish or dusky spinefoot (*Siganus luridus* and *S. rivulatus*), silver-cheeked toadfish (*Lagocephalus sceleratus*), puffer fish (*Tetraodontidae*), bluespotted cornetfish (*Fistularia commersonii*) among others.

Globalization, climate change and human intervention will surely lead to the progressive appearance of new invasive species that will directly affect our fishing industry; on the one hand, by making normal activity impossible and causing a serious socio-economic impact; and on the other hand, by incorporating new invasive species into the local fauna that cannot be eradicated, but which can be commercialized and thus serve to contain their expansion.

It is important to highlight the impact of this type of invasive species – both flora and fauna – on the fishing sector itself and on the entire local economy. This is even more so in areas that are dependent on fishing or tourism, where it affects both jobs and the fishing economy, which are also intermittently affected by the arrival of large shoals of fish on their coasts, with the consequent costs and repercussions for the local economy.

The following actions are therefore considered necessary:

1. Constituting and developing an international coordination centre and a Mediterranean warning network to detect, monitor and manage invasions. The centre should be based or have monitoring centres close to the entry points of invasive species, such as Strait of Gibraltar or the Suez Canal. Then, for example in Eastern Mediterranean they should be located in Cyprus or Greece.
2. As part of a policy of preventing the appearance and spread of these species from ships' ballast waters, the European Union must urgently lead more strict measures to monitor the quality of the sea waters and promote the incorporation of these measures by the rest of the countries involved in maritime trade. There are some measures from IMO but apparently more strict measures must be enforced. The European Union must ensure that the Member States effectively implement control measures and sanctions against those who fail to comply with the measures of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ballast Water and Ship Sediments (BWM), in force since 8 September 2017, including the arrest or exclusion of the ship.
3. Coordinating the early warning network with the various advisory councils, foresee ably with the fleet and fishermen affected by the presence of this type of species, and with European institutions in order to transfer knowledge, activities, eradication measures, etc.
4. Assessing the damage to the professional fishing sector and designing action strategies, including the evaluation of their possible incorporation as target species for fishing.
5. Deciding on policies and tools to fight against invasive alien species and promoting outreach and dissemination actions.
6. Incorporating or arbitrating extraordinary direct and urgent aid to professionals in the fishing sector who have been negatively affected by the presence and spread of invasive species that hinder their fishing activities. Include compensation for damages caused by invasive species in the forthcoming programme of the new FEAMP.

7. Evaluating the social and economic impact of invasive species and their populations in coastal areas to incorporate measures to minimize the impact on their economic sectors.
8. Promote the collaboration between professionals' recreational fishers, Environmental associations and OIG¹ both in the detection and monitoring of invasive species, and in their control/elimination.²

¹ FACOPE, CEPESCA and FNCP don't agree on specifying the ACs partners and suggested the sentence as it follows: "Promote the collaboration between ACs partners both in the detection and monitoring of invasive species, and in their control/elimination".

² IFSUA and EAA support the following specification as additional point of the list: "Promote the collaboration of recreational fishermen both in the detection and monitoring of invasive species, as well as in their control/elimination by fishing". *While FACOPE, CEPESCA and FNCP don't agree on this specification.*

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MULTI-AC ADVICE ON THE “MARITIME SECTOR – A GREEN POST-COVID FUTURE” ROADMAP

59

10th December 2020

Background

In December 2019, the European Commission published its action plan to make the EU's economy sustainable, the European Green Deal¹, which will have an important effect, especially on fisheries management and seafood trade. It sets out the Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environment related challenges with a view to implementing a new growth strategy for a resource-efficient and competitive economy. The main objectives of the Green Deal are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, and the promise of leaving no person or place behind. Included in its key actions is the alignment of all new Commission initiatives in line with the objectives of the Green Deal and promoting innovation.

As part of this, the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries was tasked with developing a new approach on the Blue Economy by EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in order to make the Blue Economy sustainable and make it an integral part of the EU Green Deal.

The EU Blue Economy Report 2020² states that “the Blue Economy includes all those activities that are marine-based or marine-related” and identifies seven established sectors: marine living resources, marine non-living resources, marine renewable energy, port activities, shipbuilding and repair, maritime transport and coastal tourism. In 2018, these established sectors generated approx. €750 billion in turnover and employed close to 5 million people.

The seafood sector is one of the main contributors to the Blue Economy as the EU is the largest market in the world for seafood, with an estimated value of €55 billion and a volume of 12 million tons.³ In its economic analysis of the EU fish processing industry (link), the European Commission states that “Besides contributing to the availability of food supplies for consumers, the fisheries sector plays an important role in providing a fair standard of living for coastal communities, which are often located in rural areas where few economic alternatives exist. In this context, the fish processing industry acquires particular economic relevance given its significant contribution to the blue economy in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.”

In 2018 Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the Irish Seafood Development Agency, concluded that “on average the ancillary multiplier for the fishing sector in the European Union to be 0.3 FTE for every 1 FTE engaged in fishing activity while the aquaculture sector had a higher multiplier of 0.6 due to the more specialised equipment required.”⁴ The European seafood sector not only generates direct employment, for example in fisheries, aquaculture and processing, indirect employment through firms supplying and servicing this sector, but it also induces employment across other economic sectors catering for the seafood workforce. Bord Iascaigh Mhara continued its detailed economic analysis of the seafood sector in Ireland throughout 2019 by examining its impact on the ten main Irish fishing ports. The findings underline the significance of the seafood sector in rural economies in Ireland where for every four jobs, a further three are generated downstream⁵. In some areas the sector actually accounts for one in every two jobs⁶.

While these figures relate specifically to the Irish seafood sector, the findings are highly indicative of the significant economic contribution the seafood sector makes across Europe by providing direct employment and supporting employment downstream and in ancillary services. However, depending on the region, the size of the multipliers may vary possibly due to the fact that ancillary activities are a part of local culture in some areas and not in others.⁷

The sea and its stocks provide an ecosystem service to anglers that is both of a cultural and provisioning kind – benefits the sector seeks to continue and expand upon. Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) is swiftly growing to be the 2nd biggest outdoor sport with big health upsides for its participants – one of the clear growth opportunities is how angling can contribute to a healthier populace even more. The upcoming transition challenge to electricity powered boating is another, that will affect the yachting/boating industry across the board.

Right now, its growth potential in Europe remains a largely untapped opportunity for the Blue Economy, growth that would go hand in hand with enhanced data collection for scientific (status of vulnerable fish stocks), management (recording and reporting of all catch) and control purposes and the typically high socio-economic value that MRF has for coastal communities.

Emerging and innovative sectors related to the Blue Economy include marine renewable energy, blue bioeconomy and biotechnology, marine minerals, desalination, maritime defence, and submarine cables. However, there are many other economic activities linked to the Blue Economy beyond the above mentioned sectors.

As the Blue Economy encompasses such a wide range of activities and impacts, effective coordination is needed to drive the proposed transformation process. The EU and its Member States share competencies on many aspects requiring harmonisation, for example of policies, research and innovation, as well as public and private investments.

The new approach to a sustainable Blue Economy is shaped by the Commission together with stakeholders and will also be implemented in collaboration.

The three main pillars to this new approach are:

1. Preserving marine natural capital;
2. Sharing profits and investing in innovation;
3. Providing benefits to present and future generations.

Problems which the public consultation initiative aims to tackle include:

- Climate change and biodiversity loss, with specific mention made of declining fish stocks;
- Compartmentalisation;
- Knowledge gaps;
- Rapid change, with specific mention made of new and advanced IT tools that will probably optimise fishing operations and allow for better data collection, better monitoring, and ultimately better management of marine biological resources.

The members of the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC), the Market Advisory Council (MAC), the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC), the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC), the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC), and the Pelagic Advisory Council (PELAC) have come together to address challenges and opportunities related to this new approach based on their relevant expertise in catch fisheries, aquaculture, seafood processing, trading, and retailing. The Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC), Black Sea Advisory Council (BISAC), the South Western Waters Advisory Council (SWWAC) and the Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) have not taken part in the development of this document but can support its recommendations and conclusions.

EU fisheries are following the CFP regulation that ensures “fishing [...] is environmentally sustainable in the long-term and [...] is managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits”⁸. It therefore guarantees that EU fisheries are on the path⁹ to be truly sustainable from an environmental, economic, and social perspective.

Recommendations

The above mentioned ACs have structured their recommendations under the three pillars of the new approach to a sustainable Blue Economy, namely (1) preserving marine natural capital; (2) sharing profits and investing in innovation; and (3) providing benefits to present and future generations. This will allow to comprehensively address the varied activities within the seafood

sector and their respective challenges and opportunities, but also ensure that these activities will remain a part of an ecosystem-based Blue Economy: an economy that respects and adapts to the ecosystem it takes place in.

1. Preserving marine natural capital

- The EU and its Member States should promote the integration and ensure the coherence of the Blue Economy framework with other relevant governance frameworks such as for international ocean governance, climate and biodiversity.
- Both the European Commission and the Member States must put mechanisms in place ensuring that direct and indirect cumulative environmental effects of activities of the Blue Economy do not add to the pressure from climate change on the ocean or adversely impact one specific sector, for example fisheries, aquaculture, their value chains, and the on-shore activities. A coordinated approach and standards to include in the environmental impact assessments the relative weight of each human induced economic activity in the marine environment is desirable.
- It is vital to ensure a level playing field between all actors of the Blue Economy and implement both the same approaches – notably in respect of upholding sustainability principles – and levels of requirements, obligations, accountability and transparency across all sectors.
- Additionally, the EU has committed itself to the UN 2030 Lisbon Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In the field of fisheries management, both the EU and fishing businesses, operators and civil society have, in particular, contributed mainly to 10 out of 17 SDGs, namely 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health), 5 (Gender equality), 8 (Good jobs and economic growth), 12 (Responsible consumption), 13 (Climate action), 14 (Life below water)
 - and here specifically to provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets, 16 (Peace and justice) and 17 (Partnerships for the goal).
- To ensure reducing pressure on the oceans and seas and creating the conditions for a sustainable Blue Economy, the EU should continue working at strengthening compliance, eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and at preventing overfishing. For the case of IUU fishing, the IUU Regulation could be highlighted as a good example of a legal instrument with clear objectives and an effective implementation for, notably, EU flag states and third country coastal states in terms of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), but also trade¹⁰.
- To achieve a level playing field among Blue Economy operators and ensure compliance with international standards, the EU should strengthen the application and coordination of ex-ante and ex-post assessments of Blue Economy projects and strategies including environmental, social and economic impact assessments.
- Certain activities, such as deep-sea mining, oil and gas extraction or similar, are incompatible with the objectives of a sustainable Blue Economy and will need to be stopped altogether.
- In the light of climate change and its effects on seas and oceans, the European Commission and Member States should study and adopt appropriate mitigation measures in order to limit

negative impacts on natural resources, economic activities and coastal communities, in particular by providing internationally coordinated and operationally integrated actions to improve knowledge and monitoring.

- In order to strengthen the actions to face climate change, adaptation measures should also be envisaged in favour of fishermen and aquaculture producers at sea, including appropriate support measures in the financial and insurance instruments. For instance, there is huge potential in supporting investments in technology that reduces CO2 emissions in the fisheries thereby reducing the CO2 footprint from the Blue Economy. Furthermore, new market strategies aimed at increasing awareness of customers regarding new species should be agreed as a coordinated international action in the framework of the Blue Economy.
- For this purpose, angling can be leveraged, as it has always been a natural way for large groups of European citizens to get acquainted with local fish species. This could now play an important role for the acceptance of emerging species, new to certain regions as a result of climate driven migration, which could be of commercial interest for professional fishing as other local species might change in distribution or decrease in abundance.

2. Sharing profits and investing in innovation

- The European Commission needs to recognise that new Blue Economy activities lead to increasing space competition and that conflicts might arise with emerging activities pushing aside traditional ones. Fishing is the pre-existing activity in coastal areas and has profoundly shaped ways of life of local communities, now threatened. In the North Sea for instance the potential spatial overlap of fishing with renewable energy expansion is extremely important¹¹. This threatens the economic viability of large parts of the fishing fleet and coastal livelihoods. While marine fishing can only take place at sea, production of renewable energy could also be located on land. On this basis, it is recommended that a thorough analysis is carried out before deciding on locating energy infrastructures at sea.¹²
- Blue Economy considerations should not only focus on rough employment potential figures but take into account the geographical location of these jobs, the type of position offered and other leverage effect on other jobs on-shore locally and in the value chain. The small scale, large scale and distant water fisheries, together with the recreational sectors and their value chains represent a huge proportion of employment in isolated coastal regions of Europe.
- Investments in sustainable food production are needed to ensure increased resilience of the European seafood value chain and infrastructures (e.g. fleets, port activity etc.) and marine based aquaculture systems in the face of climate change impacts.
- Sustainable business practices (including public-private partnerships) across all sectors of the Blue Economy must be promoted equally and should take into account the European Commission's work on sustainable finance, taxonomy¹³ and non-financial reporting.
- Both the European Commission and the Member States must put transparent conflict resolution mechanisms in place ensuring that direct and indirect cumulative socio-economic effects of activities of the Blue Economy do not adversely impact one specific sector, for example fisheries, aquaculture, recreation, their value chains, and the on-shore activities.

- Promote the role of women in the sustainable fisheries value chain, particularly in inshore communities and in the shellfish gathering sector through implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on sustainable small scale fisheries. This relates to gender equity of opportunities, access to raw materials for processing and/or selling, decent working conditions, inclusiveness, visibility and representation in decision making structures and processes.
- Promote active policies from the Blue Economy aimed to recruit and attract young people to the fishing sector. It is vital to guarantee that new generations continue with the activity and facilitate unemployed young people and young entrepreneurs the access to an activity niche in the maritime and fishing sector.
- To create the conditions for a sustainable Blue Economy, the EU should ensure a level-playing field based on decent work and social sustainability in Blue Economy sectors and address justice and equity concerns related to Blue Economy development building on inclusive processes (associating in particular local coastal communities).

3. Providing benefits to present and future generations

- Benefits should not only be understood as economic ones, but also in terms of maximising contribution to food security and ensuring sustainable and healthy seafood for human consumption.
- Focus is needed on the just transition for fishers (both professional /commercial and recreational) to secure the sustainable socio-economic development and resilience of coastal communities now and into the future.
- Access to finance is crucial to support fisher(wo)men's transition towards more sustainable fishing practices. The EU taxonomy could be an example on how to direct EU recovery funds in the fishery sector, with specific attention given to fisherwomen's access to these funds.
- To ensure the continuity of fishing as the first Blue Economy activity, the Commission needs to work on increasing the attractiveness of the sector for young fishers. We would encourage the Commission to improve the choice of opportunities for young people in our Member States and specifically our coastal communities through developing skills that would be inter-usable between the marine sectors to help sustain our coastal communities' future generations.
- The EU Blue Economy strategy will be a key instrument in achieving the EU's objectives outlined in the European Commission's Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, and vice-versa, as the two strategies are intertwined. In our market economy, consumer demand for local and sustainably produced seafood is instrumental to drive effective change in production practices. Verifiable, traceable, transparent and credible labelling is an essential tool to inform and incentivise consumers and to induce change down the supply chains. The contribution of independent certification programmes in the development of this tool should be also taken into account.

Conclusions

The seafood sector has continually worked on improving its sustainability performance with a multitude of initiatives and improvements implemented over the years, including improved fisheries management at sea, more efficient and effective aquaculture practices, as well as increased resource

efficiency in seafood processing. The sector is highly regulated, and its members persistently strive to address the balance between the three pillars of sustainability through individual, national or trans-national initiatives.

Though seafood has a lower carbon footprint on average compared to land-based animal protein production¹⁴, and the sector has been steadily decreasing its CO2 emissions for at least the past 10 years¹⁵, the sector recognises the importance of continual improvement regarding its environmental performance - in order to fully transition to more sustainable and low impact seafood systems - and is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainable performance of the sector. This will also allow to safeguard its contribution to a healthy marine environment, nutritious food production, and resilient coastal communities, which is also true for the recreational sector.

When looking at EU seafood imports, several cases of human rights violations can be highlighted, including the violations of labour rights by some industrial fishing fleets that supply fish for the EU market, or the imports of fishmeal and fish oil from West Africa that threaten the right to food of African populations. As the EU market is the most important and lucrative market for fish products globally, a future legislation that would ensure products placed on the EU market are free from human rights violations in their supply chains, as suggested by the Farm to Fork Strategy, would be an opportunity to address these concerns in the EU, but also to lead the way in global fisheries. At the same time, it is important that the environmental sustainability of imported products is ensured in the interest of EU consumers and to guarantee a level-playing field for the EU seafood sector¹⁶, in accordance with the current EU control, import and trade measures in force.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, The European Green Deal, COM/2019/640 final (link)

² https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/published-reports_en

³ PrimeFish (link) accessed November 2020

⁴ Bord Iascaigh Mhara 2018: A Top-Down Estimation of the Downstream Employment Generated by the Irish Seafood Sector (link).

For more information on FTE in each Member State, please consult the report by STECF: The 2020 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 20-06), Prellezo, R., Carvalho, N. and Guillen Garcia, J. editor(s). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, EUR 28359 EN (link)

⁵ Bord Iascaigh Mhara 2020: The Economic Impact of the Seafood Sector at Ireland's Main Ports (link)

⁶ Bord Iascaigh Mhara 2020: The Economic Impact of the Seafood Sector: Castletownbere (link)

⁷ European Commission (2016): Study on the economic importance of activities ancillary to fishing in the EU. MARE/2011/01 Lot 2, Contract Service No 11 (link)

⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013

⁹ The Pew Charitable Trusts, ClientEarth, FishSec, Oceana, Seas at Risk, Our Fish: reply to the Commission on the state of progress in implementing the CFP through the setting of fishing opportunities (link)

¹⁰ There are also market states involved in the IUU Regulation and the carding system is primarily a trade (ban) measure.

¹¹ Stelzenmüller, V. et al., 2020, Research for PECH Committee – Impact of the use of offshore wind and other marine renewables on European fisheries. European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/652212/IPOL_STU\(2020\)652212_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/652212/IPOL_STU(2020)652212_EN.pdf)

¹² This is an important dimension to bear in mind when considering the EU Commission's communication: "An EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future" Ref {SWD(2020) 273 final}

¹³ EU taxonomy for sustainable activities (link)

¹⁴ Clune, Stephen, Enda Crossin, and Karli Verghese. 2017. 'Systematic Review of Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Different Fresh Food Categories'. Journal of Cleaner Production 140 (January): 766–83. (link)

¹⁵ 17% fuel consumption decrease from 2009 to 2017 (and continued reduction of fleet size since 1996 at least). European Commission. Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. (2020). Facts and figures on the common fisheries policy: basic statistical data: 2020 edition. Publications Office. <https://doi.org/10.2771/553870>

¹⁶ For more information on the MAC's view on the topic of level-playing field, please consult this advice: link

ANNEX – AC advice related to aspects of the Blue Economy

Long Distance AC 2020

- LDAC Reply to EC Targeted Consultation on IOG – October (link)
- LDAC advice on addressing role of women in fisheries – example of EU SFPAs (link)

2019

- LDAC Opinion on Deepsea Mining (link)
- LDAC letter on implementation of SMEFF Regulation (link)

2018

- LDAC Recommendations on Strengthening the EU role in International Fisheries Governance - December (link)

Market AC 2020

- MAC Advice on Level Playing field (link)
- MAC Letter on Public Online Consultation on Horizon Europe Co-Design 2021-2024 (link)
- MAC Advice on Consumer Information on Fishery and Aquaculture Products (link)
- MAC Advice on Better Alignment of Import Control Schemes in Major Market States (link)

2018

- MAC Opinion on EU Fisheries Control System (link)

MEDAC 2020

- MEDAC opinion on invasive species and algae (link)
- MEDAC letter on GFCM Strategy 2021-2025-Integration of the previous MEDAC contribution (link)
- MEDAC Opinion “Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for

2021” (link)

- Multi-AC Advice on the implementation of Single Use Plastics Directive and operational aspect of the Fishing for Litter Scheme.

North Sea AC

- NWWAC, PELAC and NSAC advice for a non-recurrent request to ICES on the impact of marine wind energy developments on commercial fish stocks (link)
- NSAC Advice to Commission on Circular Design of Fishing Gear and endorsement of the NWWAC Multi-AC Advice on the implementation of the Single Use Plastics Directive and operational aspects of the Fishing for Litter Scheme (link)
- NSAC Advice on Port Reception Facilities (link)
- NSAC Advice on NSAC engagement with TenneT proposal for a North Sea Wind Power Hub (link)

North Western Waters AC 2020

- NWWAC, PELAC and NSAC advice for a non-recurrent request to ICES on the impact of marine wind energy developments on commercial fish stocks (link)
- NWWAC electronic response to the Open Public Consultation on the European Climate Pact, within the European Green Deal
- NWWAC electronic response to the public consultation for the EU climate ambition for 2030 and for the design of certain climate and energy policies of the European Green Deal
- NWWAC electronic response to the Open Public Consultation: New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change

- Joint NWWAC/PELAC advice for a non-recurrent request to ICES on the potential impacts of seismic activities ([link](#))
- Multi-AC Advice on the implementation of the Single Use Plastics Directive and operational aspects of the Fishing for Litter Scheme ([link](#))

2019

- NWWAC Request for setup ICES working group to investigate impacts of seismic activities on fish stocks in the North Western Waters ([link](#))

Pelagic AC 2020

- Pelagic AC recommendation on deep-sea mining activities ([link](#))
- NWWAC & PELAC advice for non-recurrent request to ICES on seismic impacts ([link](#))
- NWWAC, PELAC and NSAC advice for a non-recurrent request to ICES on the impact of marine wind energy developments on commercial fish stocks ([link](#))

2019

- Request for setup ICES working group to investigate impacts of seismic activities on (herring) spawning grounds ([link](#))
- Setting-up of an ICES working group to investigate impacts of seismic activities on (herring) spawning grou

MEDAC ADVICE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Rome, 30th March 2021

60

The MEDAC, having deepened the topic of climate change, through the collaboration of researchers who presented at the MEDAC meetings of 28 September 2020 and 30 October 2020 the main scientific knowledge regarding the impact on fisheries.

whereas:

GENERAL PREMISES

Recent accelerated climate change has exacerbated existing environmental problems in the Mediterranean basin caused by the combination of changes in land use, increasing pollution and declining biodiversity (MedECC, 2019¹) – George Triantaphyllidis²;

Climate changes affects the productivity of stocks through changes in recruitment and interactions with trophic web. Therefore, assessment and management should consider effects of climate and sea change on the resources – Fabio Fiorentino³;

It seems that climate change is affecting the Mediterranean Basin more than ever and that climate change impacts fisheries through multiple path-ways; (Shelton, 2014⁴) - George Triantaphyllidis⁵; Scientific literature shows several evidences that climate changes are negative on fisheries (Free et al., 2019; Gaines et al., 2018; Moullec et al., 2014) although some works based on global ocean models suggest future primary production increase in some higher latitude areas with potential benefits for fisheries (Barange et al., 2014) – Simone Libralato⁶;

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: 1. TEMPERATURE

Scientists observed Earth's surface warming and many of the warmest years have been recorded in the past 20 years⁷ - George Triantaphyllidis⁸.

For the Mediterranean region, average annual air temperatures now range approximately 1.5°C higher than during the preindustrial period (1880-1899) and well above current global warming trends (+1.1°C). (Cramer et al., 2018⁹) - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁰;

Warming of the Mediterranean Sea surface is currently estimated at 0.4°C per decade for the period between 1985 and 2006 (+0.3°C per decade for the western basin and +0.5°C per decade for the eastern basin). The projections for 2100 vary between +1.8°C and +3.5°C in average compared to the period between 1961 and 1990. The Balearic Islands, the northwest Ionian, the Aegean and Levantine Seas have been identified as the regions with maximum increase of sea surface Temperature (Adloff et al. 2015¹¹) - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁰;

Similar to worldwide trends caused by warming and loss of glacial ice, sea level in the Mediterranean has risen between 1945 and 2000 at a rate of 0.7mm per year [Calafat & Gomis – 2009¹²] and between 1970 and 2006 at the level of 1.1 mm per year (Meyssignac et al. – 2010¹³) - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁰;

Meeting the Paris Agreement global warming target of 1.5°C will have large benefits to Fisheries: for every degree Celsius decrease in global warming, potential fish catches could increase by more than three million tonnes per year ¹⁴ - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁰;

Scientists compared the Paris Agreement 1.5°C warming scenario to the currently pledged 3.5°C by using computer models to simulate changes in global fisheries and quantify losses or gains. Due to the migration of fish towards cooler waters, climate change would also cause more species turnover, altering the composition of species within the stocks. This would have impacts on fishers and make fisheries management more difficult. (Cheung et al., 2016¹⁵) - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁰;

Increasing water temperatures in Mediterranean lead to changes in species composition and abundance: in general, coldwater species become less abundant or extinct and warm-water species become more abundant, leading to homogenization of the Mediterranean biota with warm-water species. (Moullec et al., 2016¹⁶) George Triantaphyllidis¹⁷;

Due to the warming of the Mediterranean, warm-water species, like the blue runner, the Mediterranean parrotfish, the common dolphinfish, the grey triggerfish and the barracuda are moving northwards (Azzurro E, Moschella P, Maynou F - 2011)¹⁸ - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁷;

Also, seagrass meadows (which represent an important habitat but also a carbon sink) are vulnerable to seawater warming (Licandro et al. - 2010)¹⁹ - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁷;

The effects of global change are particularly serious in areas where range shifts of species are physically constrained such as in the Ligurian Sea, one of the coldest sectors of the Mediterranean (Paravicini et al. - 2015)²⁰ - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁷;

However, climate-induced changes may also offer new opportunities to some Mediterranean fisheries, with increased landings of warmwater species, some of which of high commercial interest (e.g., the mahi-mahi *C. hippurus*). (Moullec et al., 2016²¹) - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁷;

There is a different ecological optimal temperature of sardine (SST range 12 - 14 °C) and anchovy (SST range 17– 19°C) (by Palomera et al., 2007): increasing water temperature, in particular in winter, when sardines reproduce, may decrease breeding performances and cause population decline; warming, on the other hand, may result in an improvement of the spawning success for anchovy - Fabio Fiorentino²²;

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: 2. ACIDIFICATION

In the Mediterranean Sea, all waters have been acidified by values ranging from –0.156 to –0.055 pH units since the beginning of the industrial era, which is clearly higher than elsewhere in the open ocean (Touratier and Goyet, 2011; Hassoun et al., 2015) - George Triantaphyllidis¹⁷;

Ocean acidification is already impacting many ocean species, especially organisms like oysters and corals that make hard shells and skeletons by combining calcium and carbonate from seawater.

However, as ocean acidification increases, available carbonate ions bond with excess hydrogen, resulting in fewer carbonate ions available for calcifying organisms to build and maintain their shells, skeletons, and other calcium carbonate structures. If the pH gets too low, shells and skeletons can even begin to dissolve. (NOOA)²³ - George Triantaphyllidis²⁴;

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: 1. CO₂ INCREASE

In the last two centuries the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere has increased due to human actions: during this time, the pH of surface ocean waters has fallen by 0.1 pH units. This change represents approximately a 30 % increase in acidity. [Source: NOAA, cit.] - George Triantaphyllidis²⁴;

Changes in ocean conditions that affect fishing catch potential, such as temperature and oxygen concentration, are strongly related to atmospheric warming and therefore also carbon emissions. For every metric ton of CO₂ emitted into the atmosphere, the maximum catch potential decreases by a significant amount (Cheung et al., 2016, Science) - George Triantaphyllidis²⁴;

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: 1. SALINITY CHANGE

For Mediterranean coasts, regional changes in river runoff, provoking salinity changes and also significant land movements in the eastern parts of the basin needs to be considered. In addition to the impacts of global sea level change, circulation patterns in the Mediterranean may also be modified and generate changing regional sea level patterns, with local differences in sea surface height of up to 10 cm. (Aucelli PPC et al. - 2017)²⁵ - George Triantaphyllidis²⁴;

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: 1. ALIEN SPECIES

Most species from warmer regions enter the Mediterranean from the Red Sea through the recently widened Suez Canal (they are referred to as Lessepsian species), others are transported accidentally through ballast water from ships. More than 700 non-indigenous marine plant and animal species have been recorded so far in the Mediterranean, many of them are favored by the warmer conditions (Marbà Jorda, Agustí, Girard, Duarte (2015)²⁶; Azzurro, Moschella, Maynou – 2011²⁷) - George Triantaphyllidis²⁴;

The eastern Mediterranean is the area displaying the most severe environmental effects of invasive species. Some tropical invasive species create heavy disturbances in ecosystems, like tropical rabbit fish, which devastate algal forests. (Vergés et al. - 2014)²⁸ - Tria 18; Moreover, the western Mediterranean it is being affected by invasive species, in smaller numbers but not to a lesser extent, such as the alga *Rugulopterix okamurae*.

Movements of species and introduction of alien species represent in some cases a compensation of criticalities (e.g. bluefish; blue crab) - Accounting for thermal, alien and competition effects result in negative future effects even including some adaptation of fisheries to new species. (Libralato S., Caccin A. and Pranovi F., 2015²⁹; Gaines, S. D., Costello, C., Owashi, B., Mangin, T., Bone, J., Molinos, J. G., ... & Ovando, D., 2018³⁰; Cheung, W. W., Pinnegar, J., Merino, G., Jones, M. C., & Barange, M., 2012³¹) - Simone Libralato³².

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: 1. WINNERS AND LOSERS

The bulk of increase in catch and biomass would be located in the southeastern part of the basin while total catch could decrease by up to 23% in the western part. Winner species would mainly belong to the pelagic group, thermophilic and/or exotic, of smaller size and of low trophic level while loser species are generally large-sized, some of them of great commercial interest, and could suffer from a spatial mismatch with potential prey subsequent to a contraction or shift of their ge-

ographic range. (Moullec, F., Barrier, N., Drira, S., Guilhaumon, F., Marsaleix, P., Somot, S., Shin, Y.-J., 2019)³³ - George Triantaphyllidis³⁴;

Future changes in biomass are expected to slightly differ depending on the vertical distribution of species in the water column. By the middle of the century, the biomass of demersal species could increase by 3% whereas benthic biomass could decrease by 2%. Pelagic species, with an increase in biomass of 7%, could benefit the most from the increase in plankton productivity. Despite the global increase, the biomass of some species of high commercial interest is expected to decline, for instance, hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and Atlantic mackerel biomass could decrease by 26 and 15%, respectively. On the other hand, the biomass of other species of commercial interest, mainly pelagic species such as anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), mahi mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*), blue fin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), or sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*), are expected to increase by 35, 34, 9, and 6%, respectively. (Moullec, F., Barrier, N., Drira, S., Guilhaumon, F., Marsaleix, P., Somot, S., ... Shin, Y.-J., 2019)³⁵ - George Triantaphyllidis³⁴;

The main studied effect is the increased temperature and SOME of its direct effects on population growth/metabolism/reproduction success. In this context the impacts of increased temperatures determine winners and losers even among resident local species. (Libralato, Caccin and Pranovi, 2015³⁶ ; Albouy, C., Leprieur, F., Le Loc'h, F., Mouquet, N., Meynard, C. N., Douzery, E. J., & Mouillot, 2015³⁷; Tzanatos, E., Raitsos, D. E., Triantafyllou, G., Somarakis, S., & Tsonis, A. , 2014³⁸) – Simone Libralato³⁹.

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES: OTHER FACTORS

Climate change is only one component of global change. In the Mediterranean Sea, perhaps more than elsewhere, climate change is likely to act in synergy with other increasing anthropogenic disturbances such as pollution, eutrophication, overexploitation of resources and habitat modification and destruction, [and others] all of which playing a major role in altering the structure and functioning of ecosystems. (Moullec Fabien, Frida Ben Rais Lasram, Marta Coll, François Guilhaumon, François Le Loc'h et Yunne-Jai Shin 2016⁴⁰) - George Triantaphyllidis⁴¹;

Other effects might be considered relevant however, such as increase pH and especially future changes in primary production: climatic effects (less mixing, higher SST etc) are resulting in decrease in PP (because of nutrient limitation and higher metabolism) with overwhelming general effects on marine food web (Behrenfeld, M. J., O'Malley, R. T., Siegel, D. A., McClain, C. R., Sarmiento, J. L., Feldman, G. C., ... & Boss, E. S., 2006⁴²; Barange, M., Merino, G., Blanchard, J. L., Scholtens, J., Harle, J., Allison, E. H., ... & Jennings, S., 2014⁴³) – Simone Libralato⁴⁴.

PROJECTS AND STUDIES ON CLIMATE CHANGES IN FISHERIES

The network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), involving 400 scientific experts supported by government agencies, Union for the Mediterranean and Plan Bleu (UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Center) and other partners, produced a full synthesis of risks and presented it to decision makers for debate and approval (MedECC 2019) - George Triantaphyllidis⁴¹;

The Climefish project in Western Mediterranean run the Vulnerability assessment of various impacts belonging to 4 main groups (community and livelihoods, fisheries resources, fishing operations and wider society and economy implications) (Climefish.eu) - George Triantaphyllidis⁴¹;

Climate change adaptation was studied by FAO⁴⁵ providing a portfolio of climate adaptation tools and methods recommended such as 1) Institutional and management, 2) livelihoods, and 3) risk reduction and management for resilience - George Triantaphyllidis⁴⁶;

Important trends observed over the twenty-first century show a decrease of anchovy and sardine stocks, the expansion of other thermophilic species (round sardinella) and the contraction in distribution of cold-water species (sprat). The strong dependence of pelagic species upon river runoff variability and the very likely decrease in precipitation in the Mediterranean will have negative implications for pelagic species. (FAO, 2018) – Fabio Grati⁴⁷;

The composition of the demersal communities has changed in the Mediterranean region in recent decades with a higher contribution of warmwater species, which are progressively colonizing northern areas concomitant with a regression of cold-water species. (Lloret et al., 2015) – Fabio Grati⁴⁷;

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FROM SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Improved fisheries and ecosystems management in an overexploited Mediterranean Sea could have the potential to offset many negative effects of climate change. Given the already poor conditions of some exploited resources, these results suggest the need for fisheries management to adapt to future changes and to incorporate climate change impacts in future management strategy evaluation. (Triantaphyllidis G., Medac, 2020) - George Triantaphyllidis⁴⁶;

The MEDAC considers that

- (FUTURE MAP) the effects of climate change on fish stocks, in particular those related to rising water temperature and salinity changes, should be taken into account in future multi-annual fisheries plans.
- (MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION STUDIES) with regard to the current and future effects of climate change and the threats it poses, adaptation and mitigation measures should start with a good understanding of each fishing or aquaculture system and an accurate assessment of climate variability and likely future impacts on the environment, people and biodiversity, in order to strengthen productive and resilient aquatic ecosystems and maintain benefits for consumers and animal health.
- (MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION INVESTMENTS) it is urgent, in order to prevent, prepare for and mitigate the impact of extreme events and disasters on fisheries and aquaculture, to invest heavily in risk detection and reduction through mitigation and adaptation measures for the environment and the fishing economy.
- (MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION SUPPORT) the EU institutions, in agreement with the Member States, should pay the outmost attention to the study, development and activation of detection, mitigation and adaptation actions, including, where possible, also financial support for the damaged fishing communities.
- (SUPPORT) the fisheries sector should be shielded and supported, as it is one of the main traditional human activities conducted in the marine environment, making it a key component of integrated maritime policy and maritime spatial planning, as well as the maintenance of the economic and social activity of a large part of the Mediterranean coast.
- (THREATS REDUCTION AND OPPORTUNITIES SEIZING) On the one hand, the threats arising from climate change should be reduced or contrasted and, on the other hand, should be seized any opportunities arising from the same climatic changes, such as the introduction of new species into marketing, even if they come from outside the Mediterranean.
- (RESEARCH) It's very important the strengthening and development of international scientific programs to monitor the temperature, salinity and heat absorption of the oceans

and the seas in order to better predict the impact of climate change on their functioning, carbon absorption and management of living marine resources. The program should be focused not just only on sea water parameters but also on fisheries and indirect factors that can accentuate climate change such as changes in land use and pollution for example.

- (MS INFORMATION NETWORK) Within an alert program, an information network must be developed among the MS that can quickly indicate any changes in fishing conditions and resources following the climate change, to quickly grasp the problems and implement measures to combat and, in the long term, to manage the problems.

Calls

- for a transition from reactive management, in the wake of disasters, to proactive management and measures to reduce risk and further climate-related threats.
- for a proactive management of extreme events, considering it a matter of urgency to invest in adaptation measures for climate resilience (such as safety at sea, climate-resilient infrastructure, etc.), risk reduction and climate disaster prevention, while safeguarding the health of the aquatic ecosystem and providing for specific measures in the future EMFF to support affected sectors.
- on the Commission to take these requests into account and to respond to them in its new climate change adaptation strategy (New Green Deal), which it plans to submit by the end of 2021, and in all its forthcoming legislative proposal.

Invites

- The Commission and the Member States to provide for appropriate support measures, such as insurance regimes and social protection systems for the groups that are the most exposed to climate change.
- The Commission and the Member States to deepen knowledge: 1. on the impacts of climate change, now and in the future, to anticipate measures to adapt to change, as well as 2. on the adaptation of fisheries,
- The Commission and the Member States to incorporate flexibility and adaptation in fisheries laws, regulation, and enforcement to allow fishing sector to adapt,
- The Commission and the Member States to support the adaptation of the downstream sector, including consumers, to promote new species favoured by climate change.

Recommendations

- To enforce effective monitoring, control and surveillance

Ultimately, sustainability comes down to optimal resource management – if fishery regulations are absent or ignored, controlling what goes on there is impossible. Permits, seasonal closures, fishing opportunities, protected areas – all can contribute to sustainable management. Control bodies should be reinforced with tools and resources they need, and the culture of compliance should be endorsed and promoted by the fishers themselves.

- Adaptive management

By definition, climate change implies a situation that is constantly evolving, and fisheries management needs to keep pace to ensure adaptive measures remain appropriate and effective. Therefore, it is necessary to:

- o Promote greater consideration of adaptation to climate change in the guidelines

- and integrated community policies (in particular the Common Fisheries Policy),
- Consider alternative management approaches (e.g., changing from effort limits to catch limits to adjust exploitation rates when catch potential is unstable),
- Promote innovation and the adaptation of fishing vessels (safety, habitability and respect of the environment) considering the need of the fishing fleets to explore new fishing grounds adapting to movements and migrations of certain species in response to climate change (often towards offshore areas) balancing fishing capacity with the status of target stocks.
- To take into account the distribution of fish stock in response to climate change in managing marine resources.

- Co-management

Fishers rightly place great importance on participatory management structures, which could be implemented via multi-stakeholder management committees at fishery and regional levels. As well as making the active support of local fishers much more likely, such structures benefit from their unique knowledge and observations of what's really going on in the water – this perspective is an invaluable complement to the fine-grained scientific projections and analysis.

- Precautionary targets and an ecosystem-based approach

The increasing risks that climate change determine, can be mitigated with an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management that supports a broader ecosystem resilience. Selectivity is, for example, a tool to reduce unwanted catches.

- Research development

Some effects have been highlighted such as for example the changes in species composition and abundance, emergence of invasive species, food web modifications or impact on water resources. However, effects of complex climate changes on fish stocks and their consequences on fisheries need to be deepened.

About fisheries adaptation, planning based on alternative scenarios that integrates knowledge from all stakeholders is needed – and the range of potential outcomes to plan for, must integrate social factors as well as climatic and fishery science. This is another area where the role of women should be highlighted, as a driver of efficiency and sustainability.

NOTES

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NWWAC-MEDAC-SWWAC-CCRUP FEEDBACK ON PUBLIC INITIATIVE “CO2 EMISSIONS OF ENGINES - METHODOLOGY FOR THEIR REDUCTION”

61

Dun Laoghaire, 6th August 2021

To Charlina Vitcheva (Director-General, EC – DG MARE);

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

The North Western Waters Advisory Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Implementing Regulation establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 as regards the identification of energy efficient technologies and the specification of methodology elements to determine the normal fishing effort of fishing vessels.

The present feedback has also been examined by the MEDAC, CC RUP and SWWAC Executive Committees who agreed to grant their support after contribution to the final draft by some of their members.

First of all, the NWWAC would like to highlight that in this day and age, modern (gas oil) engines must lead to a large reduction of environmental impact according to the IMO-legislation. In addition, the European fishing industry has already taken many steps through efficient technologies that contribute to a reduction of CO2 emissions. Examples are the use of Cruise Control, econometers and specific training for crew members. The NWWAC therefore recommends taking this into account when establishing reference points for the reduction measurement.

Moreover, NWWAC members wish to point out that, as a primary sector, the fishing sector provides the necessary and sustainable food to EU citizens with the lowest carbon footprint of all healthy and nutritious protein sources. However, it is important to note that the impact of fishing on carbon rich ecosystems like seagrass meadows, which are known to contribute to the fight against climate change, are not taken into account when calculating the footprint of fish protein. Specific comments and feedbacks to the articles included in the draft Implementing Regulation are provided below.

Article 1:

Article 18 (5) second paragraph point (a) says that « *the new engine uses energy efficient technology and the age difference between the new and replaced engine is at least 7 years* ». NWWAC members are concerned about the list of “energy efficient technologies”, including hydrogen, ammonia and alternative fuel. These technologies are not mature yet and it is unlikely that these will be successfully adapted to work on fishing vessels before the end of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) programming period until 2027.

- Hydrogen and other new technologies have several limits, especially related to storage on board, which can compromise catch storage, affecting EU management by capacity of the fishing effort, in turn potentially impacting the crew accommodation and ship's safety areas.
- While ammonia certainly has the energy potential for a marine fuel, to date most of it is the product of a highly carbon-intensive process. The supply of “green” ammonia, produced using carbon-neutral methods, still needs to develop properly. Other challenges including toxicity, corrosiveness, slow ignition, and NO emissions are also still being investigated.
- It is not clear what the text refers to when it mentions “any other zero direct (tailpipe) CO2 emission fuel”.
- For what concerns engines powered by electricity, in view of the technologies currently being developed for transport on land and future difficulties in calculating the engine power of an electric motor, this technology will hardly be available for fishing vessels before 2027.
- Only electric/fuel hybridization seems to be within reach (in the short term). However, the degree of hybridization required is not specified.
- It is not clear why the text is only mentioning fuel cells and not internal combustion as well, which has shown to be cheaper. Also, the list mentions only the ICE hybrid and not the fuel cell hybrid.
- There is not mention of new zero-carbon vessel propulsion technologies like wind-assist technology which can dramatically lower fossil-fuel carbon emissions in the short term, and help prepare the industry for a new era of scarce and more expensive future zero-carbon fuels.

Article 2:

Article 18 (5) second paragraph point (c) seems complicated to implement (and likely to slow down funding applications if a thorough case-by-case study is needed). The measure based on the average of ten representative fishing trips over the three calendar years preceding the application for support implies that it will be necessary to define what a “representative trip” is. In particular, this can be complicated for mixed fisheries and vessels which change activity during the year (e.g. a trawler that alternates between bottom and pelagic fishing). Moreover, the definition of “representative trip” has to integrate parameters which are not always easy to measure: characteristics and fishing patterns, time spent at sea, fishing travel/activity, engine power used, associated sea conditions, etc. The NWWAC recommends considering an average based on annual consumption and accompanied by certification from the engine manufacturer of a better efficiency of the replacement engine, based on a comparison of engine specific consumption and type of engine. It is important to not limit the list to what is now considered to be a “efficient” technology. This

list should be left open, to take into account other technologies that are not listed or do not exist today. Otherwise, there is the risk that it would strongly limit the applicants' possibility to be eligible for the replacement or modernization of the engine (article 18.2 point (d)).

NWWAC members also highlights that the bureaucratic procedures for verifying emission reductions or fuel consumption should not unduly slow down the effectiveness of the measure.

Moreover, the NWWAC points out that it is regrettable that under the new fund there is no support for alternative emission reduction measures that don't induce fishing overcapacity for all categories of fishing vessels. It is the NWWAC's view that any contribution to achieving the Green Deal objectives through investment in energy efficient technologies should be eligible for such support, but only when such measures don't induce overcapacity and overfishing of the EU fleet.

Finally, the NWWAC notes that this policy, as well as international commitments, seem to be framed solely on CO2, but all GHG should be considered in the transition. For example, LNG may represent a solution to comply with regulations reducing CO2 emissions, however methane has a stronger GHG effect than CO2. We recommend that research is carried out looking at costs for fishing vessels (including small-scale vessels) for the different groups of fuels, including fuels from renewable electricity, bio-fuels and blue fuels derived from natural gas on land, with carbon sequestration equipment on the production process, to estimate what the sum of the capital cost, i.e. the investment made on the vessel for storage for example, and the actual fuel cost would be and their evolvement over the next decades. Results from this analysis could support the definition and adaptation of national and international strategies towards fleet decarbonisation.

Thank you for your attention on this matter. We look forward to hearing from you soon.
Yours sincerely.

WG 4 - Working Group about Recreational Fisheries



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Circeo, Italy © Paolo Petrignani

WG 4 - Working Group about Recreational Fisheries

TOPIC: Recreational Fisheries

RAC MED POSITION ON RECREATIONAL FISHING

Rome, 5th May 2011

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The MED RAC Executive Committee adopts, through written procedure the position approved by the members of the working group on recreational fishing that took place in Barcelona on March 23, 2011, in order to present it during the 35th Session of the GFCM where the recommendations proposed by SCESS of the SAC (Scientific Advisory Committee), will be examined.

In particular, regarding the SCESS recommendations at pag.6 of the document: GFCM/SAC 13/2011/INF.7 Draft Report of the 11th Session of the SAC/SCESS, the RAC MED expressed its unanimous support as to the following points:

i. Adopt and include to the GFCM Glossary the following amended definitions:

1. Recreational fishing: *Fishing activities exploiting marine living aquatic resources for leisure or sport purposes from which it is prohibited to sell or trade the catches obtained.*
2. Underwater fishing: *Recreational fishing activity practiced as a sport or for leisure by snorkeling techniques without the help of mechanical devices (e.g.scooter);*

ii. Provide a definition of “Pesca turismo” to be included in the GFCM Glossary; (It was agreed that “Pesca turismo” should not be part of recreational fishing and required a definition to be drafted);

iii. The SCESS underlined the importance to develop a common and harmonized scientific monitoring framework protocol for recreational fisheries. The SCESS recommended that a regional study be carried out to overview the recreational fishing activities with the following data, in order to estimate basic indicators of recreational fisheries for each segment (leisure and sport) and also for each modality (shore based, boat based, underwater fishing):

- a Number of licenses issued
- b Targeted species list
- c Catch amounts by targeted species (kg)
- d Recreational fishing expenditures per fisher (hotel, restaurant, transport, fishing gears [e.g. baits and accessories], etc.)
- e Age and gender of the recreational fisher
- f Fishing days per year and average hours per fishing day

*iv. The SCESS recommended that an **obligatory** licensing system should be **adopted** for the recreational fisheries in the GFCM area (not to be seen as a tax or levy, but used only for monitoring and enforcement of the sector)*

- The SCESS recommended the elaboration of a Code of Practice/technical guidelines on recreational fisheries, in support of the responsible development, promotion and management of recreational fisheries in the GFCM area.

63 RAC MED OPINION ON DEFINITIONS OF RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Rome, 27th March 2012

The Executive Committee, held in Rome on March 27, adopted the opinion proposed by the Working Group on recreational fisheries (WG4), held in Rome on 29th February 2012, on the following definitions of recreational and sport fishing following the definitions given by the GFCM/SAC Glossary here below:

- *“Recreational fishing:* Non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living aquatic resources. For Mediterranean fisheries management purposes it comprises four independent segments: leisure, sport, underwater and charter fisheries.
- *Sport fishing:* Recreational fishing practiced from the coast or a boat with competitive intentions, within an established institutional framework which sets clear rules, collects data on catches and informs the public on the outcomes of the competition.

The RAC MED suggests ICCAT to take into consideration the possibility of transposing the aforementioned definitions in the ICCAT Recommendation to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean [Rec. 06-05], that states the following distinction between sport and recreational fisheries:

- *Recreational fishery means a non-commercial fishery whose members do not adhere to a national sport organisation or are not issued with a national sport license.*
- *Sport fishery means a non-commercial fishery whose members adhere to a national sport organisation or are issued with a national sport license.”*

NB: This opinion has been approved by all the participants of the RAC MED with the exception of FEDAS who believes that a modified definition of the underwater fishing of the CGFM Glossary should include also “without the help of mechanical devices (e.g. scooters)”.

64 RAC MED OPINION ON RECREATIONAL FISHERIES ACCORDING TO THE EC MEDITERRANEAN REGULATION

Rome, 27th March 2012

The Executive Committee held in Rome on March 27, adopted the opinion proposed by the Working Group on recreational fisheries (WG4), which met in Rome on 29th February 2012, who is collaborating with the Sub Committee for Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) with a special focus on the definition and legal frameworks which apply to the recreational fisheries activities in the Mediterranean. In this framework, the RAC MED considered it useful to inform the EC on the RAC MED position relative to the current European regulations in force in the Mediterranean basin. European Council Regulation 1967/2006 which concerns management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, states that:

- *paragraph 1 “The use of towed nets, surrounding nets, purse seines, boat dredges, mechanized redges, gillnets, trammel nets and combined bottom-set nets shall be prohibited for leisure fisheries. The use of longlines for highly migratory species shall also be prohibited for leisure fisheries.*

The RAC MED believes that the ban on the use of nets should be extended gradually to passive gear, incorporating the clause that the Member states can authorize the use of traditional gear, in punctual situations.

- paragraph 3 “Member States shall ensure that catches of marine organisms resulting from leisure fisheries are not marketed. Nevertheless, by way of exception, the marketing of species caught in sportive competitions may be authorized provided that the profits from their sale are used for charitable purposes”.

The RAC MED proposes the amendment of paragraph 3, art. 17 in order to entirely abolish the authorization to market species captured during sports fisheries competitions, as this would be in conflict with commercial fisheries.

RAC MED OPINION ON A BASIC STANDARDISED REGULATION ON MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES IN THE EUROPEAN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES (Abstract)

65

Rome, 3rd December 2013

The Executive Committee unanimously adopted the opinion proposed by the Recreational Fisheries Working Group 4 (RF WG) which convened on 12 November 2013 in Rome.

PRESENTATION

During the RAC MED Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting that took place in Thessalonica, 20th September 2010, the Big Game Italy representative proposed the establishment of a recreational fisheries work group (RF WG), the proposal was accepted.

On 23rd March 2011, the members present when the RF WG was formed, chose the representative of the Spanish association “Confederación Española de Pesca Recreativa Responsable” (CEPRR) as coordinator, he took this opportunity to request contributions from the members of RAC MED RF WG with experience in recreational fisheries management in the Mediterranean, these contributions should be gathered together and put to the service of RAC MED.

The scientific institutions need to develop a common and harmonized scientific monitoring protocol for recreational fisheries, implementing basic indicators to be assessed for each sector and each fishing method. To obtain these data, a common normative framework is necessary, so as to proceed according to the same approach and to standardise data characteristics.

In order to take full advantage of the work already completed in previous years, during the General Assembly held on 29th February 2012 the coordinator proposed the following reference study of Mediterranean recreational fishing as the basis for the work to be carried out:

GFCM STUDIES AND REVIEWS. RECREATIONAL FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: A REVIEW OF EXISTING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, No. 81 2007 By Charline Gaudin, Legal Assistant, and Cassandra De Young, Fishery Planning Analyst, Development and Planning Service, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

The proposal was accepted by the members of the WG and of the ExCom RACMED, the RF WG was requested to set the study in the context of the significant evolution of recreational fishing evolution in these last years.

Given the quality of the original text, the study in question has been respected as far as possible, although the context has been reduced to include just the European Mediterranean area in developing the proposal: "A BASIC STANDARDISED REGULATION OF MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING IN THE EUROPEAN MEDITERRANEAN".

The RF WG have been kept in mind the recommendations of the CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES, FAO 1995 and TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES, No. 13, FAO. 2012.

The coordinator highlighted that all the components of the 1/3 group members had provided a significant contribution to the contents of the document.

POSITION STATEMENTS

EAA (European Anglers Alliance) position statement:

EAA has worked on definitions for almost a decade. Our aim is to achieve fewer but very well-defined terms and terminology for recreational fisheries, which can find support in all European countries as well as globally. Our thinking is mainly directed by our own angling definition of 2004: www.eaa-europe.eu/fileadmin/templates/eea/docs/DEFINITION-EAA_Angling_Def_long_FINAL_EN.pdf

- the EIFAC Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0363e/i0363e00.htm>

We have delivered this more detailed response to this RAC MED work on definitions (June, 29 2012): http://www.pescaricreativa.org/docs/racmed/81_definitions_EAA_final.pdf

CEPRR and Big Game Italia (BGI) position statement:

CEPRR and BGI represent marine recreational fishing activities carried out from vessels, the positions expressed are conditioned by the opinion of the fishers represented. The CEPRR and BGI members have been working on the management of marine recreational fishing since the 1990s. In the context of the global recreational fisheries sector their members are a minority, but the socio-economic impact is significant, it is estimated that the European Mediterranean recreational fleet includes around 300 000 vessels.

Recreational fishing is not an isolated activity at sea. Marine recreational fishing carried out from vessels shares the same area and resources as the small-scale coastal commercial fishing fleet, this daily coexistence should not be overlooked. Recreational fishing shares the same ports, fishing zones and some target species. In many cases retired commercial fishers also become recreational fishers for administrative purposes.

The recreational sector is not homogeneous, each sector and fishing method represents a sub-sector of global fisheries. Fishing from vessels, for example, has more in common with the artisanal fishing of the small-scale sector than with recreational underwater fishing.

The deep lack of knowledge that the commercial sector and fishery administrations has of the recreational sector is notorious, for this reason the RF WG members must make every effort to establish detailed definitions to ensure full comprehension of these fisheries.

IFSUA (International Forum for Sustainable Underwater Activities) position statement:

IFSUA represents hundreds of thousands of practitioners of underwater activities all around Europe as well as many of the most important underwater equipment industries and specialized magazines of the world. Some of its members have been involved in recreational fishing management for several decades. Moreover, IFSUA has started important international, Mediterranean based, scientific cooperation projects in order to improve the knowledge of our seas. This has been due to the sci-

entists' understanding that underwater activities community is the only sector that is objectively seeing what is going on down there.

IFSUA members are a part of the recreational fishing sector through the spearfishing community, but its interests go far beyond, as also our scuba-divers and underwater photographers are affected by how other recreational fisheries and commercial fisheries are managed.

Taking this into account IFSUA has approached the document with passion and understanding it not as a set of regulations, which in our opinion is out of our scope, but as a normative framework under which the EU and Member States can get stakeholders' point of view about how recreational fisheries should be managed. In some cases, together with the rest of the working group members, we consider that we have reached our aim, in others clearly not. In those cases we have tried to give our opinion through minority statements.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Recreational fishing has been documented as one of the most popular activities along the coasts of numerous countries around the world, such as Canada, Italy, Spain and the United States of America (Sutinen and Johnston, 2003).

Moreover, it has been conceded that recreational fishing is a growing activity in the Mediterranean area. The development of tourism in various regions and the enhancement of tourism charter recreational fishing have contributed to the extension of recreational fishing to almost all EU Mediterranean countries.

This phenomenon has not come without raising concerns on the potential effects of such activities on fish stocks as well as interactions with commercial fishing activities. However, without proper analysis, it is not possible to identify the potential conflicts between recreational and commercial fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea.

The increasing importance of RF in Mediterranean waters in general and particularly in some areas, such as the Adriatic Sea, will oblige the countries (at national, sub regional, and basin-wide levels) to define sustainable policies and adopt adequate management measures, guaranteeing on one hand the benefits (e.g. economic, cultural, and social) generated by recreational fisheries while, on the other hand, protecting the marine resources from overfishing and other consequent negative impacts.

However, the importance of RF in the EU Mediterranean has been largely underestimated, whether it be from the point of view of its impact on marine resources or its socio-economic potential. This under-evaluation may stem, in part, from a lack of investigation into the values and impacts of RF.

As a result, at the time of this study, there was no concerted action for the sustainable development of RF at the Mediterranean level; neither were there clearly-defined national recreational fisheries policies within the EU Mediterranean countries. Spain and several other Mediterranean countries had, however, adopted comprehensive, or at least detailed, regulatory systems for recreational fisheries. Although necessary, the existence of a legal framework alone is not sufficient to encourage the sustainable development of RF, particularly if the regulations are obsolete or irrelevant and enforcement is non-existent or inefficient. Mediterranean countries demonstrated a tendency to neglect the management of RF and particularly its monitoring and control for management purposes.

2. BACKGROUND

This chapter provides the context for recreational fisheries (RF) management in the EU Mediterranean countries, including international conventions and policy guidelines for RF, recommendations from the relevant regional fishery bodies (RFB), as well as regulations stemming from the European Commission, mandatory to a subset of the basin's countries and presents an overview of RF in the Mediterranean covering the following questions: what types of RF were practiced in the

Mediterranean, which were the main RF-targeted species, what was known about the socio-economic impacts of RF in the region, who were the primary stakeholders in RF management, what were the existing national policies guiding RF management and what RF legal frameworks were in place in the European Mediterranean countries.

2.1 INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES GUIDING RECREATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN MEDITERRANEAN

Adopted on 10th December 1982 and in force from 16 November 1994, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provided a new framework for the management of marine resources; creating new rights and responsibilities for the coastal states. More specifically, Article 61 on exclusive economic zones (EEZ) stated that a coastal state may take the appropriate measures of conservation and management in order to avoid overexploitation of marine living resources.

Furthermore, the coastal states, as well as the relevant international organizations may cooperate to that purpose. Given the extractive nature of RF, States should include RF in their attempts to conserve and sustainably manage their marine resources.

In March 1991, during its nineteenth session, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) called for the development of new concepts which would lead to responsible and sustainable fisheries activities. Based on the request formulated by the International Conference on Responsible Fishing held in Cancun (Mexico) in 1992, FAO prepared an international Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995), which was unanimously adopted on 31 October 1995 by the FAO Conference and which provided general principles and international standards of behaviour ensuring sustainable exploitation of living marine resources.

The Code has as its main objective to “establish principles and criteria for the elaboration and implementation of national policies for responsible conservation of fisheries resources and fisheries management and development” [CoC Article 2b]). The Code is voluntary and not legally binding, except regarding the articles based on relevant rules of international law, including those reflected in UNCLOS. The Code aims to provide a framework for national and international efforts to ensure sustainable exploitation of living marine resources, including not only targeted species but also the ecosystems on which they depend.

Although RF were not explicitly mentioned in the Code, the principles and standards of the Code are equally applicable to the conservation, management and development of all RF as with any other extractive fishing activities. According to the Code: “States and all those engaged in fisheries management should, through an appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework adopt measures for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources” (CoC Article 7.1.1). Therefore, according to the Code, States should adopt RF regulations/measures preventing or eliminating excess RF fishing capacity as well as establishing effective mechanisms for fisheries monitoring, control and enforcement to ensure compliance with their conservation and management measures.

THE WHOLE OPINION OF THE TEXT CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2014/11/372_racmed_opinion_basic_stand_recr_fish_en.pdf

MEDAC ADVICE FOR A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT FOR RECREATIONAL FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASED ON “FAO TECHNICAL GUIDELINES ON RESPONSIBLE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES”

(Abstract)

Split, 20th April 2016

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PRESENTATION

One of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) published on December 2013 is to ensure that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits. In addition, the CFP shall aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield.

Finally, the CFP shall implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management so as to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised.

On the other hand, coastal ecosystems are of key importance in the Mediterranean because many exploited species live there their whole lives or part of them (spawning or nursery habitats). Many human activities are developed there too, being fisheries one of the most common. But while coastal commercial fisheries (small-scale) have been deeply studied and monitored, recreational fisheries have been forgotten and abandoned by managers and decision makers. Many Mediterranean countries lack of a recreational fisheries regulation, in others it is scarce and old and in others is completely inefficient. But who knows what marine recreational fisheries mean in each country? How much and what do they catch? When? All of these are questions without answer. Moreover, underestimating or forgetting this stakeholder, how can coastal ecosystems be managed efficiently? In this context, at the end of 2014 the MEDAC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries (from now on WG4), aware of this lack of knowledge, started an attempt to provide rough but serious advice about recreational fishing in the Mediterranean. This document is only a first picture specially thought to provide some initial light to managers and decision-makers but based on the soundest piece of scientific literature about recreational fisheries management that we found, the FAO Technical Guidelines on Responsible Recreational Fisheries (from now on TG13). Our aim is that EU and Member States adopt it and take it into account and start developing serious recreational fisheries managing and regulations.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The statements below should be taken into consideration when reading this document:

- In order to achieve sustainable and responsible recreational fisheries, we consider that the adoption of the TG13 by the EU is paramount. (We should adopt them, too, as MEDAC and as Stakeholders)
- We consider inappropriate the term Artisanal to describe coastal commercial fisheries as it includes an important degree of subjectivity. We consider much more suitable to call them Small Scale Fisheries (SSF).
- For us Small-scale fisheries are those traditional professional fisheries involving fishing households and making short fishing trips (daily), using vessels until 12m length and relatively small amount of capital and energy.
- Coastal waters (half mile from shore) are of paramount importance to recreational fisheries. Special actions in favour of recreational fisheries should be considered.

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In the face of the growing socio-economic and ecological importance of recreational fisheries, the FAO Technical Guidelines on Responsible Recreational Fisheries is proposed as a guide intended to steer the activity towards sustainability at all levels, based on the FAO Code of Conduct (1995). All policy and management decisions are influenced by social values and demand. These values are not predetermined and unchangeable, they change with the passage of time and the changes within society. The regulatory (or ethical) framework should represent all of these interests or principles together, that will be used in the development of the various laws. Our working group defines in this document its own values in relation to recreational fisheries, indicating what should be taken into consideration in the development of European legislation applicable to the Mediterranean basin. On the other hand, most of the rules and decisions relating to the management process will have a positive or a negative effect depending on various factors, not least the correct identification of

the category to which they refer. Currently there does not appear to be any attempt at a reliable description of the recreational fishermen category within the EU area of the Mediterranean. The WG4, made up among others of various national and regional organisations of recreational fishers, tries to provide a first picture of the real population of recreational fishers of the EU area of the Mediterranean. This should help to support and stimulate feasibility studies, market surveys, researches and projects to implement innovative and sustainable services in the sector of recreational fishing. All cursive characters in the document are quotes from the TG13.

Characterization of recreational fisheries in the EU Mediterranean

In this section the various organisations within WG4 that are linked to recreational fishing took advantage of the data they have access to, as well as their knowledge and contacts with various authorities, in order to define the number of existing recreational fishermen as realistically as possible, according to the sector that they represent and the geographical reference area. Data introduced, however approximate, is accompanied by an indication of the sources from which they were obtained. In the case of France and Spain numbers are only referred to the Mediterranean basin.

	COAST	BOAT	SPEARFISHING	TOTAL
ITALY	866342	68723	80000	1015065
SPAIN	111000		11222	122222
FRANCE	200000		40000	240000
GREECE			10000	
CROATIA				28000

ITALY (angling) – Information provided by Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali MIPAAF at 23/03/2015.

ITALY (spearfishing) - Information provided by FIPSAS from a census made by equipment industry.

SPAIN - Information provided by regional administration, sport federations and scientific studies. Data provided in coast category includes also boat category.

CROATIA - Information provided by Croatian recreational fishing federation (CFOSA) from official data. Number provided is for all categories, as the same license allows fishing from coast, boat and spearfishing.

FRANCE - Information provided by Fédération Nationale des Pêcheurs Plaisanciers et Sportives de France (FNPPSF) and Fédération Nautique de Pêche Sportive en Apnée (FNPSA). No difference between boat and coast.

GREECE - Information provided by Greek underwater activities federation from market estimations. Indeed, those estimations consider that those 10000 are those who practice spearfishing regularly, so the numbers provided must be considered underestimated, as those who go occasionally are not considered.

Development of the regulatory framework

MEDAC considers essential to adopt the principle below as a fundamental in any regulatory framework on recreational fisheries developed in the EU:

[...] We should define and implement strategies of governance and management that in decision making represent all stakeholders and their potentially different points of view, to maximize socio-economic benefits and gain commitment to environmentally sustainable actions and behaviour, avoiding overfishing and maintaining aquatic biodiversity on a global scale.

[...] Recreational fishing is considered biologically sustainable if it avoids irreversible or highly damaging changes to wild fish stocks and it retains the structure and function of aquatic habitats and the ecosystem at the disposal of recreational fishers and other active individuals. Once these biological conservation goals have been achieved, the social and economic benefits derived from the use of the resources by recreational fisheries should be maximized in order to ensure socio-economic sustainability.

Indeed, maximizing social and economic benefits is one of the ways to achieve biological conservation goals.

Social and economic criteria that should be borne in mind in a regulatory framework adapted to the European Mediterranean.

1. Social aggregation/cohesion – recreational fishing is an activity which can be performed “from the cradle to the grave”, for this reason it facilitates people from different age and gender to meet and know each other. This reduces generational gaps and promotes cultural exchange among generations and also among different social classes. It is very common in recreational fisheries to see how low-class people share their recreational fishing experiences with high class. This generates very interesting and beneficial social and cultural exchanges that deserve to be studied in depth.

2. Social benefits of competitions – Fish caught is donated to charity organizations which usually don't have access to such good quality and fresh fish.

3. Health – As an outdoor activity, recreational fishing can help to minimize the bad consequences of the currently usual sedentary life (TVs, videogames, internet...) spread through all generations. Moreover, developing an outdoor activity helps to understand much better what ecosystems are and, consequently, the reasons why they should be preserved.

4. Low season fuel for coastal communities – Recreational fishing can be a good opportunity for coastal communities' economies to face low incomes during low season. Where fisheries resources are well managed, it generates all season tourism. This means income for small hotels, restaurants, shops in low season (winter/autumn/early spring). In Europe a good example of this is the recreational angling tourism to Ireland, where the good sea bass management attracts anglers from several EU countries.

5. Recreational fishing economy is more dependent on the **conservation of aquatic resources** than on their exploitation.

6. Recreational fishing economy should be evaluated in its complexity taking into account all the aspects which contributes to it, some examples:

- a. Tackle trade industry (jobs).
- b. Diving and spearfishing industries (jobs).
- c. Boat industry (jobs).
- d. Money spent to buy fishing tackle
- e. Money spent to move to the fishing area (transportation costs (fuel, tolls...), renting for an itinerant fishing journey, flight tickets...)

- f. Money spent to stay more than one day in the fishing area (accommodation, restaurants, apartments, supermarkets, bar...)
- g. Money spent for boats (port fees, mechanics...)
- h. Money spent to rent a boat.
- i. Spearfishing and angling stores.
- j. Insurances.
- k. Training courses (recreational fishing, free diving...)
- l. Club membership fees
- m. Money spent to rent/contract local coastal services when competitions are developed (security, medicine, big boats renting to transfer participants...)
- n. Taxes to develop fishing competitions

7. **Ethics** – Some recreational fishermen only consume the fish they get, as they consider is the most ethical way to catch fish. They practice active and selective fishing, so they guarantee that, compared to professional fishing, the fish suffers the less possible and only the species they eat are caught. Spearfishers can decide before shooting what is the fish they want to keep, anglers can release alive fish caught accidentally or those fish which haven't reached yet the MLS.

8. **Educational benefits of competitions** – Recreational fishers are gathered in fishing competitions, and they internalise competition regulations (in many cases more restrictive than administration's ones) as those to follow in their fishing trips.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE ADVICE CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

<http://en.med->

ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2016/04/155_medac_advice_regulatory_framework_recreational_fisheries.pdf

MEDAC OPINION ON THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RECREATIONAL (RF) AND SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) IN MEDITERRANEAN WATERS

67

Rome, 10th November 2016

In view of the results obtained from the constructive exchange of views between the commercial and recreational fisheries sectors in the MEDAC during the meeting held on October 2014 in Split, the WG4 proposed that as a starting point the members of each of the two categories identify mutual conflicts/problems and develop in-depth recommendations for the Mediterranean waters. Unfortunately, only recreational fishing stakeholders provided their contributions, for this reasons the result document was rejected by the Executive Committee meeting held in Split on 20 April 2016. Nevertheless, RF considers that the information provided here may be very useful for a better management of coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean, so the WG4 involved again commercial fisheries on this issue.

June 2016

During the second round of this job, some representatives of commercial sector and OCEANA provided very useful suggestions, while on some issues, mainly distance from shore of SSF netting and SSF catches registration, it is rather difficult to find a compromise (SSF has been very clear on this). Furthermore, "RF as a stakeholder" has become a hot issue opposed – unanimously - by commercial sector. The Recreational Fishery sector believes that it is a misunderstanding about the meaning of

“Recreational Fisheries as stakeholder”: this means to involve RF in decisional process on resources management and on its own management, not in decisional process on small scale fisheries (or commercial) management.

Both sectors agree on the necessity to fight against illegal fishing practices and illegal sales of catches on black market because it is a transverse problem which can't be clearly ascribed to a sector or another.

Malta commercial fisheries representative arose the problem of an increasing number of commercial fishermen fishing from recreational fishing boat instead of commercial fisheries vessels, this makes harder to identify who is who, and it happens not only in Malta.



To be able to give a realistic picture of the conflicts between the 2 sectors, we decided to rename and rewrite the boxes in “point of view” avoiding to suggest any solution for which an external facilitator (or *super partes* decision maker) should be necessary.

Furthermore, we added a column named “agreement level” in which a light shows the chance of agreement between the two sectors on each issue, it is interesting to note that green and yellow lights are the majority if compared to the red light.

October 2016 (WG4 Ajaccio) :

The problem called “poaching” (agreement level green) has been added as the result of the debate within the WG4 after the presentation of this document.

It has been highlighted that the lack of a clear definition of genuine recreational fisheries may cause most of the red light in the problem/point of view box. It is a common opinion among commercial sector that there is an “healthy” recreational sector which does not create any ‘cohabitation’ problem. Furthermore it has been highlighted the necessity to recall, for the purpose of this document, the Recreational and Small Scale fisheries definitions available in EU legal text.

Small Scale Fisheries definition:

EC 508/2014 (EMFF) – Art.3:

(14) ‘small-scale coastal fishing’ means fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 meters and not using towed fishing gear as listed in Table 3 of Annex I to Commission Regulation (EC) No 26/2004 (2); [(2) *Commission Regulation (EC) No 26/2004 of 30 December 2003 on the Community fishing fleet register (OJ L 5, 9.1.2004, p. 25)*].

Recreational Fisheries definition:

1. EC 1224/2009:

‘recreational fisheries’ means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living aquatic resources for recreation, tourism or sport;


2. EC 1967/2006 Art. 2:



8) ‘leisure fisheries’ means fishing activities exploiting living aquatic resource for recreation or sport;


3. EC 199/2008 Art.2:




c) ‘recreational fisheries’ means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting living aquatic resources for recreation or sport.




- GREEN:** 100% agreement
- YELLOW:** agreement to some extent
- RED:** no agreement

PROBLEM	MEDITERRANEAN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (RF) POINT OF VIEW	MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) POINT OF VIEW	AGREEMENT LEVEL
Trammel nets, long-lines and traps/pots (passive gears)	Passive gears (commercial or recreational) are allowed with no distance or depth restrictions from the coast (in some MS they can be dropped also at 0 metres distance from the shore/coastline), with a few exception in estuaries in some Countries. This may affect spawning grounds and euryhalines species and may have huge impact on inshore waters. This generates conflicts between SSF and RF (mainly fishing from shore). The use of passive gears by Mediterranean RF should be banned.	In many Mediterranean Countries the use of passive gears is allowed to recreational fisheries. This may affect spawning grounds and euryhalines species and may have huge impact on inshore waters. The use of this kind of gears by Mediterranean recreational fisheries generates conflicts with SSF.	

PROBLEM	MEDITERRANEAN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (RF) POINT OF VIEW	MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) POINT OF VIEW	AGREEMENT LEVEL
Commercial and recreational fishing on spawning grounds targeting spawning fish	<p>Some commercial and recreational fisheries target spawning aggregations of fish (ex: seiners targeting <i>Sparus aurata</i>, <i>Dentex dentex</i> or <i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>) or hand lines or road and line targeting <i>Dentex dentex</i>).</p> <p>This may cause great harm to ecosystems as big mature individuals, are caught easily in the most important and vulnerable period of their lives (reproduction).</p>	<p>Some recreational fisheries target spawning aggregations of fish (ex: longlines targeting <i>Sparus aurata</i>, <i>Dentex dentex</i> or <i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>) or road and line targeting <i>Dentex dentex</i>.</p> <p>This may cause great harm to ecosystems and generate conflict with SSF.</p>	
Data Collection	<p>SSF 50 kilos exemption to registration doesn't allow estimating fishing efforts on some coastal stocks.</p> <p>Not all the catches, but only those of <u>valuable species</u> should be recorded with no exception by RF and SSF.</p> <p>RF should be investigated and assessed with specific and proper instruments to know both: the fishing effort on some coastal stocks, and RF socio economic value for local communities.</p>	<p>Log book registration of each species caught without any exception is not possible. Some are open to evaluate some different kind of data collection about the 50 kilos exception</p> <p>RF fishing effort should be assessed.</p> <p>Nobody knows the amount of recreational catches.</p> <p>Not all the catches, but only those of <u>valuable species</u> should be recorded.</p>	

PROBLEM	MEDITERRANEAN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (RF) POINT OF VIEW	MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) POINT OF VIEW	AGREEMENT LEVEL
Fisheries management	<p>Decision makers and managers, often under “political” pressure by commercial fisheries and environmental NGOs, work only in SSF perspective and Mediterranean RF is often ignored or assimilated to illegal fisheries or to unregulated fisheries. Management plans are drawn taking into account commercial fisheries sector only with, as a consequence, a “one leg” management plan which doesn’t fit Mediterranean inshore water peculiarities.</p> <p>The existing RF regulation (at EU and MS level) should be improved in a more modern way which takes into account the more recent scientific advice and the social and economic value of the recreational fishing sector itself.</p> <p>Regulations often overprotect commercial fisheries (ex. priority of access to the resource in MPAs, RF must fish at a distance from SSF gears).</p>	<p>RF is not enough regulated and not controlled at all, while SSF is over regulated.</p> <p>The main feeling is that RF can do whatever it wants with no rules.</p>	

PROBLEM	MEDITERRANEAN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (RF) POINT OF VIEW	MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) POINT OF VIEW	AGREEMENT LEVEL
New very effective fishing techniques for highly vulnerable species	Some SSF adopt new very effective fishing techniques not or low regulated that may deplete the stocks of highly vulnerable species. Usually this is linked to spawning aggregations, ignorance of managers and really slow management measures.	Some RF adopt new very effective fishing techniques not or low regulated that may deplete the stocks of highly vulnerable species. Usually this is linked to spawning aggregations, ignorance of managers and really slow management measures.	
Unreported fishing sold in black market	This does not allow knowing the real impact of the activity. Moreover, this happens mainly with high value species, which are the most vulnerable and needed to know the state of the stock.	This does not allow knowing the real impact of the activity. Moreover, this happens mainly with high value species, which are the most vulnerable and needed to know the state of the stock. Unfair competition with commercial sector.	
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)	MPAs are commonly being developed giving banning or highly restricting RF while giving priority access to SSF. This increases the conflict between SSF and RF.	SSF is strictly regulated and restricted in MPAs.	

PROBLEM	MEDITERRANEAN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (RF) POINT OF VIEW	MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) POINT OF VIEW	AGREEMENT LEVEL
Fishing pressure (RF and SSF share same resources in the same area)	Some of the species fished by SSF are not so important for their economy as much as it is their impact on the stock; SSF impact on these species may have a huge impact on RF economy potential. So if the problem is well assessed and RF is involved in the resource management process the coastal communities and the fish stocks could benefit from both, SSF and RF in the area.	SSF should be given priority of exploitation of fishing resources because it is their business and their job.	
Use of recreational boat for commercial fisheries	Some commercial fishermen use recreational boat to fish for several reasons: to avoid control, during fishing closure, after retirement. These catches are sold.	Some commercial fishermen use recreational boat to fish for several reasons: to avoid control, during fishing closure, after retirement. These catches are sold.	
Poaching	There is a form of capture which is not recreational nor professional. The MEDAC WG4 call it "Poaching". It lowers the image of sport and recreational fisheries and lower the quantity of fish available to leisure fisheries.	There is a form of capture which is not recreational nor professional. The MEDAC WG4 call it "Poaching". It lowers the quantity of fish available to professional fisheries and trespass their commercial market (lowers their income).	

MEDAC OPINION ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL STOCKS- FOCUS ON THE MAIN ENDANGERED INSHORE SPECIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Rome, 17th November 2017

The WG on Recreational Fisheries (WG4), composed by recreational and commercial representatives, as well as NGOs, as a consequence of the work done in 2015/16 on the interactions between SSF and RF, which share coastal waters and resources, and taking into account that CFP demands the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and understanding that current fisheries management is mainly focused on deep and/or pelagic waters, recognized the need of addressing inshore waters issues. Coastal waters and fish resources are of paramount interest, both for recreational and small-scale fisheries, as include most of their target species. These species aren't currently assessed, so there is a lack of knowledge about their status. Thus, WG4 agreed on identifying those species that, according to stakeholders' opinion, in addition of being of fishing interest, might be endangered. In addition, the WG4 for one year has tried to **fulfil ecosystem-based management approach**, by describing the ecology of these species (including both scientific and stakeholders' knowledge) and identifying some of their main threats, both linked and not linked to fisheries.

On October 2017, during the meeting held in Palma de Mallorca, the WG4 members agreed on the following list of species:

- *Sparus aurata*
- *Dicentrarchus labrax*
- *Dentex dentex*
- *Epinephelus marginatus*
- *Sciaena umbra*
- *Umbrina cirrosa*

For which:

the MEDAC ¹ agrees and recommends to include in the framework of Mediterranean Multi-annual plans, taking into account the ecology of each species and, at least, the threats described below.

Note: *Information in italics obtained from scientific sources.* The remaining part is provided by stakeholders.

1. SPARUS AURATA

Found in seagrass beds and sandy bottoms as well as in the surfzone commonly to depths of about 30 m, but adults may occur to 150 m depth. A sedentary fish, either solitary or in small aggregations. In spring, they often occur in brackish water coastal lagoons and estuaries. Mainly carnivorous, accessorially herbivorous. Feed on shellfish, including mussels and oysters.

Males become females at about 3 years of age. Protandric hermaphrodite species, maturing first as male (during the first or second year of age) and after the second or third year of age, as female. Spawning happens generally from October to December, with sequenced spawning during the whole period. Incubation lasts about 2 days at 16-17°C. Larval stages last about 50 days at 17.5°C or about 43 days at 20°C. Egg size 0.9-1.1 mm, larval length at hatching 2.5-3.0 mm. Simultaneous hermaphroditism is suggested for this species.

During the spawning season (mainly October-November in Western Mediterranean) they gather

in inshore waters (15-40m depth)) in big shoals of large individuals, around aisled structures (oceanic buoys, wrecks...) or on *Posidonia oceanica* grounds. After spawning, in late winter and early spring, they gather once again in shoals and, when high pressures occur, for unknown reasons come close to the shore and hide into caves. They are really skinny then, so an eventual reason could be for eating, but we're not sure about it. This is quite common in areas where the continental platform extends for many miles, with alternate of sandy bottoms, *Posidonia oceanica* and rocky reefs.

Big, protected, sandy bays, with very shallow water are perfect nursery habitats for this species. A paradigmatic example of that could be the Alfacs Bay, at the Ebro river mouth.

Threats external to fisheries

Disappearance of feeding resources may be significant for this species. Mussels are disappearing (depletion, pollution) and other potential sources of food in the sand may be affected by beach reconstructions (dredging).

Loss of brackish water habitats, reduced volume of fresh water into the sea and escapes from aquaculture (genetic impoverishment) are also other threats.

2. DICENTRARCHUS LABRAX

Adults manifest demersal behaviour, inhabit coastal waters down to about 100m depth but more common in shallow waters. Found in the littoral zone on various kinds of bottoms on estuaries, lagoons and occasionally rivers. [...] Young fish form school, but adults appear to be less gregarious. Feed chiefly on shrimps and molluscs, also on fishes. Juveniles feed on invertebrates, taking increasingly more fish with age. Adults are piscivorous. Spawn in batches [...]

Spawn in groups. Eggs are pelagic. In the Mediterranean, first sexual maturity occurs generally between 2 and 4 years of age [...]. Spawning in the Mediterranean seems to happen between December and March, being the most common months January and February. Eggs have 1-2 fat drops that fuse about 12 hours after laying. Embryo development lasts about three days at 13-14°C and larval development about 40 days at 19°C. Egg size 1.1-1.5 mm, larval length at hatching 3 mm.

Eurythermal. Gregarious when young. Voracious predator. High tolerance to salinity changes. Adults migrate to the estuaries in summer where they spawn in January-June. Young inhabit waters of 0.24-0.37‰ salinity where they feed mainly on zooplankton. From 3.0 cm TL, diet changes to worms, crustaceans, fish larvae. Adults are strictly carnivorous surviving on small fish.

MEDAC considers that sea bass from the Mediterranean has a considerably different behaviour than populations from the Atlantic. In addition, the fact that the main studies about this species have been carried out with Atlantic populations, makes the results with a certain degree of bias at least when applicable to our sea. This stakeholder opinion, could be in some way backed by recent research².

Spawning takes place usually between one big female and several smaller males. It is common to see them in really shallow water (less than 10m depth) and/or inside big caves, but also can happen within bigger shoals in deeper water (20 - 30m) and sandy bottoms. What definitely does not seem to occur are the offshore huge spawning shoals so common in the Atlantic.

Regarding the Mediterranean, MEDAC does not agree with fish base's suggestion that adults are not gregarious. Indeed, MEDAC usually finds important shoals of big adults around aisled structures during summer (buoys, wrecks, artificial reefs...), probably for feeding.

Regarding euryhaline behaviour, MEDAC suggests that although some individuals may surely come in and leave the rivers, in the Mediterranean, an important amount of sea bass that live in rivers do it permanently.

Excellent nursery habitats for Mediterranean sea bass are really shallow waters in sandy beaches and rocky bottoms, where they can usually be found in schools of several individuals swimming at less than 1m depth from May to late August.

Although adults are mainly piscivorous, MEDAC members informed that they have found large individuals feeding voraciously on sandy crabs during end of winter and early spring.

Threats external to fisheries

Estuarine and coastal antropization, as well as loss of brackish water habitats, reduced volume of fresh water into the sea and escapes from aquaculture (genetic impoverishment) are some threats. Occasional stormy episodes may destroy some spawning habitats. Climate change might end up producing population moves and epigenetic modifications³.

3. DENTEX DENTEX

Inhabit hard bottoms (rock or rubble) down to 200 m depth. Usually found in shallow water less than 50 m deep. Adults solitary; young gregarious. [...] Feed on fish, molluscs and cephalopods. [...]

Gonochoric, but some specimens are hermaphroditic. Species of separated sexes (although some individuals may be hermaphrodite in young stages). In the Mediterranean, reproduction takes place between March and May, in areas near the coast. Embryo development lasts about 3 days at 17°C.

Adults are solitary only some months of the year, usually autumn and winter. During the spawning months they gather in big shoals and during late spring and summer they keep living in smaller shoals, probably to be more effective hunting.

During late spring and summer they usually move with the thermocline, although some of them don't seem to fulfil always this behaviour⁴. Although they usually like some locations, their movements may be directly linked to those of their preys, too.

In late autumn and winter, adults are usually found alone or in small groups in rocky shallow waters (less than 10m). Those same areas will become excellent nursery habitats in summer, together with *Posidonia oceanica* bottoms.

4. EPINEPHELUS MARGINATUS

Juveniles are found close to the shore or in rocky tidal pools. Adults prefer rocky bottoms at littoral and circalittoral area. They are mainly solitary and territorial, although they form spawning aggregations, that occurs mainly between June and August.

Their migrations are between demersal, benthic and littoral habitats between 1 and 120m depth, mainly linked to those of their preys, for spawning and also to temperature (thermocline).

Threats external to fisheries

Virus.

5. SCIAENA UMBRA

*Its main habitat are rocky and *Posidonia oceanica* bottoms. Juveniles live very close to the shore. This seems to be a sedentary species with strong site-fidelity and low levels of mobility and their breeding season is from May to July.*

Some scientific sources of information relate the species with estuarine environments, but MEDAC members consider that there can be a confusion with some similar species (*Umbrina cirrosa* or *Argyrosomus regius*), as they have never interacted with this species in estuarine environments. MEDAC suggests that these sources of information are reviewed thoroughly.

Threats external to fisheries

Loss of seagrass habitats and antropization.

6. UMBRINA CIRROSA

Juveniles are gregarious and can be found in coastal sandy bottoms. They can enter estuaries. Adults are solitary or in small groups, living in different littoral sea bottoms, but preferring sandy ones. Their migrations are demersal, benthic and littoral, from 0 to 100m depth. Spawning happens during spring and summer.

Threats external to fisheries

Habitats antropization (estuaries, ports and beaches).

THREATS RELATED TO FISHERIES FOR ALL THE SPECIES

Overfishing seems to be significant for the six species mentioned and special attention should be put in those gears targeting aggregations. For hermaphrodite species, targeting only a segment of the population may end up seriously affecting the reproductive capacity of the species. In addition, some of them lack of MLS, or the one that have is significantly below first sexual maturity.

MEDAC understands that those fisheries impacts are broad and affect both commercial and recreational. Thus, MEDAC will identify and treat them in detail when discussing specific MAPs.

¹ Oceana agrees and supports to include these 6 species into Mediterranean multiannual plans. However, rejects the description made for each species as it shows a biased analysis of their threats, almost obviating completely well documented fishing threats by scientist community, from both commercial and recreational fishing sectors. This analysis prevents to have a realistic picture of the situation and doesn't allows to identify possible fishing management measures to improve their threatened status.

² Mbaye Tine et al. (2014), European sea bass genome and its variation provide insights into adaptation to euryhalinity and speciation, Nature Communications

³ Anastasiadi, D., Díaz N., Piferrer F, (2017), **Small ocean temperature increases elicit stage-dependent changes in DNA methylation and gene expression in a fish, the European sea bass**. Nature Scientific Reports.

⁴ Aspillaga Eneko et al., 2017, **Thermal stratification drives movement of a coastal apex predator**, Scientific reports, 7:526.

MEDAC REPLY TO DG MARE LETTER ON NEW TECHNICAL MEASURES REGULATION (RECREATIONAL FISHERIES)

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Rome, 22nd October 2019

To Bernhard Freiss (Acting Director- General, EC - DG MARE)

Dear Mr. Friess,

Thank you for providing MEDAC with such a detailed analysis on the status of the new Technical Measures Regulation with regard to recreational fishing (your letters ref. 6277189, 10 October 2019).

- The MEDAC will for sure take into account the new provisions when delivering an advice.
- We take note, that the **Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (MCRSs)** seem not to apply at all to recreational fisheries from 14 August, due to the provisions in the new regulation. **The MEDAC may discuss and send an advice on that issue, but we would really appreciate your views on this issue in advance.** Furthermore, the CFP and related legislation require the EU to protect juveniles, however a number of MCRS as they are set in this regulation do not seem to serve this purpose as they are often set below the first spawning size (e.g. Sea bass 25 cm in the Mediterranean!). In some cases, they are not even set for many relevant species for recreational fisheries.
- The **Landing Obligation** has implications with the MCRS as well. This Regulation indeed, according to recent provisions¹, explicitly doesn't apply to the Western Waters, the North Sea,

and the Baltic Sea. It would be helpful for the MEDAC if the Commission could clarify whether the landing obligation applies to recreational fisheries in the (Western) Mediterranean Sea.

- A review of recreational fishing gears allowed in the Mediterranean is necessary. MEDAC has already planned this issue within the Working Group on Recreational Fisheries (WG4) in the working plan for 2020. We would appreciate if you could share your views on what is the best time for an advice in order to be more effective.

Yours sincerely.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2019/472 of 19 March 2019

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019R0472>

70 MEDAC LIST OF THE MAIN SPECIES TARGETED BY RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Rome, 12th November 2019

The first step of the WG4 2020 work is to identify a list of the most iconic target species for the recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean (in alphabetical order). This list does not include ICCAT species because they are covered by specific management.

Some species have been added in addition to those proposed by RF on request of commercial fishermen representatives, some of them are not so “iconic” for recreational fisheries but they have been added with footnote (*) because although they are not iconic their catch can be significant at local level. The species suggested by RF representatives are written in red.

SPECIE	IMPORTANCE FOR RF	NOTES
	++++ (HIGH) + (LOW)	
Coryphaena hippurus (*)	+++	Their importance for RF is increasing, we can start to consider it among iconic.
Dentex dentex	++++	
Dicentrarchus labrax	++++	
Diplodus spp	++++	
Epinephelus spp	++++	
Galeorhinus gales (*)	+	
Lichia amia	++++	
Loligo vulgaris (*)	++	
Merlangius merlangus (*)	+	IMPORTANCE (+++) IN NORTHERN ADRIATIC
Octopus vulgaris	++++	
Pagellus bogaraveo	++++	
Pagellus erythrinus (*)	++	
Pagrus pagrus (*)	++	
Pomatomus saltatrix	++++	
Sciaena umbra	++++	
Scomber scombrus (*)	++	
Scorpaena scrofa (*)	++	
Sepia officinalis	++++	
Seriola dumerili	++++	

SPECIE	IMPORTANCE FOR RF	NOTES
	++++ (HIGH) + (LOW)	
<i>Sparus aurata</i>	++++	
<i>Spicara flexuosa</i> (*)	++	
<i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i> (*)	++	
<i>Umbrina cirrosa</i>	++++	
<i>Zeus faber</i> (*)	++	

The following are commonly collected also by people who doesn't fish at all. Their importance for recreational fisheries is very low.

<i>Echinus esculentus</i> (*)	+
<i>Paracentrotus lividus</i> (*)	+
<i>Donax trunculus</i> (*)	+

(*) On request of commercial fishermen representatives, mainly Balearic Islands, Malta and Slovenia (and Italy: *Paracentrotus lividus* and *Donax trunculus*)

MEDAC LIST OF PAPERS AND RESEARCHERS OF RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Rome, 12th November 2019

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During 2019, WG4 evaluated currently available literature on recreational fisheries in order to define which of the many studies are useful and significant for the purpose of further research on the sector in question, so as to be in a position to provide the Commission and the Member States with an up-to-date tool to be used as necessary in the pursuit of sustainable, conscious and non-discriminatory management of recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean basin.

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Cultural and socio-economic impacts of Mediterranean marine protected areas	2000	Badalamenti et al.	All	Authors review management of different activities in Mediterranean MPAs, including recreational fisheries, to claim more focus on socio-economic impacts.
SFITUM, Sport fishing: an informative and economic alternative for Tuna fishing in the Mediterranean	2003	Gordoa A.	Angling	Boat fishing
Spearfishing in the Balearic Islands (West central Mediterranean): species affected and catch-evolution during the period 1975-2001	2004	Coll et al.	Spearfishing	
Impacte de la pesca recreativa sobre les espècies comunes al litoral de Catalunya	2004	ECOPROGES	All	Study for the Catalan fisheries Directorate, focused on the impact on species
A conceptual framework to identify and understand conflicts in recreational fisheries systems, with implications for sustainable management	2005	Robert Arlinghaus	All	

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Global impact on recreational fisheries	2005	Arlinghaus R., Cooke S.	All	Letter responding the article <i>The impact of United States recreational fisheries on marine fish populations</i> .
A fuzzy local expert system to estimate intrinsic extinction vulnerabilities of marine fishes to fishing	2005	Cheung et al.	All	This article is useful for all fisheries (commercial and recreational), as it allows estimating vulnerability of targeted species to fishing
The recreational fishery off Majorca Island (Western Mediterranean): some implications for coastal resource management	2005	Morales-nin et al.	All	
Estudio del impacto socioeconómico de la pesca recreativa en el Mediterráneo español	2005	TRAGSA	Boat	Focused on Spanish Mediterranean boat fishing.
Overcoming human obstacles to conservation of recreational fishery resources, with emphasis on central Europe	2006	Robert Arlinghaus	Angling	Paper based on freshwater ecosystems with private access, but some constraints and suggestions are applicable to marine RF
La pesca recreativa en Cataluña: aspectos biológicos, sociales y económicos	2006	Maria A.	All	Focused just on Catalonia region
Review of recreational fisheries survey methods	2006	Sullivan et al.	All	
Recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean countries: A review of existing legal frameworks	2007	Gaudin C., De Young C.	All	
Managing evolving fish stocks	2007	Jorgensen et al.	All	The paper shows how fisheries-induced evolution may affect our experience on several marine activities, recreational fisheries being one of them
EU Contract FISH/2004/011 on "Sport Fisheries" (or Marine Recreational Fisheries) in the EU	2007	Pawson et al.	All	
Influence of anatomical hooking depth, capture depth, and venting on mortality of painted comber (<i>Serranus scriba</i>) released by recreational anglers	2008	Alòs J.	Angling	
Effects of hook size and barbless hooks on hooking injury, catch per unit effort, and fish size in a mixed-species recreational fishery in the western Mediterranean Sea	2008	Alòs et al.	Angling	
The definition of marine recreational fishing in Europe	2008	Pawson et al.	All	

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Spearfishing pressure on fish communities in rocky coastal habitats in a Mediterranean marine protected area	2008	Lloret et al.	Spearfishing	This paper is the result of an Interreg IIIc project (MEDPAN) full of methodological flaws (species identification, size estimations, survey methodology, etc). IFSUA identified them all and wrote a detailed report about it. The problem is that this paper has been cited and used many times after its publication by other authors, so the flaws are carried around. Even managers have used it to apply discriminatory regulations.
Recreational fisheries: Socioeconomic importance, conservation issues and management challenges	2009	Arlinghaus R., Cooke S.	All	Chapter 3 from book: Recreational hunting, conservation and rural livelihoods: science and practice, by Dickson et al.
Adaptive management for a turbulent future	2010	Allen et al.	All	This is a very general paper that mentions that this kind of management can help to mitigate anthropogenic impacts and, specifically, recreational harvest of animals and regulation of human participation in natural resource-based recreational activities.
Scientists and recreational fishers: Communication manners and its efficiency	2010	Cardona-Pons et al.	Angling	Although the study is only about angling, the conclusions could be applied to all modalities.
Diversity and complexity of angler behaviour drive socially optimal input and output regulations in a bioeconomic recreational-fisheries model	2010	Johnston et al.	All	Study on freshwater species but interesting to understand the need to take fishers behaviour into consideration when managing RF.
Socioeconomic implications of recreational shore angling for the management of coastal resources in a Mediterranean Marine Protected Area	2010	Font T., Lloret J.	Angling	Shore-based
Quantifying recreational fishing catch and effort: a pilot study of shore-based fishers in the Perth Metropolitan Area	2011	Smallwood et al.	Angling	Focused on shore-based fishers
The importance of trip context for determining primary angler motivations: are more specialized anglers more catch-determining primary angler motivations: are more specialized anglers more catch-oriented than previously believed?	2011 2011	Beardmore et al. Beardmore et al.	Angling Angling	Although the study is on a freshwater species and angling, we believe it should be applicable to marine recreational fisheries modalities. It would be desirable marine recreational fisheries modalities. It would be desirable more studies like this (mainly saltwater and spearfishing) to see if results are similar.

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Assessing the impact of artisanal and recreational fishing and protection on a white seabream (<i>Diplodus sargus sargus</i>) population in the north-western Mediterranean Sea, using a simulation model. Part 2: Sensitivity analysis and management measures	2011	Hussein et al.	All	
Comunidades de peces de los arrecifes rocosos costeros de Galicia: ecología e impactos humanos	2011	Pita P.	All	In this PhD recreational fisheries CPUE is obtained from a survey answered by a ridiculous number of fishers (e.g. 54 spearfishers out of a population of more than 5000). This is against standard methodology in how recreational fisheries assessments should be carried out and thus, results in completely flawed data.
Spearfishing regulation benefits artisanal fisheries: the ReGS indicator and its application to a multiple-use Mediterranean marine protected area	2011	Rocklin et al.	Spearfishing	It makes assemblages with species not targeted by spearfishers. The list used is completely different from MEDAC list. On the other hand, should an MPA have the role of benefiting commercial stakeholders and be detrimental to RF? Finally, although grouper being banned to spearfishing, they include it as fished by them. This is completely unacceptable.
Community involvement in recreational fisheries data collection: opportunities and challenges	2011	Stenekes N., Sahlqvist P.	All	The paper shows the benefits of recreational fisheries monitoring programs in Australia.
Influence of spear guns, dive gear and observers on estimating fish flight initiation distance on coral reefs	2012	Januchowsky-Hartley et al.	Spearfishing	
Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries 13: Recreational Fisheries	2012	Arlinghaus et al.	All	FAO Document. MEDAC developed advice based on this.
Analyse économique et sociale de l'utilisation de nos eaux marines et du coût de la dégradation du milieu marin en Méditerranée occidentale, activités de loisirs utilisation des eaux marines, pêche récréative	2012	Levret H.	All	
Towards resilient recreational fisheries on a global scale through improved understanding of fish and fisher behaviour	2013	Arlinghaus et al.	All	Understanding fish and fisher behaviour is paramount for resilient fisheries
Communication between scientists, fishery managers and recreational fishers: Lessons learned from a comparative analysis of international case studies	2013	Dedual et al.	All	

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Unexpectedly high catch-and-release rates in European marine recreational fisheries: implications for science and management	2013	Ferter et al.	Angling	
La pêche récréative en mer en France Métropolitaine (Atlantique, Manche, Mer du Nord, Méditerranée)	2013	Levrel et al.	All	Results of the survey taken by IFREMER
A comparative analysis between recreational and artisanal fisheries in a Mediterranean coastal area	2013	Lloret et al.	All	All assumptions on spearfishing are, at least, dubious due to being based on the paper by the same authors on 2008 that is considered completely flawed.
overcoming human obstacles to conservation of recreational fishery resources, with emphasis on central Europe	2013	Cooke et al.	Angling	Authors present different scenarios in which tagging by inexperienced fishers is questioned.
Análisis de la flota recreativa y de su impacto socioeconómico y pesquero en Euskadi	2013	Zarauz et al.	Angling	Socio-economics of boat fishing in Basc Country
Estimation of the recreative fishery catches along the Venetian coast	2014	Anelli Monti et al.	All	
Explaining participation rates in recreational fishing across industrialised countries	2014	Arlinghaus et al.	All	Results mix freshwater and marine RF
Socio-ecological approach of the recreational squid fishery	2014	Cabanellas-Reboredo M.	Angling	Boat fishing
Angling for endangered fish: Conservation problem or conservation action?	2014	Cooke et al.	Angling	
Does recreational catch impact the TAC for commercial fisheries?	2014	Eero et al.	All	Based on an Atlantic species but perfectly applicable to other basins
Biological and ecological impacts derived from recreational fishing in Mediterranean coastal areas	2014	Lloret et al.	All	All assumptions on spearfishing are, at least, dubious due to being based on the paper by the same authors on 2008 that is considered completely flawed.
A review of biology, fisheries and population structure of <i>Dentex dentex</i>	2014	Marengo M., Marchand B.	All	Authors make a review on this species, including its fisheries. A point is dedicated to recreational.
How relevant are recreational fisheries? Motivation and activity of resident and tourist anglers in Majorca	2014	Morales-nin et al.	All	
Spear fishing ban in MPAs: the rational choice?	2014	Pita et al.	Spearfishing	The study identifies several flaws in some of the main studies focused on spearfishing

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
The use of spearfishing competition data in fisheries management: evidence for a hidden near collapse of a coastal fish community in Galicia (NE Atlantic Ocean)	2014	Pita et al.	Spearfishing	Spear fishing data is used to show the decline of coastal fish communities (independently of the cause).
The economic gains from reallocating specific saltwater fisheries	2015	American sportfishing association	All	
Improving knowledge exchange among scientists and decision-makers to facilitate the adaptive management of marine resources: A review of knowledge and research needs	2015	Cvitanovic et al.	All	Review paper useful for all kind of fisheries, including recreational and commercial
The structure and function of angler mental models about fish population ecology: The influence of specialization and target species	2015	Gray et al.	Angling	Although the study is on a freshwater species and angling, it is perfectly applicable to marine recreational fisheries modalities.
Effectively managing angler satisfaction in recreational fisheries requires understanding the fish species and the anglers	2015	Beardmore et al.	Angling	Although the study is on a freshwater species and angling, we believe it should be applicable to marine recreational fisheries modalities. It would be desirable more studies like this (mainly saltwater and spearfishing) to see if results are similar.
Comparing industry sector values, with a case study of commercial fishing and recreational sea angling	2015	Tinch et al.	All	
Comparing different survey methods to estimate European sea bass recreational catches in the Basque country	2015	Zarauz et al.	All	Although the study is focused in the Atlantic is perfectly applicable to the Mediterranean.
Collaborative approaches to accessing and utilising historical citizen science data: a case-study with spearfishers from eastern Australia	2015	Gledhill et al.	Spearfishing	How to take advantage of recreational fisheries knowledge and sources of information to establish baselines to understand change in marine ecosystems. Applicable to other RF modalities, also.
Smartphones reveal angler behavior: a case study of a popular mobile fishing application in Alberta, Canada.	2015	Papenfuss et al.	All	Paper based on freshwater ecosystems, but applicable to marine RF
Fast and behavior-selective exploitation of marine fish targeted by anglers	2016	Alós et al.	Angling	Study on <i>Xyrichtys novacula</i> . Vulnerability to angling. The idea of vulnerability could probably be extrapolated to other gears.
Recommendations for the future of recreational fisheries to prepare the socio-ecological system to cope with change	2016	Arlinghaus et al.	All	Conclusions and recommendations emerged from 2014 WRFC

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Response of fish populations to novel and traditional harvesting regulations	2016	Bond et al.	All	Conference paper based on laboratory experiment suggests harvesting slots managing outperform traditional min length management. It would be desirable to test it in the sea.
Estimating harvest and its uncertainty in heterogeneous recreational fisheries	2016	Cabanellas-Reboredo et al.	Angling	Focused on <i>Loligo vulgaris</i> fishery (boat) in Mallorca but applicable to many modalities
Comparative analysis between artisanal and recreational fisheries of <i>Dentex dentex</i> in a Marine Protected Area	2016	Marengo et al.	All	Biased toward artisanal fisheries. Although they catch more <i>Dentex</i> , they claim measures to RF. On the other hand, it's against <i>Malak A. et al.</i> (2011) conclusion that spear fishing is the main threat of <i>Dentex dentex</i> in the Mediterranean and here its impact is considered low.
Assessing the impact of spear fishing by using competitions records and underwater visual censuses	2016	Pita et al.	Spearfishing	
Consumptive tourism causes timidity, rather than boldness, syndromes: a response to Geffroy et al.	2016	Arlinghaus et al.	All	The authors of the response state that consumptive tourism does not cause boldness but timidity syndrome based on recreational fishing examples.
Does unreported catch lead to overfishing?	2016	Rudd M.B., Branch T.A.	All	Useful for any kind of fishery, recreational and commercial
The Barcelona agreement: a manifesto towards the spearfishing of the future	2016	Sbragaglia et al.	Spearfishing	The authors explain the main challenges for this activity in over-exploited coastal ecosystems
Bait worms: a valuable and important fishery with implications for fisheries and conservation management	2016	Watson et al.	Angling	Assessment and ecological implications of bait collecting
Why do fishers fish? A cross-cultural examination of the motivations for fishing	2016	Young et al.	All	An study of fishers motivations, comparing recreational and artisanal and finding out that they have a lot in common (recreational mindset).
Spearfishing data reveals the littoral fish communities' association to coastal configuration	2017	Boada et al.	Spearfishing	
Expanding aquatic observations through recreation	2017	Brewin et al.	All	
The nexus of fun and nutrition: Recreational fishing is also about food	2017	Cooke et al.	All	
Evaluation of observer-and industry-based catch data in a recreational charter fishery	2017	Gray C.A., Kennelly S.J.	Angling	

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Recreational sea fishing in Europe in a global context - Participation rates, fishing effort, expenditure, and implications for monitoring and assessment	2017	Hyder et al.	All	
Toward a mechanistic understanding of vulnerability to hook-and-line fishing: Boldness as the basic target of angling-induced selection	2017	Klefoth et al.	Angling	Although the experiment was made with freshwater fish, it is probably applicable to marine species
What makes fish vulnerable to capture by hooks? A conceptual framework and a review of key determinants	2017	Lennox et al.	Angling	Applicable to recreational and commercial fisheries that target fish with hooks
Conciliating artisanal and recreational fisheries in Anegada Bay, Argentina	2017	Llompert et al.	All	
A matter of scales. The management of recreational fisheries in the EU	2017	Pita et al.	All	
The role of recreational fisheries in the sustainable management of marine resources	2017	Ogana A.	All	
Making waves: Marine citizen science for impact	2017	Schläppy et al.	All	Although not directly focused on recreational fisheries, it could be very useful for RF stakeholders
Angler apps as a source of recreational fisheries data: opportunities, challenges and proposed standards	2017	Venturelli et al.	All	Opportunities and challenges of apps as a source of data for RF assessments
Recreational fisheries in Portofino Marine Protected Area, Italy: Some implications for the management	2017	Venturini et al.	Angling	
Participatory adaptive management leads to environmental learning outcomes extending beyond the sphere of science	2017	Fujitani et al.	Angling	Although the study is on a freshwater species and angling, we believe it is applicable to all marine recreational fisheries modalities.
An assessment of catches of shore sport fishing competitions along the coast of the Maltese Islands: Implications for conservation and management	2018	Agius Darmanin S., Vella A.	Angling	Just focused on shore based competitions
Welfare of aquatic animals: where things are, where they are going, and what it means for research, aquaculture, recreational angling and commercial fishing	2018	Browman et al.	All	Applicable to recreational and commercial fisheries.
Identifying recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea through social media	2018	Iovos et al.	All	Taking data from social media is very dangerous, as a very limited part of the RF population uses them. Indeed, there is a new trend among fishers to avoid them.

Paper/Publication	Year	Author/s	Modality	Comments
Recreational fishing in Spain: First national estimates of fisher population size, fishing activity and fisher social profile	2018	Gordoa et al.	All	First assessment made of the whole Spanish population of recreational fishers using an app.
Estimating recreational fishing fleet using satellite data in the Aegean and Ionian Seas (Mediterranean Sea)	2018	Keramidas et al.	Angling	Limited to boat fishing
Estimating post-release mortality of European sea bass based on experimental angling	2018	Lewin et al.	Angling	
The impact of marine recreational fishing on key fish stocks in European waters	2018	Radford et al.	All	Although the article is full of extrapolations due to scarce data, the authors stress the need to include RF catches in stock assessments
Spearfishing modulates flight initiation distance of fishes: the effects of protection, individual size, and bearing a speargun	2018	Sbragaglia et al.	Spearfishing	Results differ in some aspects with those of Januchowsky-Hartley et al. More studies on this subject should be made in order to understand which is the general trend.
Opinion: Governing the recreational dimension of global fisheries	2019	Arlinghaus et al.	All	
The future of recreational fisheries: advances in science, monitoring, management and practice	2019	Brownscombe et al.	All	Review on different aspects of recreational fisheries, including research. Some data offered seems dubious, like that catch and release in European RF is around 60%.
The first estimates of species compositions of Spanish marine recreational fishing reveal the activity's inner and geographical variability	2019	Dedeu et al.	All	
Recreational and small-scale fisheries may pose a threat to vulnerable species in coastal and offshore waters of the western Mediterranean	2019	Lloret et al.	All	Lloret keeps using his 2008 flawed data and the biased results keep spreading to other papers.
Data mining on YouTube reveals fisher group-specific harvesting patterns and social engagement in recreational anglers and spearfishers	2019	Sbragaglia et al.	All	

A list of researchers who work in European and/or national research institutes and organisations is also provided together with this information; these are experts who have acquired in-depth knowledge and experience on the specific issues affecting the recreational fisheries sector. This list reflects to some degree the confidence that the stakeholders have in those fisheries scientists who demonstrate that they know how to approach the matters that are unique to the recreational fisheries sector in a fair and unbiased way, thus providing high-level scientific support in the endeavour to define future management choices for a recreational fisheries sector that is sustainable, easy-to-integrate and which does not suffer undue discrimination.

Scientist Name, Surname	Interest area (maritime, freshwaters, both)	Job Country	Institute/University/EU (ICES - STECF)
Alòs, Pep	maritime	Spain	IMEDEA
Arlinghaus, Robert	Both	Germany	Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology
Azzurro, Ernesto	maritime	Italy	ISPRA
Baudrier, Jérôme	maritime	France	IFREMER
Boada, Jordi	maritime	Spain	UB
Brown, Adam	maritime	UK	CEFAS
Cavaleiro Diogo, Hugo Miguel	maritime	Portugal	University of Azores
Colella, Sabrina	maritime	Italy	ISMAR
Dedeu Luntón, Arnau Luk	maritime	Spain	ICM-CSIC
Ferter, Keno	maritime	Norway	IMR
Gordoa, Ana	maritime	Spain	CEAB-CSIC
Grati, Fabio	maritime	Italy	CNR-IRBIM and FAO GFCM
Hyder, Kieran	maritime	UK	CEFAS
Keramidas, Ioannis	maritime	Greece	AUT
Lafon, Jérôme	maritime	France	FranceAgriMer
Lozano, Matías	maritime	Spain	IEO
Michailidis, Nikolas	maritime	Cyprus	DFMR
Mohamed, Esha	maritime	Sweden	SLU
Morales-Nin, Beatriz	maritime	Spain	IMEDEA
Mugerza, Estanis	maritime	Spain	AZTI
Olesen, Hans Jakob	maritime	Denmark	DTU
Papadopoulos, Anastasios	maritime	Greece	FRI
Pita, Pablo	maritime	Spain	USC
Rangel, Mafalda	maritime	Portugal	CCMAR
Sbragaglia, Valerio	maritime	Italy	ISPRA
Sköv, Christian	maritime	Denmark	DTU
Strehlow, Harry Vincent	maritime	Germany	Thünen-Institute

Strehlow, Harry Vincent	maritime	Germany	Thünen-Institute
Veiga, Pedro	maritime	Portugal	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Verleye, Thomas	maritime	Belgium	VLIZ
Villasante, Sebastián	maritime	Spain	USC
Volstad, John Helge	maritime	Norway	IMR
Weltersbach, Simon	maritime	Germany	Thünen-Institute
Zarauz, Lucia	maritime	Spain	AZTI

MEDAC OPINION ON RECREATIONAL FISHERIES RELEVANT SPECIES AND ANNEXES

2nd March 2020

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The MEDAC¹ has dealt with certain issues concerning recreational fisheries by defining a list of the species which are most significant for the recreational fisheries sector and/or for which conflict with professional fisheries in terms of gear used or catches is perceived.

There are no up-to-date data on the size of stocks for most of these species, and at the time of approval of this opinion there are no data on the impact of recreational fisheries on the species taken into consideration, it is therefore difficult to provide an opinion on the catch limits based on scientific data. This is underlined by the wide variety of contributions (considered as independent suggestions) received from the WG4 participants concerning restrictions to total catches. However, there is what can be termed the “actual fisheries” which is the real situation related to the fishing gear actually employed by the recreational fisheries sector and that used by small-scale fisheries (SSF) to capture these species; it has therefore been possible to identify the cases in which the gear used by both fishery sectors overlap, as highlighted in the table and graphs that are an integral part of this opinion.

As a result of this analysis, it has emerged that there is some overlap in the use of the following gears: long lines, traps, hand or hand dredges and hooks, in the percentage indicated in the graphs. In particular, highest level of overlap (considering the number of species and the number of replies received from the working group participants) relates to longlines, however there are critical issues concerning traps too, as a consequence of the commercial value that the professional sector attributes to some species caught with this gear, such as *Sepia officinalis*. Furthermore, during the debate in the framework of WG4, it emerged that there was some conflict regarding the use of electromechanical aids in recreational fisheries (e.g. electric reels) with particular reference to demersal species (*Pagello bogaraveo*).

In this regard the MEDAC therefore believes that it is necessary to:

- Ban the use of passive gear (longlines, traps) and electromechanical aids (electric reels) in recreational fisheries ^{2 3}.

The WG also worked on the following issues, in relation to which the MEDAC considers it appropriate to express its point of view:

1. The introduction of minimum conservation reference sizes⁴ (MCRS) for the recreational capture of the species indicated in the list.
2. The introduction in the EU Technical Measures Regulation of definitive total catch limits for the species indicated in the list.

With reference to point 1 the MEDAC:

- believes that this should be defined on the basis of scientific data, the MEDAC does not therefore intend to suggest any specific size, however it is deemed necessary to introduce a minimum⁵ conservation reference size for recreational fisheries⁶ for each of the species in the list which takes into account the size at first sexual maturity (based on of the most up-to-date scientific data available), so as to allow each of these species at least one reproductive cycle before capture.

With reference to point 2, the MEDAC thinks that it would be difficult to reach an agreement in order to provide precise indications on the daily total catch limits without stock assessment, given the wide variety of contributions provided by the working group participants on this topic (reference is made to the graphs attached), however:

- the MEDAC believes that stock assessment is necessary for each of the species on the list and that a daily total catch limit should be introduced (for each individual fisher) in terms of the number of specimens of each species, which should not, in any case, exceed a daily quantity in terms of total weight, or one single specimen of a greater weight⁷.

Furthermore, the MEDAC reiterates that it is in favour of the following, as already stated in previous MEDAC opinions:

- The introduction into European legislation of mandatory authorisation⁸ for recreational fisheries at sea throughout the Mediterranean basin.
- The introduction of legislative and economic tools in order to improve efforts to tackle, and possibly to eradicate, the problem of illegal trade of fish products by fishers who do not have a commercial licence.
- It is necessary to start an evaluation of the impact of the catches from recreational fishing on the stocks in each of the Member States, as well as a socio economics evaluation related to RF.
- The introduction of mandatory “user friendly” electronic tools (such as smartphone apps) to record catches and to notify fishing trips at sea using a vessel.
- Extending the application of the ban on fishery operations in Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRA) to recreational fisheries⁹ too.
- Measures to identify catches from recreational fisheries by means of ablation of the lower part of the caudal fin.

¹ FACOPE, CEPESCA and FNCP voted against this opinion.

² FIPSAS, CIPS and FIPIA opposed the ban on the use of passive gear and electromechanical aids in recreational fisheries. EAA and IFSUA are opposed to a ban of electromechanical aids because the socio and economic impact of such a ban should be taken into account, E.g. some disabled anglers would suffer from such a ban (social inclusion).

³ Federpesca supports the prohibition of all the professional gears included in the art.2 of Italian D.M. 12/06/2012, excepted LHP (hand line and rod and line without electro-mechanical support) and LTL (trolling).

⁴ WWF suggests not only a minimum but also a maximum MCRS, a maximum size is intended to have a positive impact in terms of spawning capacity.








⁵ WWF suggests not only a minimum but also a maximum MCRS, a maximum size is intended to have a positive impact in terms of spawning capacity.














⁶ FIPSAS and CIPS do not consider the introduction of minimum catch sizes for recreational fisheries to be acceptable unless the same sizes are applied to the commercial fisheries sector.









⁷ FIPIA and IFSUA ask for the total catch limit in Kg to be applied according to the limits that are currently in force in the respective countries (Italy – Spain) plus one fish. FIPSAS asks for the total catch limit in Kg to be applied according to the limits that are currently in force in Italy.

⁸ WWF prefers the term “license” instead of “authorization”

⁹ EAA and IFSUA are against a blunt ban on rod and line in FRA without scientific evidence of the impact on the FRA if other fishing gears or fisheries are allowed. EAA has adopted a position on MPAs, which covers FRAs, which can be read here: www.eaa-europe.org/positions/marine-protected-areas-2018.html (version Oct 2019).

MEDAC WG4 - STEP 2				
SPECIES	EU SIZE Reg. 2019/1241 Annex IX T.L. cm	GEARS USED BY RF (1)	GEARS USED BY SSF (2)	CONFLICTS ON GEARS OVERLAP (3)
<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns	Set nets - purse seine - FAD - Hooks (trolling lines) - longline	
<i>Dentex dentex</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline - traps	Set nets - purse seine - longline	
<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	25	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Set nets - longline	
<i>Diplodus spp</i>				
<i>Diplodus annularis</i>	12	Hooks (rod or handline)	Set nets - longline - traps	
<i>Diplodus puntazzo</i>	18	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Set nets - longline - traps	
<i>Diplodus sargus</i>	23	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Set nets - longline - traps	
<i>Diplodus vulgaris</i>	18	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Set nets - longline - traps	

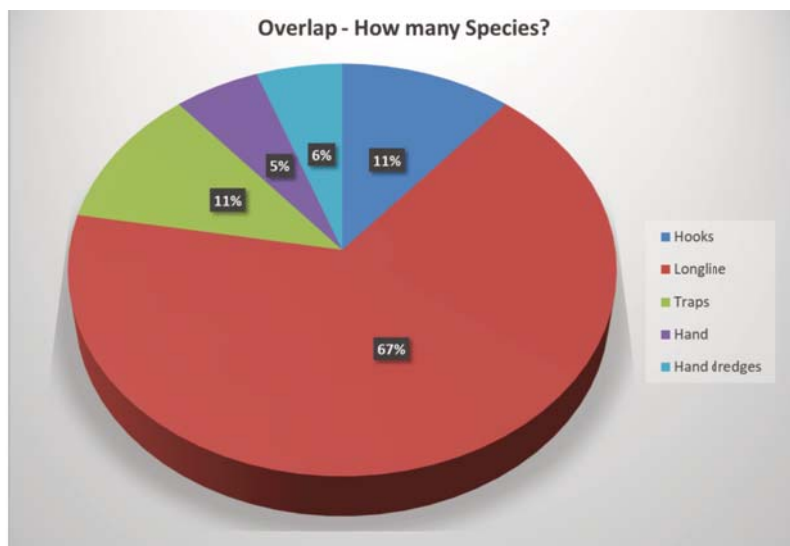
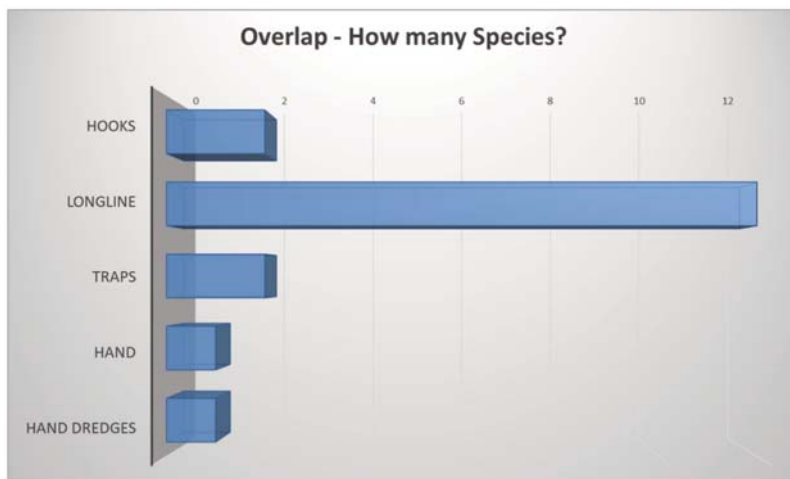
<i>Epinephelus spp</i>	45	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Set nets - longline	
<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - longline	Set nets	
<i>Lichia amia</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns	Set nets - longline	
<i>Loligo vulgaris</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline)	Purse seine - Set nets - Hooks	
<i>Merlangius merlangus</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline)	Set nets - longline	
<i>Octopus vulgaris</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - traps	Set nets - traps	
<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	33	Hooks (rod or handline)	Longline	
<i>Pagellus erythrinus</i> (*)	15	Hooks (rod or handline) - longline	Set nets - longline	
<i>Pagrus pagrus</i> (*)	18	Hooks (rod or handline) - longline	Set nets - longline	
<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns	Set nets - longline	
<i>Scomber scombrus</i> (*)	18	Hooks (rod or handline)	Purse seine - set nets - longline	
<i>Scorpaena scrofa</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline - traps	Purse seine - set nets - longline	
<i>Sepia officinalis</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - speargun - traps	Set nets - traps	

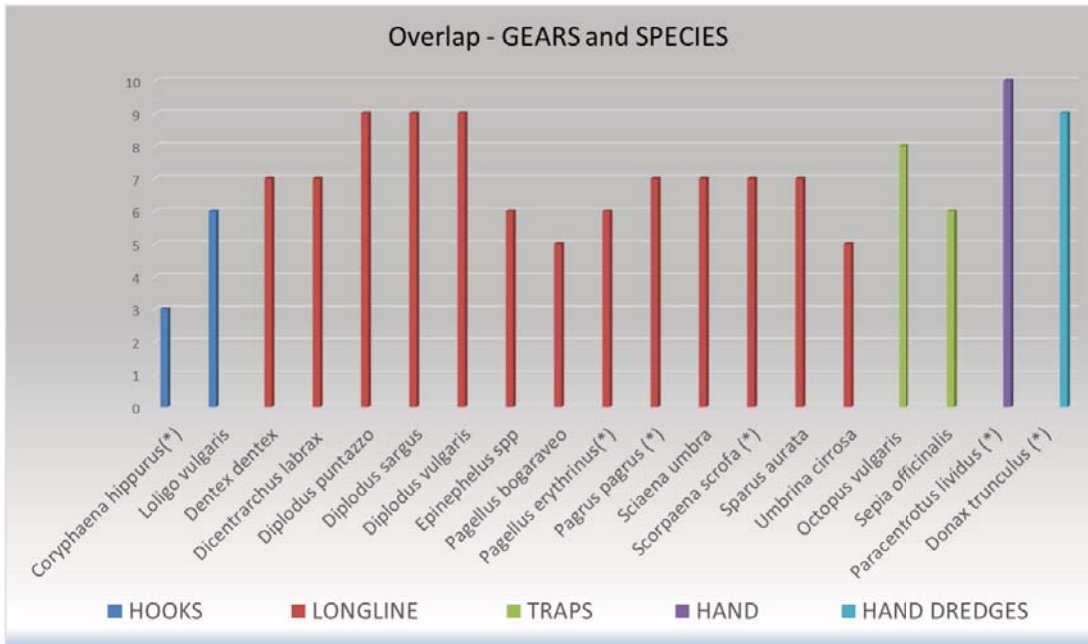
<i>Seriola dumerili</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns	Set nets - longline - traps	
<i>Sparus aurata</i>	20	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Purse seine - set nets - longline	
<i>Spicara flexuosa</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline)	Set nets	
<i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i> (*)	15	Hooks (rod or handline)	Purse seine - set nets - longline	
<i>Umbrina cirrosa</i>	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline) - spearguns - longline	Purse seine - set nets - longline	
<i>Zeus faber</i> (*)	n.d.	Hooks (rod or handline)	Set nets - longline	
<i>Paracentrotus lividus</i> (*)	n.d.	Hand	Hand	
<i>Donax trunculus</i> (*)	n.d.	Hand dredges	Boat dredges - hand dredge	

- 2) In order to simplify, the WG4 Coordinator chose to include each commercial gear in macro group, which is enough for the purpose of this job, according the following:
 SET NETS group includes: GNS, GTN, GTR
 LONGLINE group includes: LLS, LLD
 PURSE SEINE group includes: PS, LA
 TRAPS group includes: FIX, FPO
 HOOKS group includes: LTL, LX
- 3) In this column it is highlighted the conflict on gears used by both RF and SSf: ● **GREEN** means no conflict, ● **YELLOW** means conflict on gears mainly used by RF (SSF trolling line) or “no gears” (hand), ● **RED** means conflict on gears mainly used by commercial sector (longlines, traps)

WG 4 – Recreational Fishery

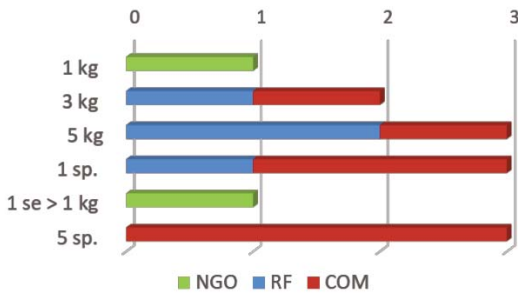
Contributions on MCRS, gears overlapping between RF and SSF, Daily bag limits



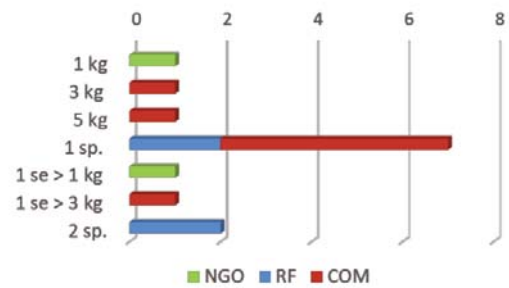


DAILY BAG BY DIMENSION AND PARTICIPANTS (NGO, Recreational Fishers, Commercial Fishers)

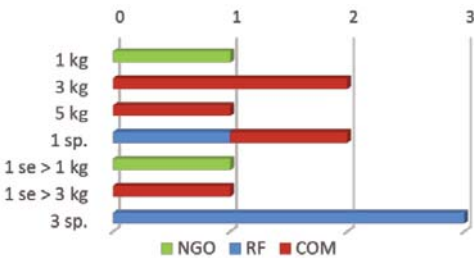
Coryphaena hippurus



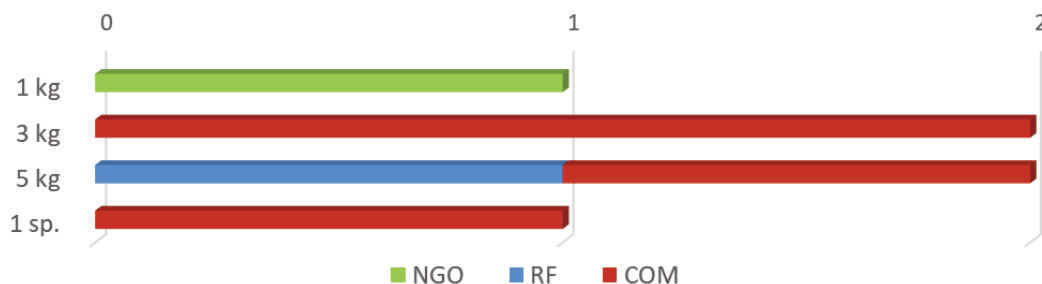
Dentex dentex



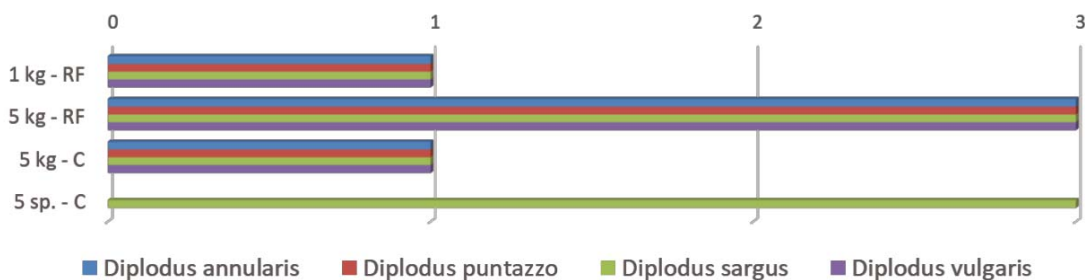
Dicentrarchus labrax



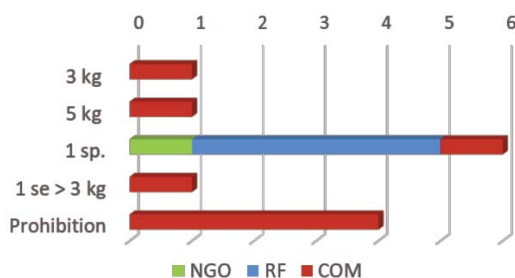
Diplodus spp.



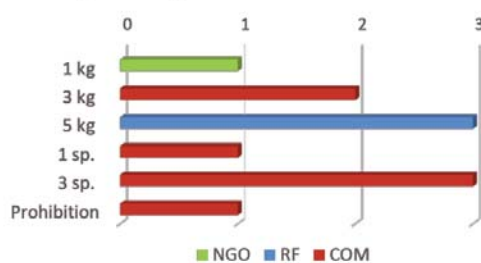
Diplodus spp.



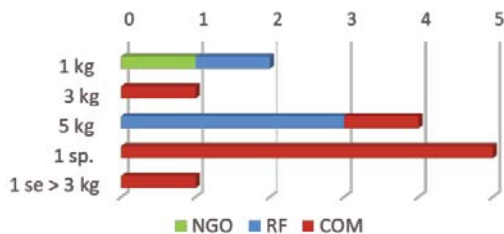
Epinephelus spp.



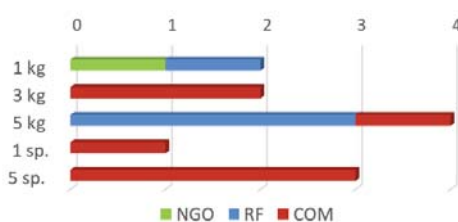
Pagellus bogaraveo

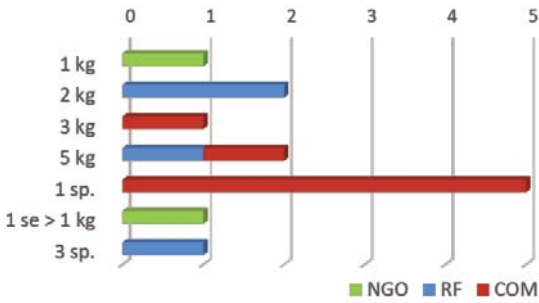
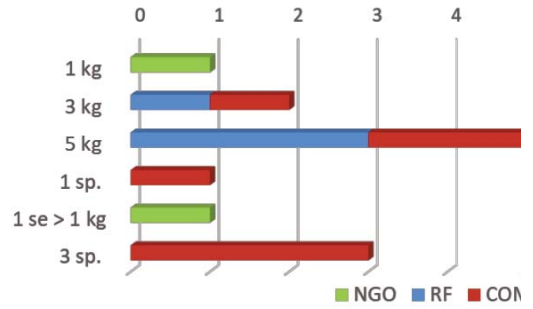
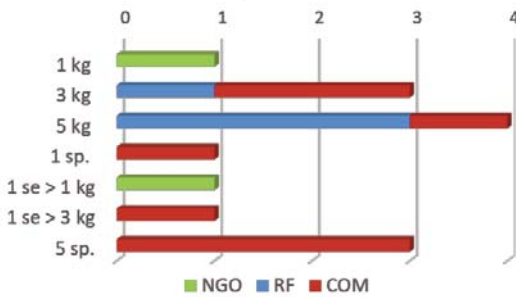
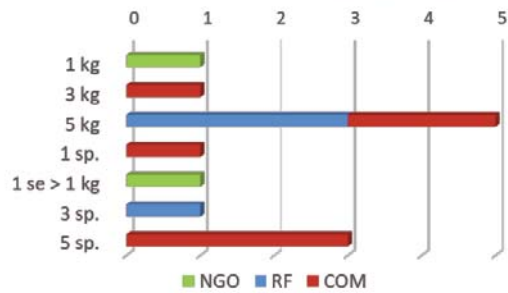
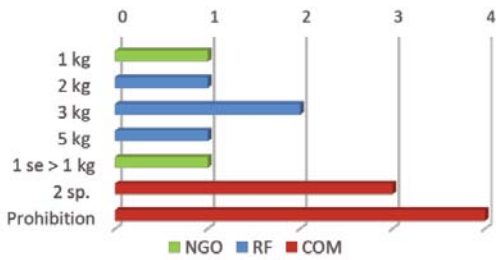
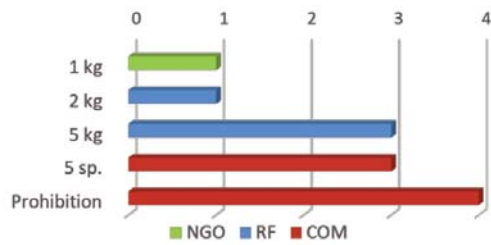
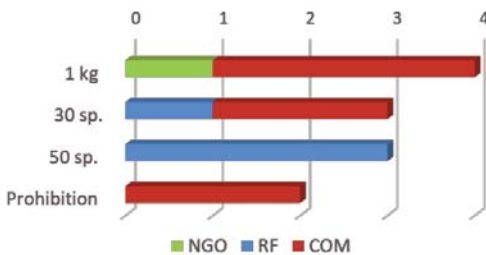
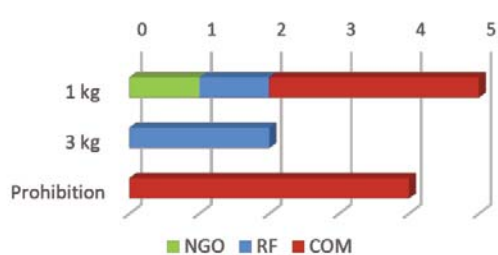


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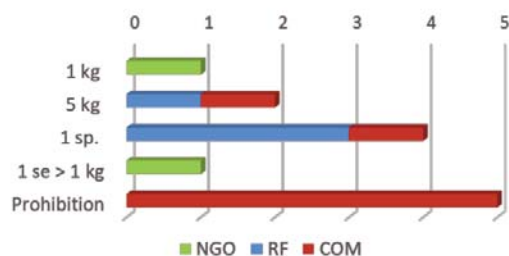


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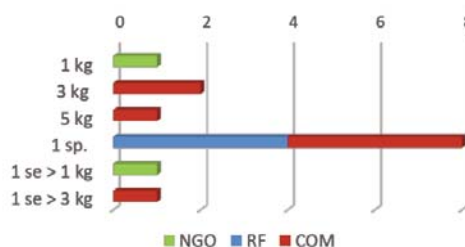


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Scorpaena scrofa

Sparus aurata

Umbrina cirrosa

Octopus vulgaris

Sepia officinalis

Paracentrotus lividus

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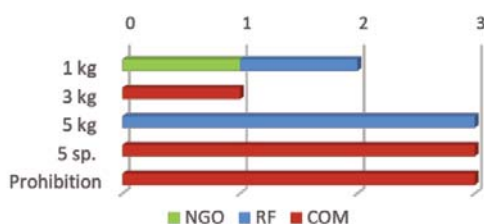
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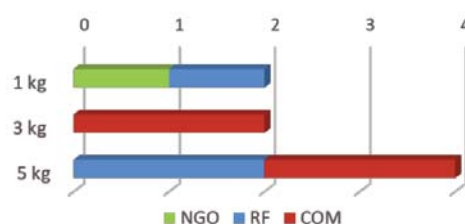
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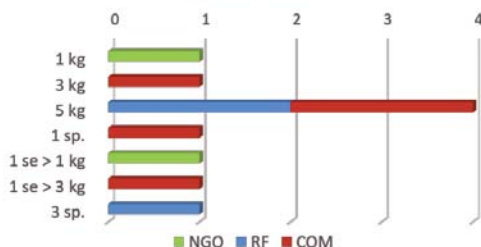
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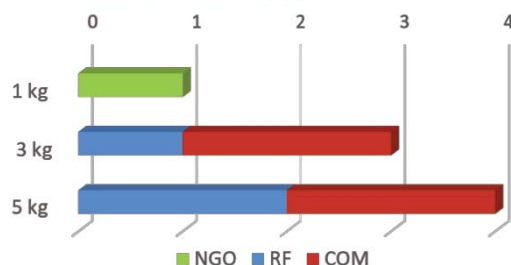
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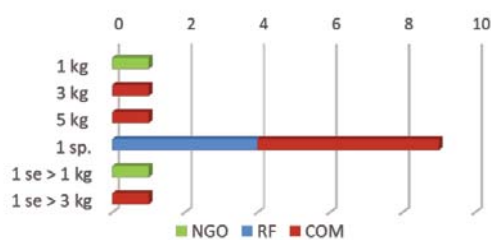
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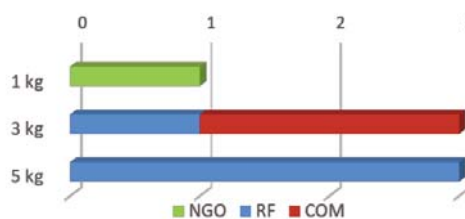
Scomber scombrus



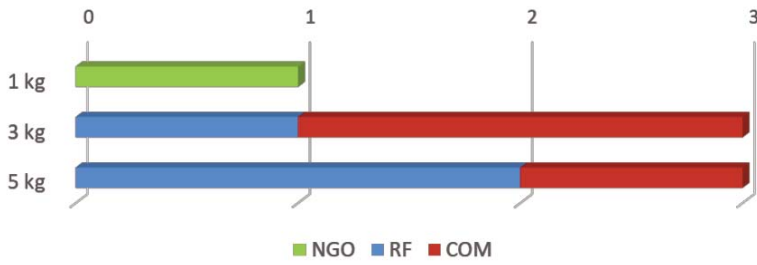
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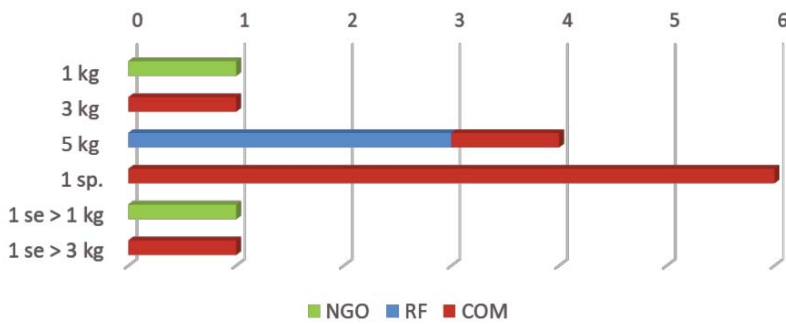
Spicara flexuosa



Trachurus mediterraneus



Zeus faber



WG 5 - Working Group about Small-Scale Fisheries and Socioeconomic impacts



WG 5 - Working Group

about Small-Scale Fisheries and Socioeconomic impacts

TOPIC: Socioeconomic impacts and Covid-19 Crisis

RACMED LETTER TO THE EC ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE EFF

73

Rome, 04th July 2012

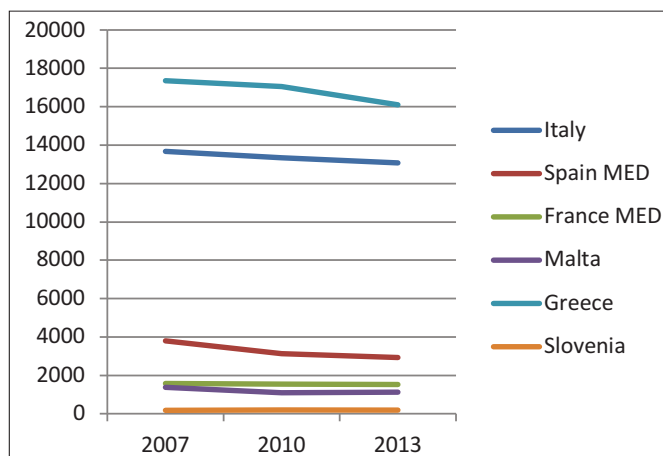
To Lowri Evans (Director General, EC – DG MARE); Ernesto Bianchi (EC - DG MARE)

Dear Ms Evans,

During the Working Group on the assessment of the socio-economic impact of the CFP reform (WG5), the discussion focused on the state of fisheries in each Mediterranean country within the EFF timeframe. There was an exchange of views on the drafting of a questionnaire to assess, with the help of official figures, the economic impact of the application of fisheries management measures given the specific nature of the Mediterranean situation using indicators (such as, fleet composition, level of employment, level of production cost, cost of fuel, safety nets), taking three reference years: 2007, 2010 and 2013. The results of this effort are provided in appendix.

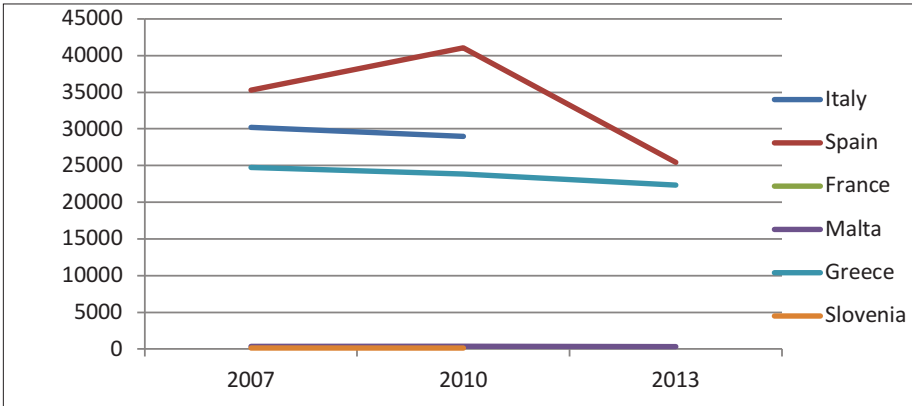
From the analysis of the numerical information provided it is clear that there is an overall decrease in the EU fishing fleets operating in the basin, as shown in Graph No. 1. The Spanish Mediterranean fleet, for example, experienced a decrease of 17.74% between 2007 and 2010 falling from 3.796 vessels registered in the Mediterranean in 2007, to 3.120 in 2010 and for 2013 it is likely that vessels will be reduced by a further 6,19% reaching a total of 2.927 boats. The same happened in Malta, where in 2010 there was a reduction of 20,5% in the number of registered vessels, decreasing from 1.371 in 2007 to only 1.090 registered vessels in 2010. This decline is the result of the policies implemented to reduce fishing capacity. In the French Mediterranean basin the number of trawlers has suffered a sharp decrease from 125 fishing vessels in 2007 to 65 fishing vessels in 2013, it means that there has been a reduction of almost 50% from 2007 to 2013.

Graph 1: Number of registered vessels (2007-2010) in the RAC MED member countries



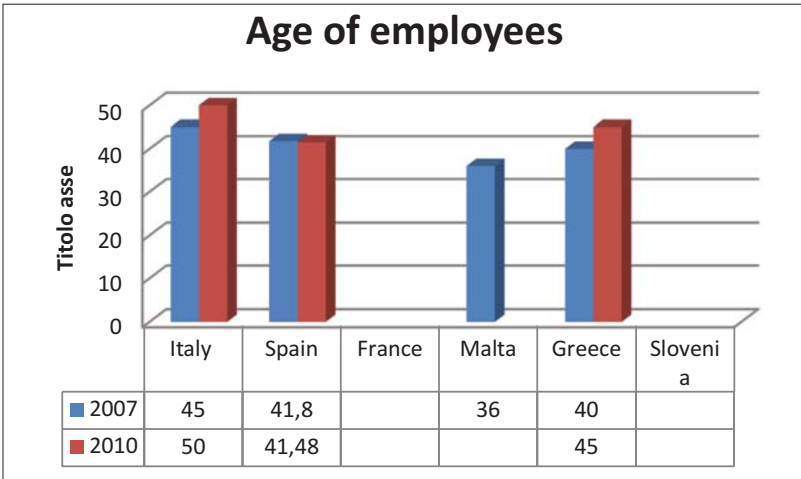
Referring to the number of employees in the fishing industry (see Graph 2), although it was not possible to extrapolate the data relative to the Spanish Mediterranean fleet, and no data was available for France, we can see a very sharp decline, on average, in the total number of employees, of approximately 5% in various countries. In Spain, where it was only possible to look at the total number of employees both for the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, there was an initial increase in the number of employees between 2007 and 2010 but the estimates for 2013 show there would be a sharp decline, of approximately 38% compared to 2010, reaching a level of 25.440 employees. A similar pattern was registered in Malta, with an initial increase followed by a sharp decline, whereas in the other countries the total number of employees shows a constant negative trend.

Graph 2: number of employees in the fisheries sector (2007-2010)



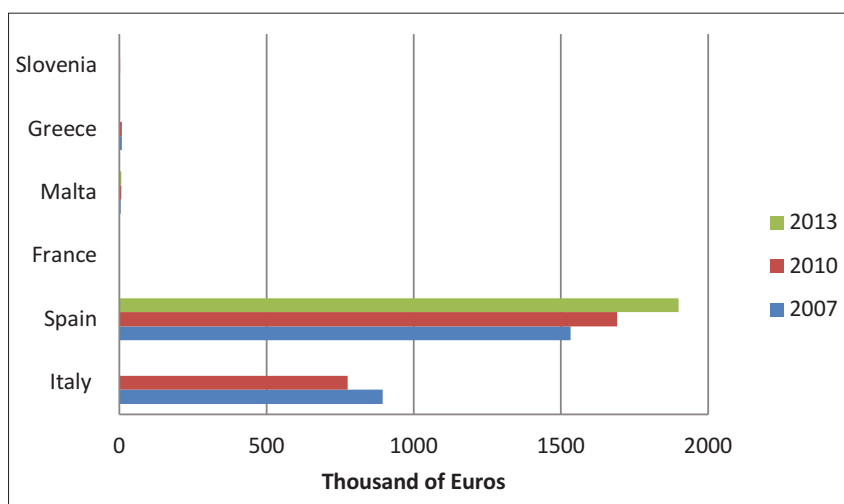
The situation seems even more serious considering that the average age of the employees in the fisheries sector for the Mediterranean countries ranges from 36 years in Malta (with the youngest workers of the MED RAC member countries) to 50 years old in Italy.

Table 1: The average age of the employees in the fishery sector (2007-2010)



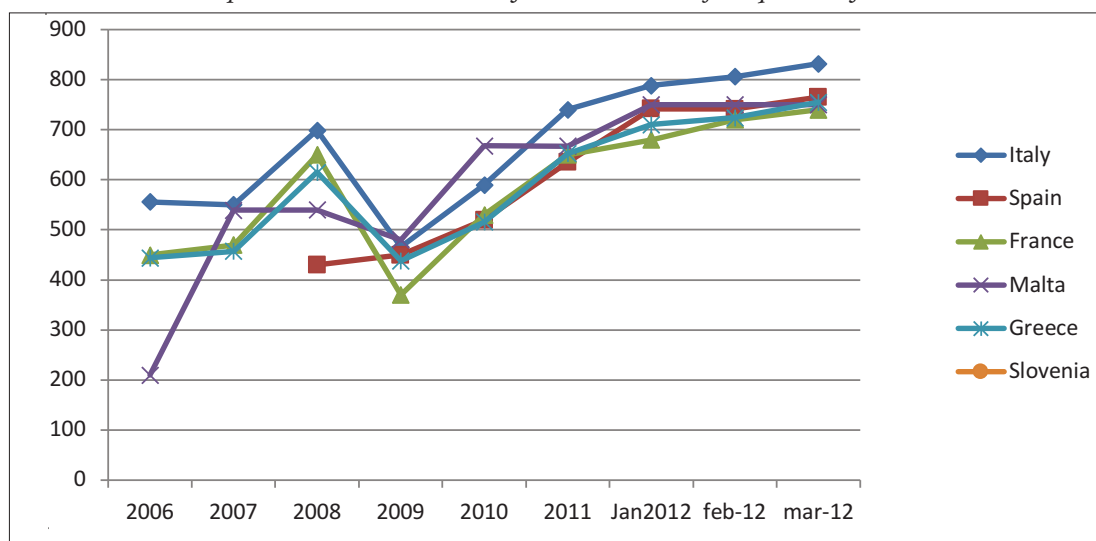
From the analysis of the information provided, there is a general increase in the operating costs as well (see Graph 3), for example in Spain costs rose from 1.532 million euros in 2007 to about 1.691 in 2010, and up to 1.900 million forecasted for 2013. Similarly there has been an increase in operating costs of approximately 29% for Malta in 2010 and by 45% for Slovenia.

Graph 3 : Management costs (2007-2010)



Last but not least, it is useful to point out that the increase in costs for the fishing industry has to take into account the sharp increase in fuel cost over the last few years (see Graph 4), which have risen by approximately 20 % from 2006 to 2012, even though in many countries fuel is exempt from local taxation.

Graph 4: Fuel cost (€/1000lt) from 2006 to the first quarter of 2012



On the basis of all this information provided by the member associations of the RAC MED, it is clear that the fishery sector is undergoing a structural crisis rather than a cyclical one. A phenomenon which started several years ago and is continuing to cause the increase in unemployment and the resulting decrease in number of the fishing companies operating in the sector, the increase in operating costs and the consequent decline in the profitability of the sector.

On the base of the data collected, the WG5 believes that it is necessary to adopt measures to revitalize the entire fishing industry designed specifically for the atypical nature of the

Mediterranean basin, given the socio-economic characteristics that distinguish it (high unemployment in the Mediterranean areas, low level of education of its employees, etc.). Therefore, as already stated in the RAC MED opinion on the draft Regulation on the Reform of the CFP (October 28, 2011, ref.266/AV), it is once again pointed out, with supporting data, *“that, although the general aim of achievement of the MSY should be respected (which in the Mediterranean ought to be established by groups of species that are variable according to the season or the area in the different fishery systems) a margin of flexibility needs to be permitted concerning the deadline of 2015. An experimental period will also be necessary in order to identify the necessary measures and actions to be taken to achieve the goal, ascertain applicability and verify the results obtained.”* The WG5 proposes to undertake studies on each single stock in order to improve understanding of the biological and socioeconomic aspects, with the aim of achieving greater harmony between the results of scientific research and the effective state of the stock under assessment.

APPENDIX

ITALY

FEP Time Frame 2007-2013			
	2007	2010	2012, April
NR of registered vessels - MED¹	13.583* - 13.762**	13.223* - 13.451**	13.072**
- inactive or waiting for license	238*	276*	
Turn over / total revenue (in mln Euros)	1.338*	1.102*	
Nr of employees - Active	30.214*	28.982*	
Nr of employees - Employed			
Nr of employees - Inactive			
- age of employees (average)	50 years***		
- not directly employed in the fishery sector			
Rate of unemployment in the fishing industry			
TOTAL management costs (intermediate+labor costs**) in Mln €	894 (100%)*	775 (100%)*	
of which intermediate costs (Mln €)	517 (57,8%)*	459 (59,2%)*	
of which labour costs (Mln €)	377 (42,2%)*	316 (40,8%)*	
Fuel costs (Mln €)	264*	237*	
Amount of money invested in ameliorating the fleet (Mln €) ²		3.315a - 1193b	
Unemployment subsidies	not structured	CIGS ³ - Art. 54bis DL 78/2010	N/A

¹ High seas not included

² Partial data only concerning EFF (art.25 Reg. 1198/06)

³ The Wages Guarantee Fund (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni - CIG) is a special public fund used to protect workers' income, financed by companies and the state and administered by the National Institute of Social Insurance (INPS). In cases laid down by law, the CIG makes up the pay of employees affected by lay-offs (see suspension of work) or short-time working, up to 80 per cent of the lost pay. For fishery sector in Italy the CIG lays at the moment in an exception regime because usually this fund is not intended for the sector.

Source:

* IREPA - Osservatorio economico strutture produttive della pesca marittima in Italia

** Community Fishing Fleet Register

*** Studio Legapesca-SWG (2004)

a: Committed - Source: Annual Report on implementation of the European Fisheries Fund (Italy 2010)

b: Paid - Source: Annual Report on implementation of the European Fisheries Fund (Italy 2010)

SPAIN

FEP Time Frame 2007-2013			
	2007	2010	2013
NR of registered vessels - MED only*	3.796,00	3.120,00	2927**
NR of registered vessels - Spain (Caladero Nacional)*	12.473,00	10.404,00	9950**
- inactive or waiting for license***	5%	5%	5%
NR of firms	115,00	140,00	125,00
Turn over / total revenue (in mln Euros)	13.416,92	24.632,83	26.855,72
Nr of employees - Active	35.258,00	41.061,00	25440***
Nr of employees - Employed	49.800,00	33.900,00	22.000,00
Nr of employees - Inactive	- 14.542,00	7.161,00	3.440,00
- age of employees (average)	41,80	41,48	
- not directly employed in the fishery sector			
Rate of unemployment in the fishing industry	6,56%	12,75%	20%
Management costs (Mln €)	1.532,00	1.691,00	1.900,00
Amount of money invested in ameliorating the fleet (Mln €)			
Unemployment subsidies (Mln €)	3.136,00	5.180,00	7.000,00

*Source: Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente and Instituto Nacional de Estadística

**Estimates Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente

***Estimates IVEAEMPA

FRANCE

FEP Time Frame 2007-2013				
	2007	2010	2012	2013*
NR of registered vessels - MED	1.574	1.543	1.521	1.500
NR of registered vessels - France	8.109	7.222		
- inactive or waiting for license		244		
trawlers	125	105	65	65
Turn over / total revenue (in mln Euros)				
Nr of employees - Active			2705	
Nr of employees - trawlers			300	
Nr of employees - Inactive				
- age of employees (average)				
- not directly employed in the fishery sector				
Rate of unemployment in the fishing industry				
Management costs (Mln €)				
Amount of money invested in ameliorating the fleet (Mln €)		33,00		
Unemployment subsidies tempo./def. stopped		15	9	8

*Estimates

GREECE

FEP Time Frame 2007-2013			
	2007	2010	2013*
NR of registered vessels - MED	17.356	17.054	16.100
NR of registered vessels	17.564	17.181	16234
- inactive or waiting for license	7.015	7.424	8112
NR of firms	16.054	15.512	
Turn over / total revenue (in thou. Euros)	335.258,00	292.602,00	
Nr of employees ^	24.745,00	23.862,00	22.338,00
Nr of employees - Active*	4.814	4.319	
Nr of employees - Employed**	9.317	8.676	
Nr of employees - Inactive***	7.818	8.046	
- age of employees (average)	40	45	
- not directly employed in the fishery sector****	11300	10000	9000
Rate of unemployment in the fishing industry			
Management costs (Mln €)*****	8,93	9,30	
Amount of money invested in ameliorating the fleet (Mln €)			
*****	8,72	9,29	
Unemployment subsidies	^^	^^	

*Estimates

* Employed in trawlers and purse-seiners, seasonally due to legislation (Hellenic Statistical Authority, Ministry & PEPMA)

** Employed in small scale fisheries and mixed vessels purse-seiners & trawlers (Hellenic Statistical Authority, Ministry & PEPMA)

*** Owners of small scale fishing vessels that fishing is not their main occupation (Hellenic Statistical Authority, Ministry & PEPMA)

****based on legislation due to the insurance carrier

***** refers only to middle range fisheries

*****does not refer to the entire fishing fleet

^ Source: for 2007: EC "Facts and Figures on the CFP -Basic Statistical data - Edition for 2010 and 2012: Estimates of PASEGES

^^ no unemployment subsidies are foreseen for fishers

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, Ministry & PEPMA

SLOVENIA

FEP Time Frame 2007-2013			
	2007	2010	2013*
NR of registered vessels	175	185	186
- inactive or waiting for license			
NR of firms			
Turn over / total revenue (Mln €)	1,80	2	
Nr of employees - Active	123	116	
Nr of employees - Employed			
Nr of employees - Inactive			
- age of employees (average)			
- not directly employed in the fishery sector			
Rate of unemployment in the fishing industry			
Management costs (Mln €)	1,81	2,63	
Amount of money invested in ameliorating the fleet (Mln €)			
Unemployment subsidies			

*Estimates

Source: KGZS

MALTA

FEP Time Frame 2007-2013			
	2007	2010	2013*
NR of registered vessels - MED	1371[^]	1090[^]	1132[^]
NR of registered vessels	1373 [^]	1091 [^]	1132 [^]
- inactive or waiting for license	19 [^]	21 [^]	20 [^]
NR of firms	N/A	1,076	878
Turn over / total revenue (in mln Euros)	9,70	9,2	7,40
Nr of employees - Active	344	361	310
Nr of employees - Employed**	344	361	310
Nr of employees - Inactive	N/A	N/A	N/A
- age of employees (average)	36	N/A	N/A
- not directly employed in the fishery sector	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rate of unemployment in the fishing industry	N/A	N/A	N/A
Management costs (Mln €)	5,25	6,74	7,21
Amount of money invested in ameliorating the fleet (Mln €)	1,70	1,40	1
Unemployment subsidies (Mln €)	0	0	0

*Estimates

**Refers to the number of jobs which are paid for by the firm/vessel (Does not include Vessel owner)

[^] According to Fleet Vessel Register data source

FUEL COSTS (€/1000lt) - (no VAT and other tax costs added)

ITALY	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
							JAN	FEB	MAR
fuel cost €/1000lt	556	550	699	466	590	740	788	806	832

Source: MSE - DGERM

SPAIN	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012				
							JAN	FEB	MAR	ABR	MAY
fuel cost €/1000lt			460-400	480-420	600-440	730-540	742	741	765	777	761

FRANCE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
							JAN	FEB	MAR
fuel cost €/1000lt	450	470	650	370	530	650	680	720	740

GREECE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
							JAN	FEB	MAR
fuel cost €/1000lt	444	457	615	438	516	652	710	724	755

MALTA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
							JAN	FEB	MAR
fuel cost €/1000lt	210	539	540	480	668	667*	750*	750*	750*

*Values obtained through average price per liter * 1000

MEDAC OPINION ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Rome, 22nd June 2017

During the meeting held in Ajaccio (October 2016) MEDAC WG5 was informed on the research carried out by the Fondazione Metes on the socio-economic situation of the Mediterranean fisheries sector with reference to the following Member States: Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, utilizing information from the STECF ("The 2016 Annual Report on the EU Fishing Fleet"). On the basis of the available indicators provided by the Member States the research highlighted how a reduction in catches, incentives to for decommissioning vessels, unchanged profit levels in recent years, increased management costs and the import of non-European products

have negatively affected employment levels throughout the Mediterranean basin. However, it should also be highlighted that this situation goes alongside the critical state of fish stock in this region, where over 90% of the assessed stocks are overexploited. While for other EU region, where an overall improvement in profitability of the EU fleet has been reported, it coincided with an increase in the number of fish stocks being fished at rates consistent with the objective of achieving MSY and an associated increase in biomass of such stocks, as reported by STECF¹.

On the basis of the data that was referred to in this study, the trend regarding both the employment levels and the number of vessels was negative (-14% and -8% respectively from 2008 to 2014), small-scale fisheries was particularly affected, here the decline was -16% in vessel numbers and -13% in employment in the same period. These numbers are highly significant if we consider that small-scale fisheries involve a considerable percentage of the vessels present in the Mediterranean. MEDAC therefore considers it essential to take this aspect into due consideration in the next multi-annual management plans, in assessing which measures to put in place to support fishing enterprises and workers in an overall approach that links conservation of resources with the livelihood and socio-economic sustainability of the coastal communities.

It is therefore necessary to address the problem transversally. MEDAC underlines that the issue of employment and that of resource conservation need to be analysed and studied simultaneously in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of both. Productive activities cannot exist without the resources and there can be no resources without raising environmental awareness and socio-economic support. These two elements are an integral part of the debates taking place at the MEDAC meetings. Solutions such as adopting scientifically sound and ecosystem-based multi-annual plans, have been proved to restore stock biomass and provide economic benefits to the fishing sector, while mismanagement of fish stocks can lead to heavy social impacts that generate unemployment. In line with the EESC's opinion on "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks"², MEDAC highlights need for adequate economic and social impact assessment, considering both short and long-term effects, and measures to offset the effects of the multi-annual plan on businesses and jobs. In the meanwhile, MEDAC believes that it would be perilous to contemplate stopping or reducing a productive activity, leaving the management of the social consequences in the hands of the businesses themselves and their workers; in the meantime, it is necessary to intervene to safeguard fishery enterprises and workers.

Bearing all these reasons in mind, MEDAC considers it necessary for these issues to be discussed both directly by DG Employment, DG Environment and DG MARE as well as the national administrations involved in resource protection. In the first case, the involvement of DG Employment could help manage the critical periods that arise when fishing activities are reduced, DG Environment would help to integrate pollution, climate change and other non-fishery related impact mitigation measures into MAPs, whilst with the participation of the states concerned, it may be possible to share income support solutions such as re-education/training courses and diversification of activities, particularly in those areas where specific decisions have to be made to support the resources and the foreseeable effects include negative socioeconomic consequences. MEDAC proposes the use of funds provided by the EMFF, alternatively actions by the individual states involved could be considered with the collaboration of DG Employment and DG Environment.

MEDAC also highlights that better-quality data and a wider range of indicators would help to face socio-economic issues in a more exhaustive way.

In conclusion, therefore, MEDAC proposes raising awareness of possible joint actions by DG Em-

ployment and DG MARE, as well as greater involvement of the countries involved, so as to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic impact of the management measures proposed to protect fishery resources and also employment levels.

¹ The Eu Fishing Fleet Trends And Economic Results Fisheries DG Mare Economic Papers N° 03/2017

² NAT/705 Multiannual plan for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea

MEDAC LETTER ON SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

Rome, 21st June 2019

75

To João Aguiar Machado (Director General, EC - DG MARE); Roland Kristo (GFCM)

In the Adriatic Focus Group of MEDAC held in Thessaloniki on 4 June, MEDAC members gave attention to the advice process related to the request by the 42nd session of the GFCM to the SAC on technical elements for the management of demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea.

According to the outcomes of the following expert groups:

- Sub-Regional Committee on Adriatic Sea (23-24 May) that discussed the work carried out by the Workshop on management Strategy Evaluation-AS (17-18 May)
- WKMSE-AS held on 17-18 May that discussed the work carried out by the recent STECF expert group on Multiannual Plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea (STECF-19-02)
- STECF Expert Group (STECF 19-02)

MEDAC members highlighted the relevance of consultation with stakeholders in evaluating the socio-economic implications of the proposed measures in the Multiannual plan of demersals, whereas

- The comments of STECF to the Expert Group (STECF 19-02) report that “consultation with stakeholders would be needed to better understand the socio-economic implications of the proposed Multiannual Plan” (ToR 1 pg.8 STECF 19-02)
- GFCM SRC-AS also noted that the socio-economic analysis should be carefully reviewed and that an estimated assessment of social (e.g. on number of employees potentially affected) and economic impact (e.g. potential losses versus future benefits) should be attempted based on the analyses already carried out.
- The aim of the MAP should be the environmental-socio-economic sustainability.

Moreover, MEDAC members agreed on the opinion that multiannual management plans should be previously evaluated through bio-economical models ad hoc, considering the diversification of conditions and fishery segmentation in the Mediterranean and indicating any interventions to support the sector from Member States and/or the EU.

Despite the time constraints, MEDAC believes that stakeholders’ consultation is an opportunity on which this Advisory Council should cooperate in order to improve the two economic indicators analyzed in the report of the Working Group STECF 19-02 (dependency and contribution analyses).

Moreover, MEDAC should suggest possible alternative solutions, as the improvement of the added value for local products or the opportunity for the fishermen to manage the total amount of fishing days in the year.

MEDAC first contribution on socio-economic indicators will be provided shortly, wishing that account be taken on this opinion. In order to carry out an analysis of the possible socio-economic indicators, the MEDAC is waiting for the management scenarios that should be provided by GFCM and STECF.

Yours sincerely,

76 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS RELATED TO THE FORTHCOMING DRAFT MAP ON DEMERSAL IN ADRIATIC SEA

Rome, 22nd July 2019

The MEDAC, during the WG1 meeting held in Thessaloniki in June, acknowledging the importance given to the socioeconomic indicators by STECF and GFCM WKMSSE, decided to investigate and analyse this topic related to the future Adriatic MAP on demersal species. This work will be done in collaboration and coordination with WG5, starting from the most updated information on the status of the demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea. Nevertheless, the MEDAC decided to open the debate on the most appropriate socioeconomic indicators to be estimated before the definition of management measures in the MAP and/or after the regulation enforcement in order to evaluate the effects in each Mediterranean sub-area.

Stock status indicators:

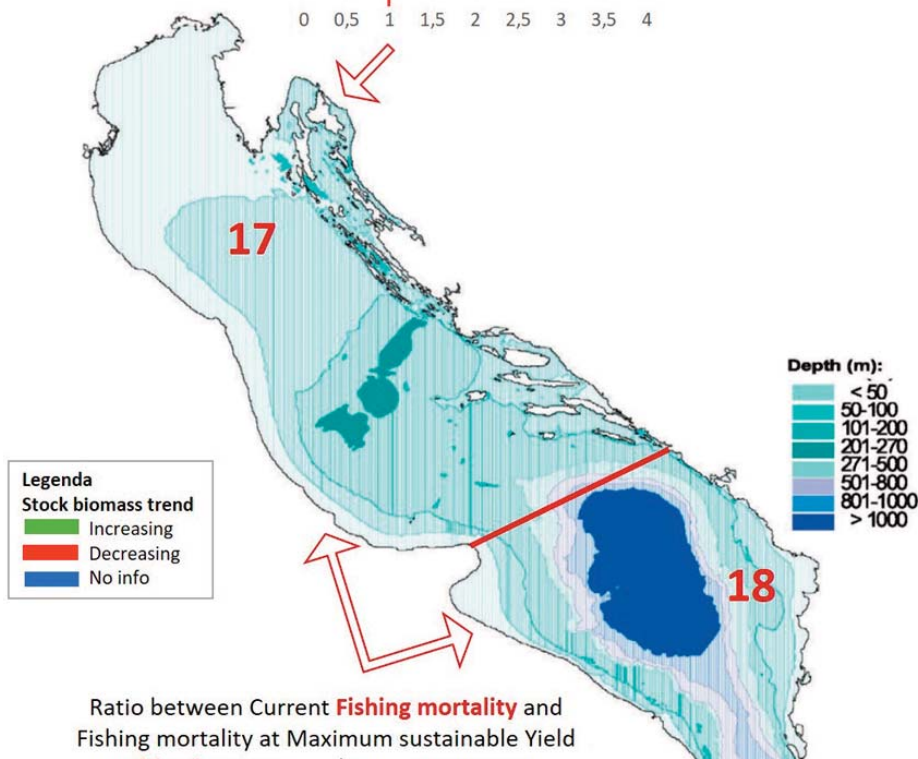
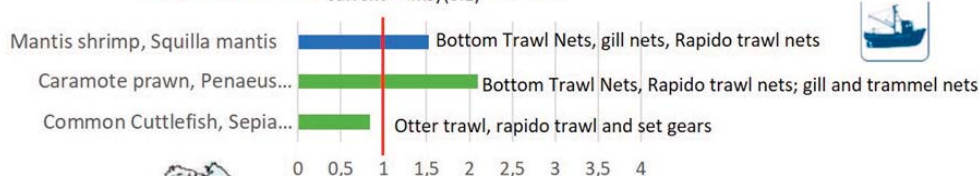
- F_{msy} fishing mortality related to the maximum sustainable yield
- $F_{0.1}$ is considered a conservative proxy for F_{msy} , and is widely used in the context of the GFCM, especially for demersal stocks.
- $F_{current}$ = Current Fishing mortality - **Objective of management measures: $F_{current} = F_{msy}$ (or $F_{0.1}$) AND SO $F_{current} / F_{msy}$ (or $F_{0.1}) = 1$**

Species	GSA	Fishery	Spawning Stock Biomass	F (Fishing mortality)	Diagnosis	Advice and recommendation
Blue mullet, <i>Mullus barbatus</i>	17-18	Bottom Trawl Nets; small amounts gill nets and trammel nets	Increasing from 2011	Decreasing, now slightly higher than reference point	In overexploitation with relatively high biomass	Reduce $F_{current}$ towards $F_{0.1}$ 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 1,17$
Deep-water rose shrimp, <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	17-18-19	Bottom Trawl Nets	Increasing (max value in 2017)	Decreasing	Unstable results in the last years - Possibly in overexploitation, with relatively high biomass	Precautionary advice – Reduce fish mortality 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 2,85$
Common prawn, <i>Scyllarus kerathurus</i>	17	Bottom Trawl Nets, Rapido trawl nets; gill and trammel nets	Stock biomass increasing above MSY	Increasing	In overexploitation, with relatively low biomass	Progressive reduction of fishing effort 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{msy} = 2,1$
Common shrimp, <i>Illia mantis</i>	17	Bottom Trawl Nets, gill nets, Rapido trawl nets			Intermediate overfishing, relative low biomass	Reduce $F_{current}$ towards $F_{0.1}$ 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 1,53$
Common shrimp, <i>Illia mantis</i>	17-18	Bottom Trawl Nets, gill nets	Increasing	Decreasing	In overexploitation with relatively high biomass	Reduce fishing mortality 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 2,60$
Common lobster, <i>Homarus norvegicus</i>	17-18	Bottom Trawl Nets; small amounts traps gill nets	Decreasing	Decreasing	In overexploitation	Reduce fishing mortality 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{msy} = 1,47$
Common cuttlefish, <i>Sepia officinalis</i>	17	Otter trawl, rapido trawl and set gears	Biomass in the last 4 years increased but is still below the B_{msy}	Decreasing	Sustainably exploited, with relatively low biomass	Do not increase Fishing mortality Avoid any increase of catches to improve the of biomass 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{msy} = 0,84$
Reference (benchmark)	17-18		Biomass around 70% the precautionary biomass		In overexploitation and overexploited	$F_{current}/F_{msy} = 3,4$

In the following figure you can find the information provided in the previous table

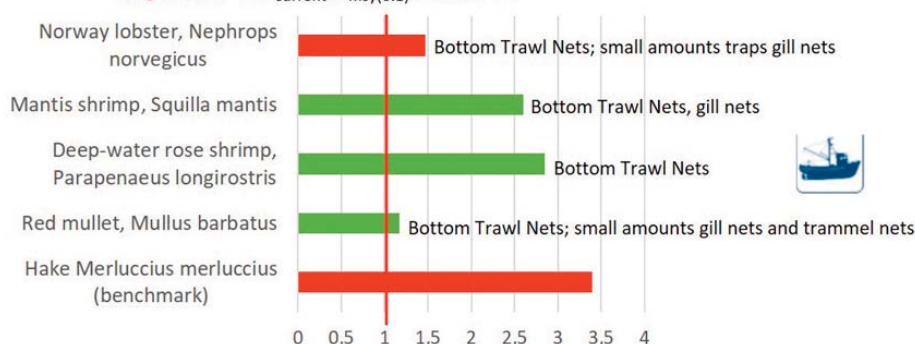
Ratio between Current **Fishing mortality** and Fishing mortality at Maximum sustainable Yield

Objective = 1 $F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{msy}(0.1)}$ GSA 17



Ratio between Current **Fishing mortality** and Fishing mortality at Maximum sustainable Yield

Objective = 1 $F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{msy}(0.1)}$ GSA 17-18



Furthermore, considering the STECF - GFCM WKMSSE (Workshop Management Strategy Evaluation) comments:

European hake	The fact that hake is heavily overexploited leads to the stock being very reactive to changes in F leading to large increases in SSB. This brings stock dynamics to areas not observed in the past data, increasing uncertainty in the outcomes and suggesting results should be taken cautiously . Nevertheless, the outcomes of the MSE for this stock are very similar to those obtained for other hake stocks around the world, so of them validated by an observed quick recovery after a reduction of fishing pressure .
Deepwater rose shrimp	The assessment highlights a peak in recruitment in the most recent part of the time series. This makes it difficult to project into the future and therefore the results of an MSE based on this assessment should be taken with caution .
Common sole	The average of F in the last three years, used as F status quo, is smaller than the terminal F in the assessment, instantly triggering an increase SSB, due to an artificial decrease of fishing mortality in the first year of the projection. ii. For this particular MSE, the harvest control rules we not robust to the stock recruitment relationship assumed in the assessment. GSA 17 Fcurrent/Fmsy = 2,71

And the management scenarios assessed during the STECF 19-02 are listed in the table below:

	F status quo	Fmsy2024	Fmsy2024 Fix Reduction	F status quo Catch lim	Fmsy2024 Fix Reduction Catch limit	F status quo FRA (Fishery Restricted Area)	Fmsy2024 Fix Reduction FRA	F status quo 6 Nautical miles closure	Fmsy2024 Fix Reduction 6 Nautical miles closure
Solea solea	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hake	X	X	X						
Deep-water rose shrimp	X	X	X						
Red mullet	X	X	X						
Mantis shrimp	X	X	X						

Acknowledging the steps forward on the knowledge of the assessed stocks, additional information and more robust results on the effects related to management measures and scenarios could improve the compliance of the fishery sector.

Moreover, considering the results of the SAC21 meeting (24-27 June 2019), that endorsed the outcomes of the WKMSSE and the SRC-AS:

“The overexploitation status of all priority demersal species, with the exception of common cuttlefish, was also highlighted. In view of improving the overall management of priority species in this subregion, technical elements towards a management plan, including potential fisheries management measures, were presented. In acknowledging the poor status of Adriatic demersal stocks, it advised management measures to be implemented, in line with the following technical elements:

- *The **linear reduction scenario tested had the best performance** in terms of both recovery and reaching the target of MSY. This is particularly true for stocks that are highly overexploited and for which a significant and continued reduction (as highlighted by the results of the stock assessment) may be needed to reach agreed targets.*
- *Regarding **common sole**, the most effective **spatial measures** to reduce F among the ones tested is the **combination of the 6nm closure with the effort reduction**.*
- ***Two-year management lag in the cyclic response observed in the simulations reduces the uncertainty in the projections for catch and SSB**. This effect is exacerbated by the fact that the fishery for most of these species concentrates on individuals between 1 and 3 years of age, so by the time adopted measures become effective, the stock used as the basis of management would have already left the fishery.”*

During the SRC-AS meeting, the following Potential fisheries management measures were proposed. **The existing (*in italics*) and potential fisheries management measures applicable to demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea** include:

- Fishing effort regime
- FRA to protect EFH (*Jabuka/Pomo pit (Rec. GFCM 41/2017/3)*)
- *Depth restrictions*
- Other spatial restrictions (*Distance from the coast*)

- Temporal closures (Authorized number of fishing days or Temporal closures)
- Gear restrictions (*Authorized/prohibited gear types*- Gear characteristics including mesh size)
- Management of the fleet capacity (Fleet registry/Number of vessels/fleet capacity)
- *Minimum conservation reference size*
- Control measures (VMS and electronic logbook/ pilot project for joint inspection schemes)

Furthermore, considering that the **WKMSE in the intersessional period 2019-2020 will provide support to the SAC towards advice on the impacts of alternative measures for selected fisheries**, including the **expansion of the analysis of economic dependency** of different fleets on the different demersal species in the Adriatic Sea, initiated by the STECF-19-02 (Appendix 10 – SAC21).

Taking into consideration the **comments and conclusions of the STECF Plenary to the EWG 19-02** “EWG 19-02 was asked to assess the potential biological and socio-economic benefits of implementing several management options of a planned Multi-Annual Plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea” [...] “STECF notes however that the bio-economic analyses carried out by the working group are limited and still preliminary. STECF considers that further work based on mixed fishery bioeconomic modelling and **consultation with stakeholders would be needed to better understand the socio-economic implications of the proposed Multiannual Plan**”.

MEDAC suggests the following socio-economic indicators.

Socioeconomic indicators – Demersal Stocks

Indicators	Brief description
Economic dependency on the stocks	$\text{Sum}_{\text{species of MAP}} (\text{weight} * \text{price}) / \text{Total revenues}$
Fleets' contributions to total landings	$\text{Weight}_{\text{stock}} / \text{Total weight of stock}$ (taking into consideration the seasonal fluctuations)
Social impact related to fishing communities	Social impact on small coastal communities (i.e. percentage of impacted people on total community population – Islands)
Price/Landed Quantities (Kg)	Economic indicator
Current coefficient of elasticity of the demand for the species involved	Socio-economic indicator (estimate of the effect of reducing quantities landed - due to the management measures in place - on the average price for the sale)
Working days/Employed	Socio-economic indicator
Working hours/day/Employed	Social indicator
Full-Time equivalent (FTE)	Social indicator
Full-Time equivalent (FTE)/Catches (tons)/year	Social impact
Fuel consumption (l)/Catches(ton)/year	Economic indicator (taking into consideration the distance needed to reach the fishing area)

Unwanted catches (kg)/Tot catches (ton)/year	Economic indicator
Average age of new workers in the fishing sector	Socio-economic indicator
Average of exit age from the fishing sector	Socio-economic indicator
Population pyramid of the different localities (distribution of various age groups in a population)	Socio-economic indicator
Employment level in the fishing sector in the affected localities	Socio-economic indicator
Possibility of alternative or complementary economic activities	Socio-economic indicator
Number of vessels with permanent cessation of fishing activity	Medium term Socio-economic indicator
Current Revenue (CR) / Break-even Revenue (BER)	Indicator of the economic sustainability
Labour cost / Number of employees	Social Indicators - Average salary per employee
Effects of bringing stocks to MSY through the implementation of the MAP	Environmental indicator - The recovery of stocks repairs the disequilibrium of the ecosystem and makes it more resilient to external factors (climate changes, pollution).

	Socio-economic indicator (Operating on depleted stocks is a net loss for fisheries. The Jabuka example shows that marine ecosystems have a surprisingly strong and fast capacity of recover in terms of biomass. Fishing on thriving stocks means better catches on middle term (quantity and quality) which means a better value at first sale which implies more visibility for coastal communities that depend (directly or indirectly) on fish and fishing activities.)
Use of EMFF by the concerned fisheries (How many ships? How much? What for?)	Socio economic indicator
Difference between present catches and catches at MSY	Socio economic indicator
Difference between present number of Full-time jobs and employment at MSY	Socio economic indicator
Difference between present value at first sale and at MSY	Socio economic indicator
Difference between present financial net results and at MSY	Socio economic indicator
Difference between present situation of the processing sub-sector and effects at MSY	Socio economic indicator
Current CPUE and CPUE at MSY (maintaining capacity)	

MEDAC LETTER ABOUT THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY - DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR AND MARKETS

77

Rome, 23rd March 2020

MEDAC members reported that many fishers across Europe, in particular the ones fishing near the coast, have stopped fishing or expect to stop within the next few days. This is happening because nobody is buying their fresh fish, as restaurants and fish markets are closed. Employed fishers are worried for the risk that fishing activities could start and then stop shortly again due to the entry into force of the biological rest periods.

In **Croatia**, the fisheries activities are almost ceased because in the fishing vessels the required minimum distance cannot be met, and the commercial opportunities are very few especially for demersal species. Around the 80% of whitefish is unsold. The transports, in terms of movements of persons and goods, including exports, are almost blocked. Consequently, many people have stopped working. Croatia is really penalized because the country is not in the Schengen area. Purse seiners are still working despite many difficulties because they fish for the processing industry. Nevertheless, they too will gradually stop fishing, most likely when the first sick people will be found in the fishing vessels or in the industries. The protection of workers requires stopping them. This level of country paralysis had not even been reached during the last war.

In **France** the bottlenecks in the market and the drop in prices of all fishery products, due to the safety measures needed for the COVID-19, no longer allow enterprises to break even and force them to stay docked. Many players in the marketing chain (wholesalers) have closed their businesses in order to keep their staff safe - or with regard to the closure of food outlets or fishmongers. In some areas, there are no more sales opportunities and the vessels can no longer sell their products. The COVID-19 measures will lead to profound changes in the consumption of fishery products and thus have a cascading effect on the economic sustainability of the various sector of the production chain.

At the same time in France, the activity of European fishing vessels out of the EU waters is also hampered by the increase in the number of border closures at world level, because it already made impossible to take over the crew. Social measures (unemployment) are not currently available to French fishermen and if they will become, they will not be available to everyone. In all cases they will be insufficient.

In **Greece**, the rapid proliferation of corona virus -19 and the measures taken in order to control it, have resulted in major financial and labour issues in the fishing sector.

The demand for fresh fish as well as the selling prices have collapsed: there is a manifest decrease of the purchasing power of the Greek consumers which is not only due to the real lack of financial resources, since many companies closed down and many people are unable to work, but also to the frugality of the consumers as a result of the uncertainty attributed to the nightmare we are going through.

As a result, they choose other types of foodstuff which are much cheaper, and which have a long shelf life. Furthermore, many fishing boats of middle and coast fishing, that mainly or in part export their fish (shrimps, mollusks, tuna, swordfish) are facing threatening problems as a result of transportation difficulties and the isolation of the country. Additional factors holding back the

smooth operation of fishing boats and jeopardising their sustainability include the alarming decrease of intermediate buyers because of the closing down of many selling points and restaurants. The auctions are still operating since they are linked with the supply chain and in spite of the great decrease in consumption. Both the staff and the merchants show a strict compliance to the measures of personal protection decided by the government.

Because of the nature of the establishments that attract many staff and visitors, it is not possible to know when their operation will be suspended and what the repercussions will be. Moreover, The ship owners are not able to decrease their staff since they have seasonal workers, most of the times from Egypt and they have been hired on the basis of transnational agreements with personal contracts. The employers have to pay their salaries and they do not have the possibility to lay them off since their repatriation is impossible. Finally, though the fishing period started on March 1st, many purse seiners have to stay at the port since the Egyptian workers cannot enter the country as a result of the closing down of the boundaries.

As a result of the above, fishing vessels of middle range fishery under operate and wither being unable to cover even a part of their operating expenses. In spite of the fact that they should continue operating even under such difficult conditions, since they have a major social mission producing a good which is necessary for the food chain, many of them have decided to opt for temporary cessation which most probably will be extended for the above-mentioned reasons.

In the **Italian** fishery sector, the main problems raised up since the first days of the emergency COVID-19 are as follows:

- the fish markets and wholesalers' closure, due to the minimum distance required in the last decrees for health security (droplet);
- the final consumers critically decreased and then the direct sale doesn't work, and fish shops are closed.

Almost all fishing gears stopped their activities:

- Trawlers, except some vessels fishing twice per week for the main national fish markets; - In Liguria and Tuscany, the purse seiners are waiting to arm the fishing vessels (especially for small pelagics) because the risk of large quantities unsold;
- The purse seiners with fishing lights for small pelagics cannot really respect the minimum distances required by the decrees;
- Small scale artisanal fishing vessels limited the catches to the fishermen own use and few doorstep sales;
- Adriatic dredges for bivalve molluscs are remaining in port, few of them excepted.

In the fishing vessels the minimum distance required, and the weakness of personal protective equipment don't allow a safe work to the crew.

The fishing sector in **Slovenia** is at a temporary standstill. Only some small-scale fishers are working for self-consumption of few catches. Due to the closure of the main fish market and the little fish shops, fishers cannot sell their landings.

The expected effects for the fishing fleet in **Spain** are as follows:

- The reduction of demand and the consequent price declining due to the restaurants closure, the tourists decreasing, etc. This is affecting profitability of the ship owning companies, and then wages, auctions and other related services (ice etc.);

- Temporary or permanent closure of the enterprises due to the lack of profitability, which will cause the suspension of employment relationship or the reduction of working hours;
- Loss or heavy reduction of fishers' wages due to the payment method of the "parts";
- Reduction or total loss of the income due to the ordinary payments, such as taxes, loan repayments etc, and due to the payment requests that may be faced by the ship owning company, the workers, and the fishers associations for the auxiliary services for the fishing sector;
- Reduction or lack of means to solve the extraordinary expenses, such as repairs;
- Some of the professional fishers still active have children, who cannot stay with the grandparents because of the contagion risk. If both parents work, the children must be kept by someone.
- The fishing vessels dimension and the work methods don't allow to respect the minimum distance required between people, then the enterprises must be temporarily closed. In Spain fishers refuse to work on fishing vessels because of the risk due to COVID-19.

In Andalusia the 60% of fishing vessels is still active, nevertheless this percentage will keep going down. The prices of crustaceans and shellfish reduced up to 70% and fish to 50%. The buyers are decreasing day by day and the situation is very critical, both for trawlers enterprises and other gears. Regarding purse seiners, the price of small pelagics is still not really impacted by the COVID-19 effects. La Federaci3n de Cofradias de Girona highlighted the same constraints and problems reported at national level, especially related to the reduction of consumers, prices, open markets and the consequent decrease of wages (by "parts") impacting through dismissals or reduction in hours per working day, or the enterprise closure.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUPPORT MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNEMENTS

The **French Government** temporary suspended the regulatory work in progress, such as the revision of control regulation.

In **Italy** the last Ministerial Decree foresees extraordinary measures to support all the economic sectors, including fisheries. These measures will have to be increased in case of the emergency prolongation. Specific funds have been allocated to compensate fisheries undertakings and to ensure an income maintenance for fisheries workers.

The main economic measures adopted by the Italian government (decree n°18, 17 March 2020) foresee the following urgent economic supports:

- Establishment of a fund for the agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture enterprises with a budget of EUR 100 million in the year 2020 aimed, inter alia, to finance the temporary cessation of fishing activities, in accordance with the minimis rules on State aid, and following the criteria, methods and allocations to be defined by the Ministry of Agricultural food and Forestry Policies;
- Easier access to credit for SMEs, including fisheries enterprises;
- Provision of layoff for the whole national territory also for fishery and aquaculture, including the enterprises with more than one employee on board (the total available amount is 3,3 billion to be shared among regions);
- Strengthening of other ordinary income support instruments (e.g. the wage integration fund, which currently has been increased with a budget of more than EUR 1,3 billion);
- Extension to the end of June of all the taxes, administrative and social security deadlines, without sanctions and interests.

The **Slovenian** fishery sector is waiting for the EC measures needed to promptly mitigate the impact especially on the small-scale fishery.

In **Spain** the Real Decreto-ley 8/2020 (17th of March 2020) on extraordinary urgent measures facing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 provides the following measures:

- 17 billion of euros have been mobilized specifically for vulnerable sectors;
- The ERTE (Temporary labor force adjustment) will be more flexible and will fall in the “force majeure” case, the employees will be paid by the unemployment fund even if they do not have a sufficient period of contribution and the payments received in this period will be not deemed as used up.
- Public guarantees to companies: an amount of 100 billion euros will be made available, from 100 billion euros to 200 billion, if the private sector is included. More than this, Spain will be the guarantor with additional 2 billion euros for export companies and for the restructuring the agricultural export credits. - Moratorium on mortgages for debtors in a particularly vulnerable situation.
- Self-employed benefits: more flexibility in the access to the benefits for the activity closure and exemption from contribution for self-employed persons who do so. Self-employed persons with employees can apply for the ERTE.
- Postponement of tax liabilities falling in the period from 12 March 2020 to 30 May 2020, under specific conditions. The postponement shall be six months and no interest shall be due on late payment done in the first 3 months.

REQUESTS

First, it is required the temporary suspension of the European regulatory work in progress, such as the revision of control regulation.

Although the decision to relinquish this year's obligation to request refunding of unspent prefinancing for the EMFF is really welcomed, the use of this amount to support employed fisher's income should be monitored.

MEDAC supports the modification of the articles on mutual funds (for fisheries, Art. 35 of the EMFF for the extension of the cases covered for the application of the temporary stops provided for “major health crisis” because this solution is the only one that Europe can quickly propose to organize production in order to allow the food supply of populations while securing businesses.

Furthermore, in the same art. 35 of the Reg. (EU) 508/2014, the reduction to 20% of the financial intervention threshold should be foreseen in case of health public crisis, instead the ordinary 30%. Other EMFF mechanisms that should be adapted to this critical situation include: the temporary closures provided at the art. 33 of the Reg. UE n°508/2014 should open to “major health crisis” and the storage aid schemes (Art. 67 accompanied by the former Art. 31 of OCM regulation n°1379/2013) should be reinstated for the markets.

MEDAC requests/suggestions to face the difficulties due to COVID-19 in the fishing sector:

- The socio-economical support to the fishing sector in this exceptional period should be an easy process without heavy bureaucracy. Moreover, the new measures of the EMFF and the other European funds should provide a rapid, effective and enough support to those impacted.
- The access to concessional credit should be facilitated;
- Provision of visibility to fishing enterprises in order to organize the production to meet the food demand of citizens without compromising the economic viability of the enterprises.

- Authorization without delay to operators of the direct sale guarantying the minimum distances set by the governments, improvement of price definition in the auctions and urgent implementation of telematic sales to the public with home delivery. In fact, the above-mentioned difficulties have already led to a price reduction of more than 50%.
- Flexible departure and arrival times for artisanal fishing vessels in order to avoid crowd at the moorings. Then, this flexibility should not cause an increase in fishing effort and the sales and/or action takes place once all the catches have been landed.
- Review the mechanism of the Special Regime for the Sea and the remuneration, guaranteeing the payment according to the weekly distribution of the “parts” between the crew and the shipowner. It is necessary to respect the labor rights of the entire crew regardless of whether they are shipowners or crew members, also in case of vessel quarantine.
- Replacement of workers older than 50 years who request it and training of young people knowing how to swim in order to join them to the crew and respect the minimum number on board.
- Cancellation of mortgage payment: the same measure adopted for unemployed people and first-time resident may be applied in respect of the mortgages payment by the shipowners that secured their vessel purchase through the mortgaging of their homes.
- An immediate and long-term moratorium on the payment of taxes, contributions and other public obligation is needed. The postponement of sanctions deadline is needed.
- Payment and/or advance of aid. In the fisheries sector, aid may be granted from Community funds such as Interreg med. Some administrations should provide the aid related to other years. Any aid that is due should be liquidated immediately - The broadening of FLAGs “Fisheries Local Action Groups” in any region located in the Mediterranean or in countries where COVID-19 has spread because up to now only few provinces can be covered by FLAGs funds. In facing such emergency, all regions, provinces and ports should be treated equally.
- Payment of aids to representatives of the fishery sector: associations, federations, employers’ associations, trade unions, cooperatives and maritime clusters. Regional, national and EU administrations should pay any current debts to these organizations in order to guarantee the employment of their workers and the related services provided to the fisheries sector. The Community funds for Mediterranean countries most affected by COVID19 must be made effective immediately in order to prevent the crisis of these organizations. Therefore, the EC is required to pay promptly to MS, Regions or Consortia that are carrying out European projects. Moreover, part of the project budget funds (40% at minimum) allocated to them should be advanced if the proposal or project has been approved on the basis of the “agreement” contract.

The aids granted by the MS to the professionals and the enterprises, should go beyond what is foreseen in the 2015 Guidelines in relation to the national fisheries aid, as amended in 2018, or beyond the limits of “de minimis” Regulation (EU) 717/2014, without being against the competition law.

MEDAC requests/suggestions to face the difficulties due to COVID-19 specifically in the fish markets

- Facilitate ERTE to the Concessionary Companies of fish markets;
- Exoneration of Port Taxes to fish market dealers;
- Deferral of tax obligations to OPPs and Associations.

78 MEDAC OIG POSITION ON COVID-19 AND FISHERIES

Rome, 29th April 2020

Context

The fishery sector in the Mediterranean, like most of the economic activities, has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

Besides an overall reduction of the fishing effort, a number of new factors including increased cost for seafood distribution, a reduction and in certain cases collapse of the demand and market availability of fresh seafood products, as well as the total closure of recreational fisheries in many countries, started to reshape the fishery landscape in the Mediterranean in this time of crisis.

While the fishing effort is dropping in general, the pressure on certain stocks, such as small pelagics for canning, has shown an increase due to a higher demand for non-perishable seafood products, as a response to market demand. Similarly, the importance of subsistence fishing (fishing for food security) and the pressure on respective target stocks has evidently increased. In addition, there is a solid risk of an increase of illegal fishing, in a context where controls at sea might certainly not be a priority or are limited by safety requirements. Consequently, a significant reduction of effort in monitoring, control and surveillance can already be observed in several countries and fisheries.

Recommendations

- The safety of all fish workers men and women, along the supply chain, needs to be ensured as a first priority. This includes the secured provisions of personal protection equipment (PPE) and physical distancing measures, including in the fishing operation and the sale of fish in direct sales to secure fish supply in coastal communities and to wider supply chains, according to the national provisions.
- Fisheries, like other economic activities, should benefit from public funds to safeguard the employment levels and mitigate the economical impact of the COVID-19 crisis. In particular state aid should compensate for closures of fishing activities, provided that this is beneficial to both the economic dimension, and the recovery of the stocks. It is of paramount importance that any dilution of current and future measures aiming at the recovery of fish stocks must be avoided to support the resilience of ecosystem services in this and future crises. This includes technical measures, gear selectivity, identification and implementation of closed areas, spatio-temporal restrictions, MCS measures and fishing effort reductions limits.

Where food security is not impaired, a moratorium of all fishing activities, aimed at catalyzing the rebuilding of overfished stocks, should be considered.

- The reports on challenges in global and European trade, mostly linked to disrupted supply chains, accumulate. The crisis has highlighted the importance of the availability of local production to ensure seafood supply at local level under the current conditions. Small scale producers in particular, face unprecedented economic challenges where market demand is heavily reduced and traditional supply chains impaired. This also underlines the importance of options for diversified supply chains, including more direct marketing that, while respecting reporting requirements, can increase the value of productions at first sale for fishers.
- Especially in this time of crisis, there is a high risk for fishers to be in a weaker position in the negotiation with brokers and fishmongers who could take advantage of the critical situation to purchase fish at a lower price and establish unsound economic relations. This dynamic can incite fishers to a “race to fishing” once the crisis is over, in order to overcome this vicious circle.

For this reason, the re-starting of fishing activities should be progressive so that supply and demand find a new equilibrium at a fair price for everyone (fishermen and consumers) and unused fishing days should not be rolled over to 2021.

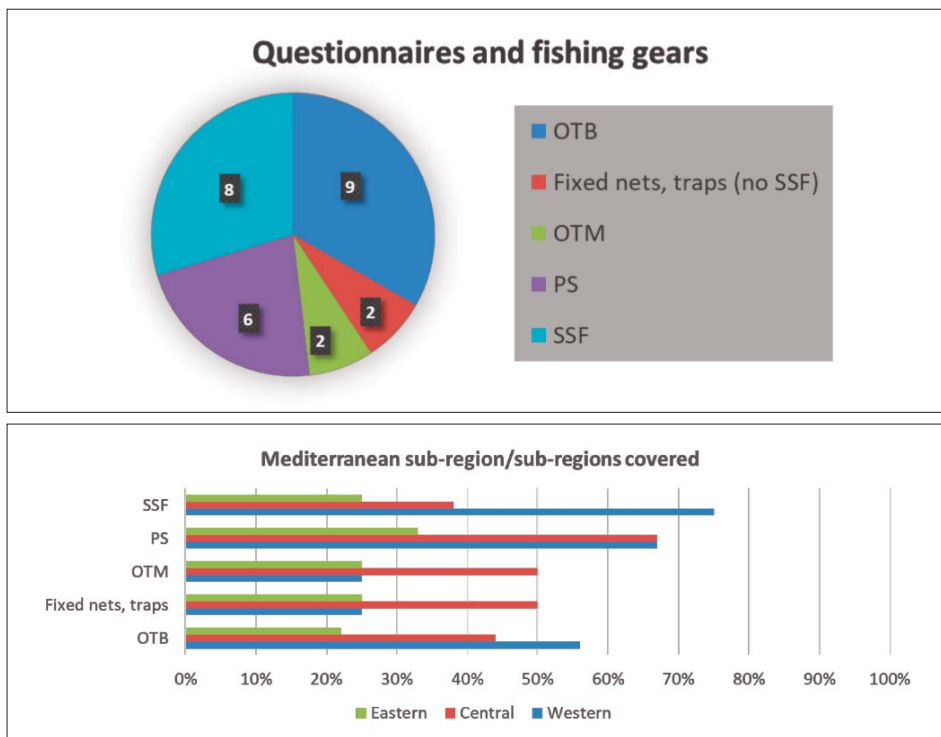
- Especially small-scale fishers risk being in a less powerful position when it comes into a price negotiation. It is hence paramount, in alignment with SDG target 14b, to offer alternatives for fishers against unfair agreements, promoting and supporting new solutions to shorten the supply chain, escape from fish traders' monopole and ensure a legal and diversified market, both during and after this emergency situation.
- Even if the temporal horizon of the crisis is still unclear, the moment to re-think and plan how the resume of fishing activities will look like is now. In this unprecedented situation, the opportunity to assess the impact of such a radical change, including on the abundance and recovery of fish stocks needs to be evaluated and realized. Particularly possible changes in consumers' patterns (mainly in cities that are far from the sea) will have to be scrutinized.
- Sustainability of fisheries should be the priority when fisheries activities start to resume. The fishery sector should learn from the positive effects of the reduced pressure on fish stocks in terms of increased CPUE, increased size, volume, quality and value of the catch, lower costs and lower footprint of the fishing operation. This is an unique opportunity to rethink fishing activities, improve fisheries management and fast-track the recovery of fish stocks, delivering on regional policies for healthier marine ecosystems and a higher resilience for nature and people in the future.
- The dialogue between EU and non-EU countries in the GFCM context is now more important than ever. Co-operation should be maintained and re-established where its importance has been temporarily put on hold. This is a time for cooperation and solidarity. The harmonization of measures at regional level is crucial to avoid that some parties profit from the current crisis at the costs of others and the Mediterranean overall. This is also the time to keep fighting illegal fishing and avoid any potential increase of IUU activities. In doing so, the application of measures against IUU fisheries in the EU and GFCM context, national rules and regulations, as well as reporting of infringements and non-compliance, must be strengthened and pursued with even more determination during these challenging times. REM can be an excellent tool to be used as a future-proof method of control which even respects social distancing for the benefit of fishers and inspectors.
- In a time of such crisis, countries bearing the biggest responsibility through having the largest fleets and hence fishing effort, need to lead by example and put forward measures in line with the above for the sake of a highly productive and resilient future of the Mediterranean.
- Regarding recreational fishing, we consider that it should be authorized respecting the social distancing measures recommended by the health authorities. Recreational fishing helps its practitioners stay physically active and improve their mental health, all of which help to strengthen the immune system. In the same way, it allows the provision of fish for food within a framework of food sovereignty. The economic damage that the recreational fishing sector is suffering (material brands, specialized stores, etc..) is being very serious, and if the current situation continues, the impact could be unsustainable for the sector.

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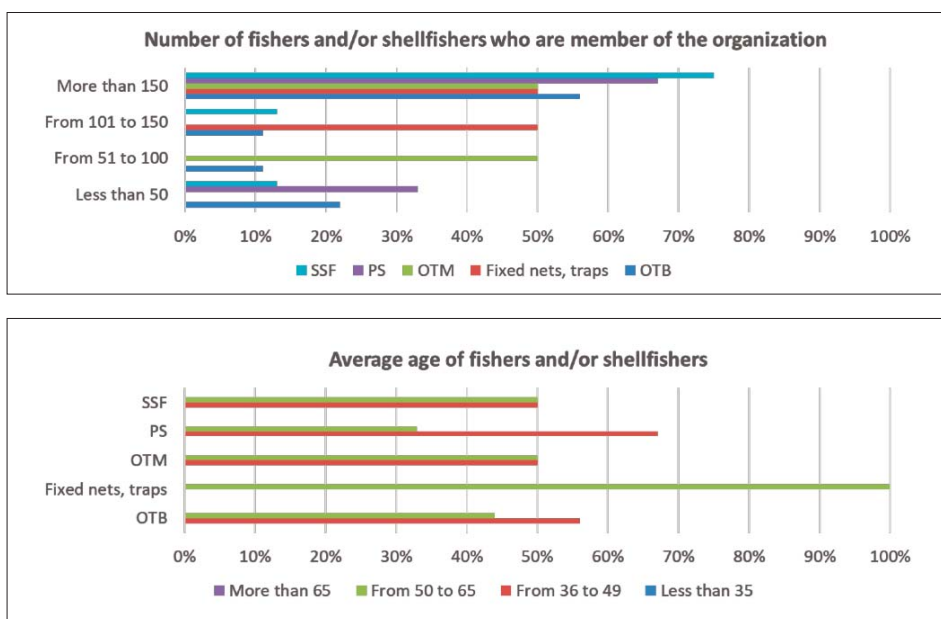
RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT COVID-19 EFFECTS ON FISHERY SECTOR

30th July 2020

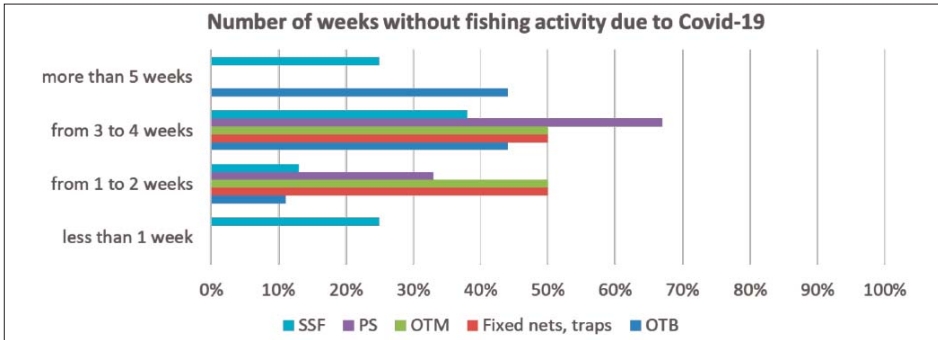
THE SURVEY Fishing gears and sub-regions



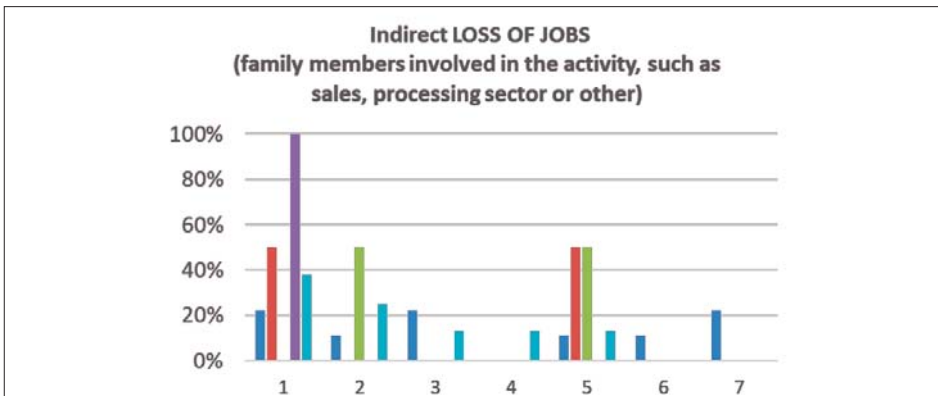
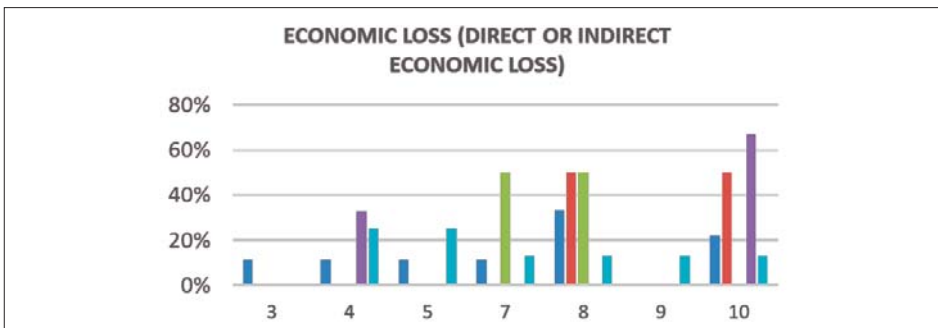
THE SURVEY-Representativeness



COVID-19 EFFECTS

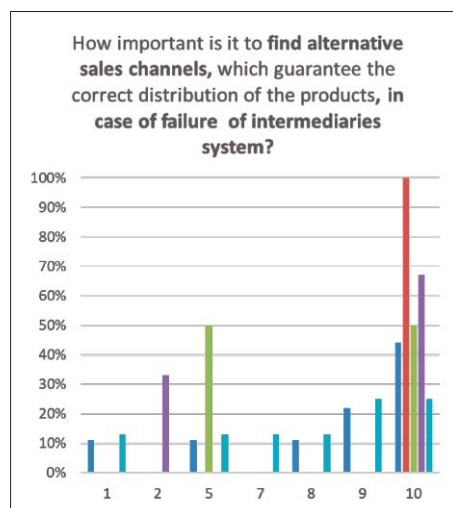
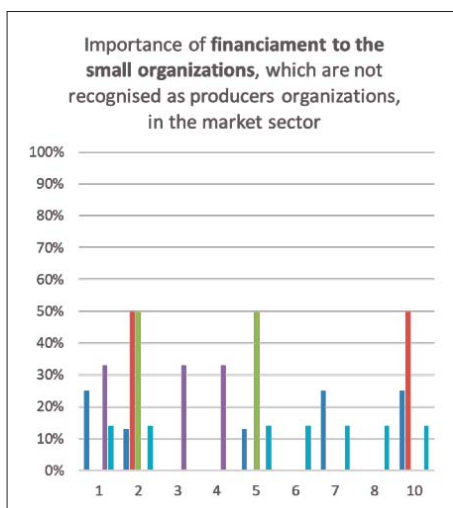
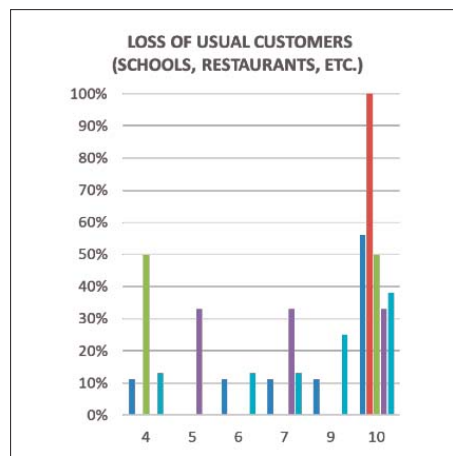
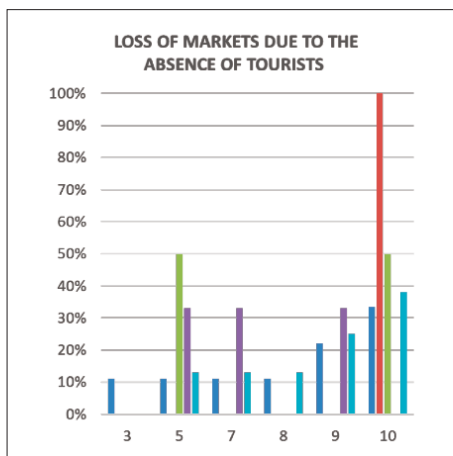
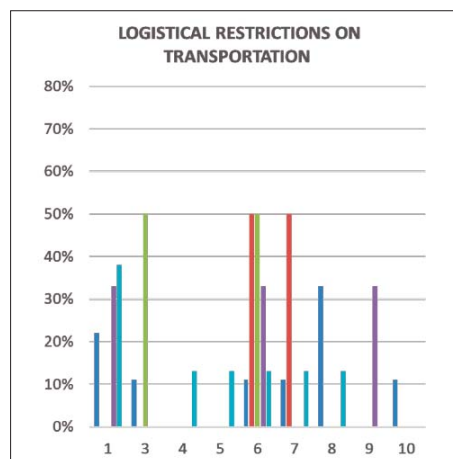


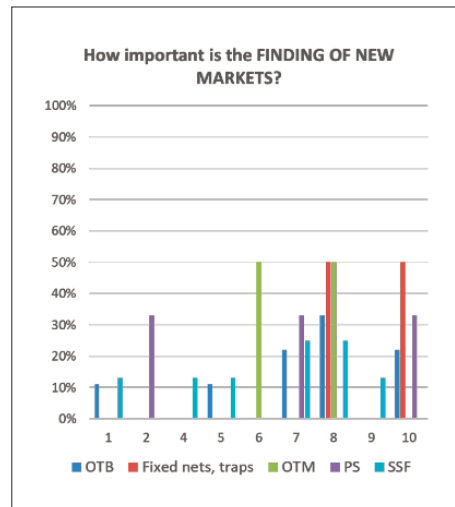
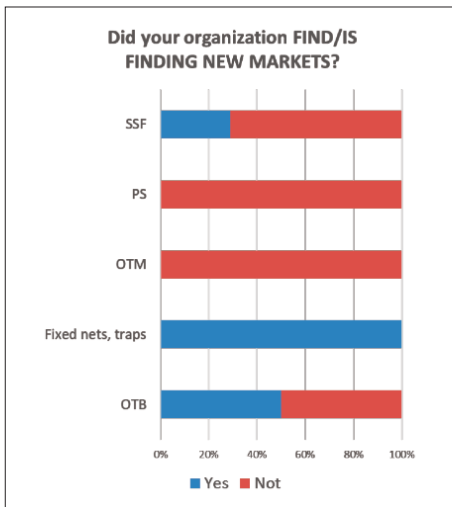
In some country the stop of fishing activities has not been consecutives, while the vessels stopped every other day in order to avoid the collapse of the market price



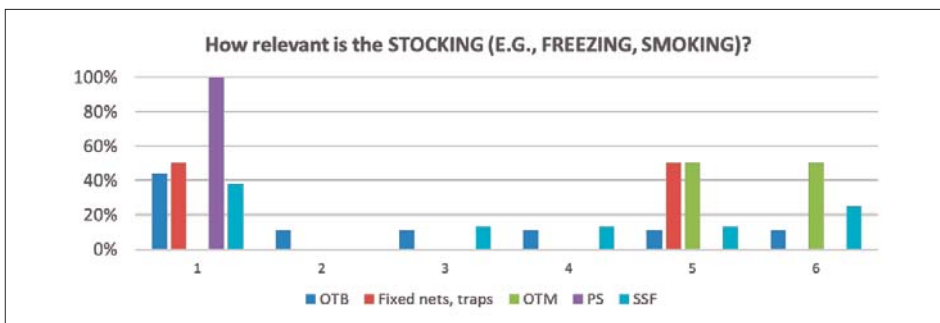
■ OTB ■ Fixed nets, traps ■ OTM ■ PS ■ SSF

1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)

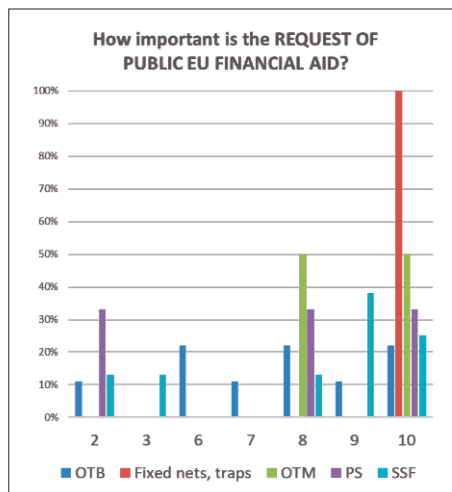
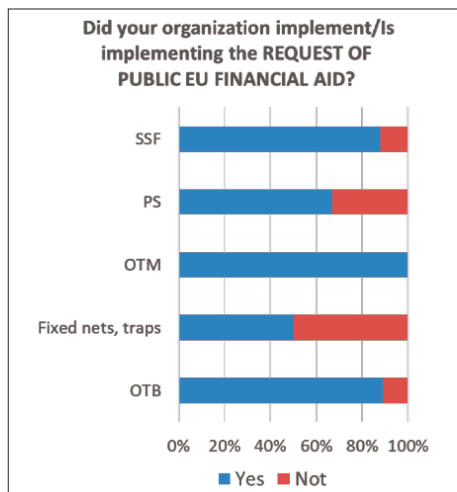




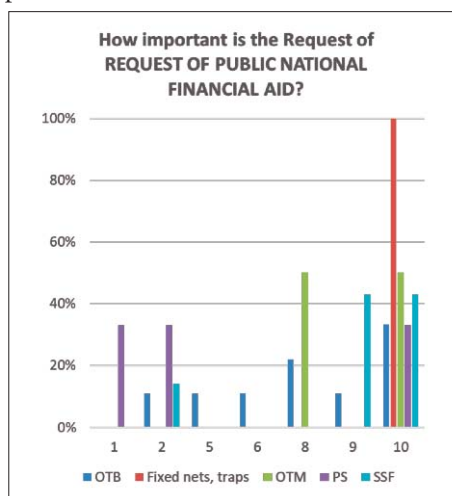
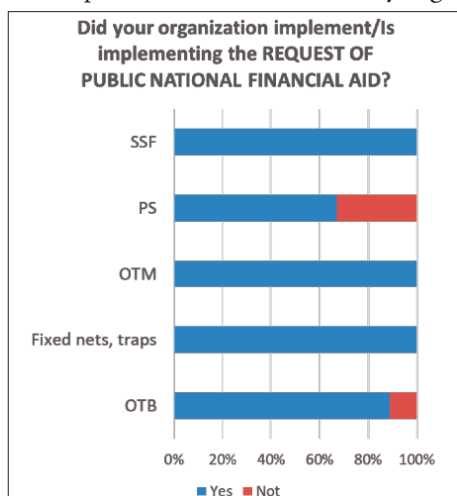
No organization is implementing the STOCKING (E.G., FREEZING, SMOKING) to face the crisis caused by COVID-19



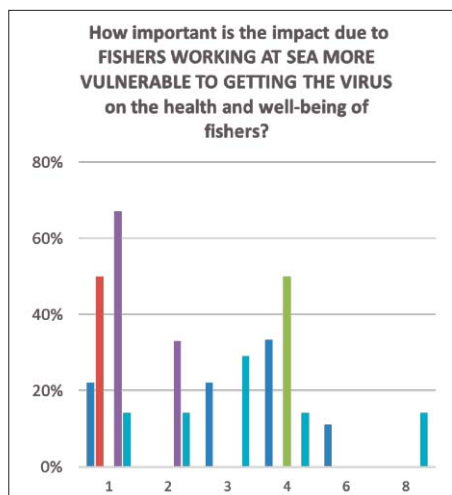
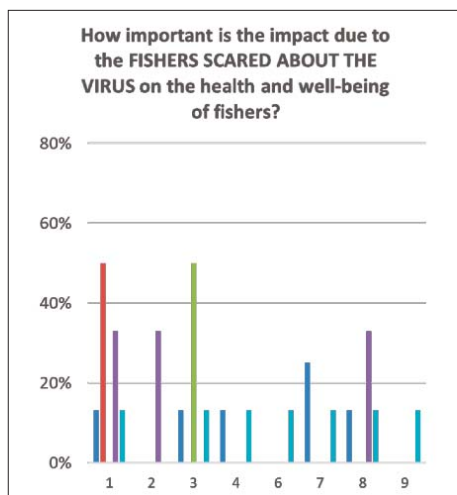
1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)

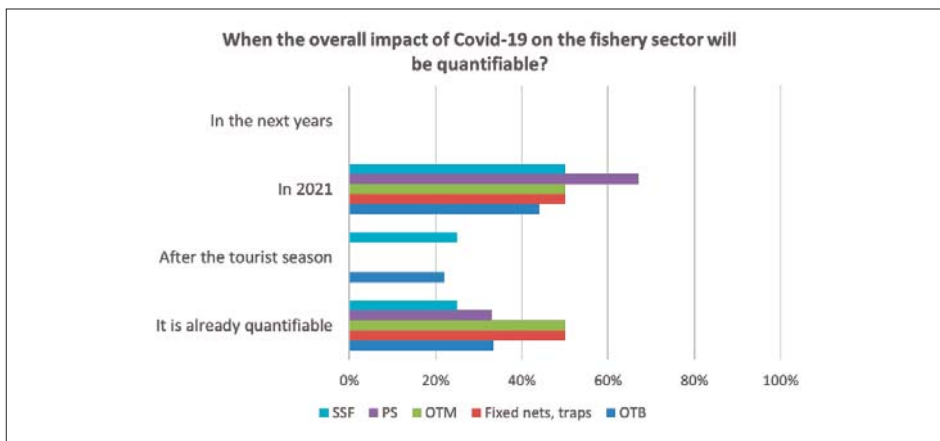


1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)



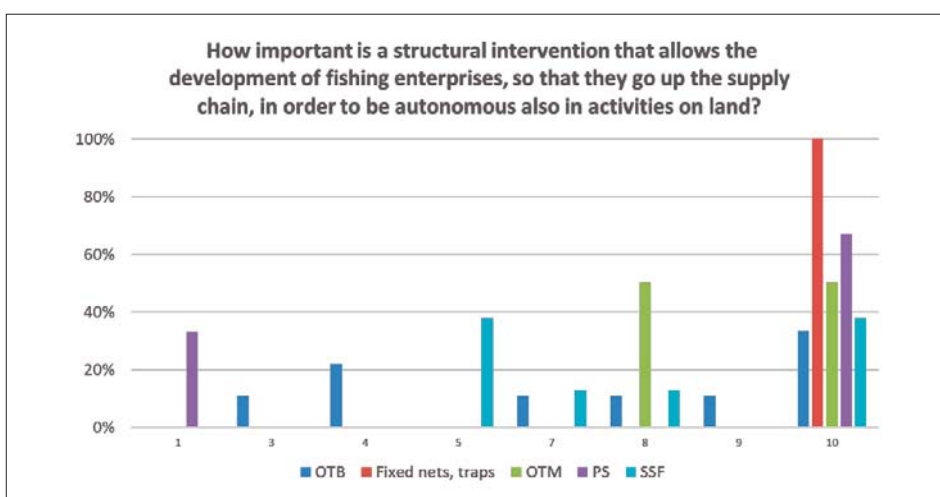
1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)





What strategies the Commission should support to overcome the Covid-19 crisis in the fishery sector?

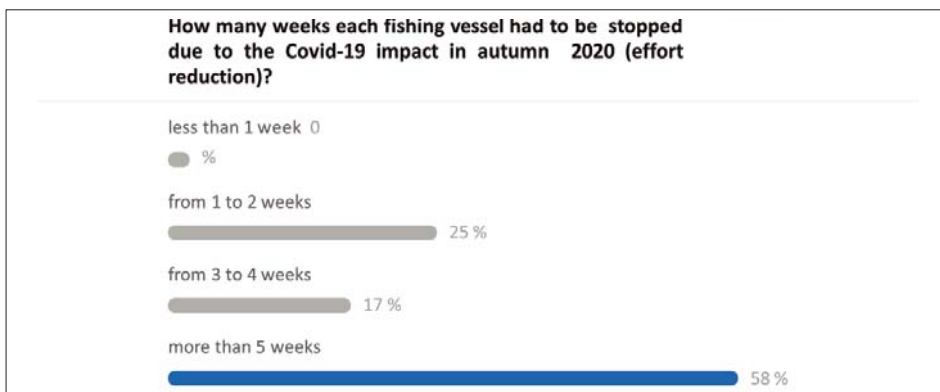
- **More flexibility** in organizing the fishing activity according to the **market's fluctuation**;
- More flexibility, so that fishing companies can carry out **the process of traceability themselves** in case of need. Otherwise, if the organizations of first sale fail due to the crisis, the market stops;
- **Same rules for EU and non-EU countries in the Med**;
- Enhancement and **greater certification** of the EU products;
- Incentives for **fleet modernization**;
- **Financial strategies** in order to promote local products;
- Speed up the **payment of temporary cessation** of activity and broaden eligibility for the measure;
- **Support on-line sales platform** and stocking/freezing capacities
- **More important aid targeted** at specific fishing activities which are more in difficulties than others, rather than aids given to all companies, regardless of the real impact the Covid-19 crisis had on them.



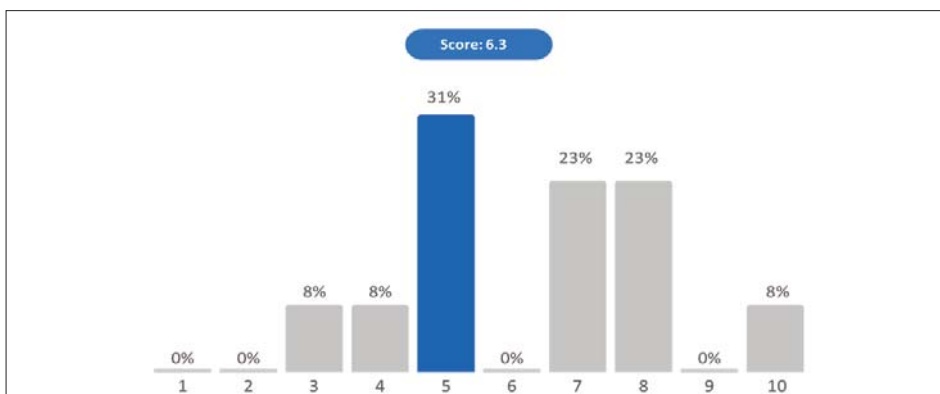
1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)

80

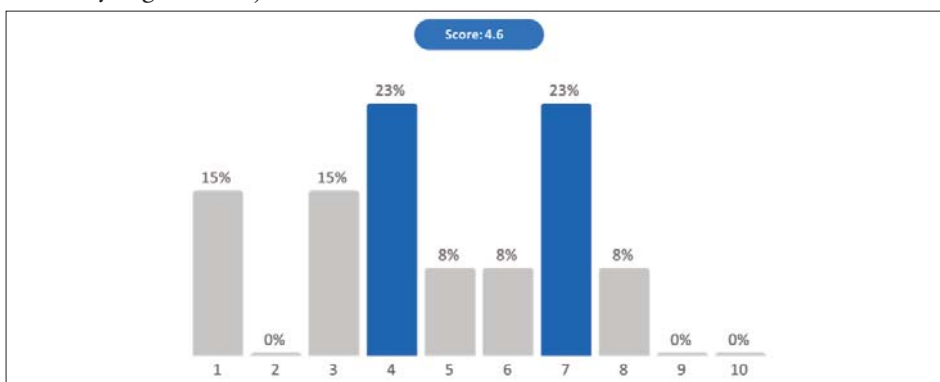
RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ABOUT COVID-19 EFFECTS ON FISHERY SECTOR- JUNE 2021 (Abstract)



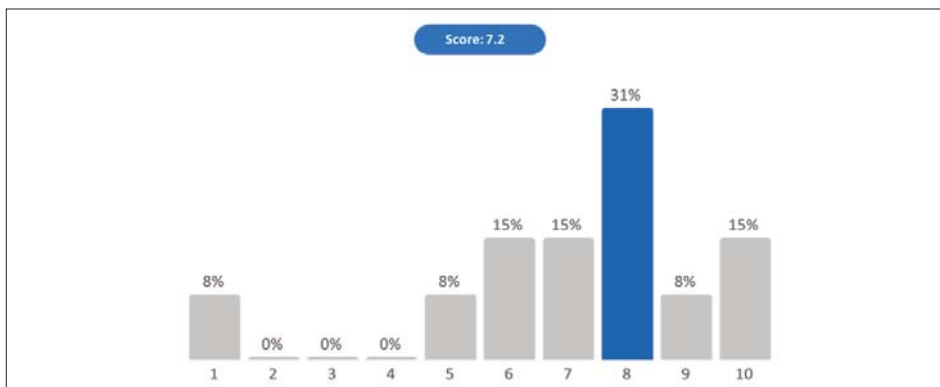
Please, indicate if there was an **ECONOMIC LOSS (DIRECT OR INDIRECT ECONOMIC LOSS)** amongst members of your organization due to the crisis caused by COVID-19. 1 (=no loss at all) to 10 (=very high economic loss)



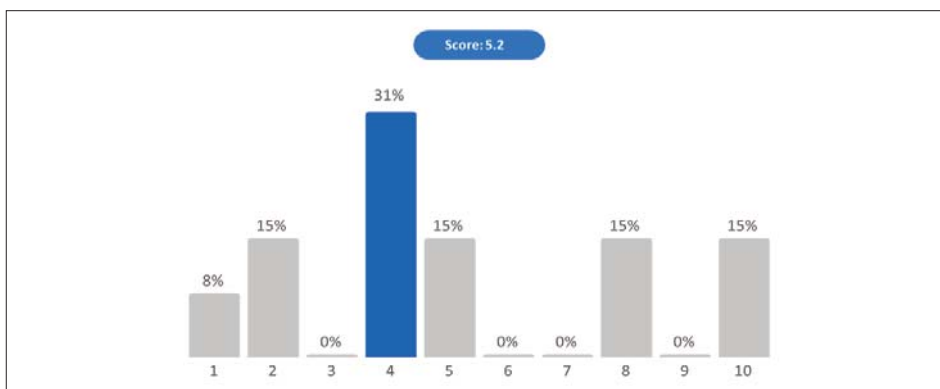
Please, indicate if any **indirect LOSS OF JOBS** (family members involved in the activity, such as sales, processing sector or other) occurred due to the crisis caused by COVID-19. 1 (=no loss at all) to 10 (=very high loss of jobs)



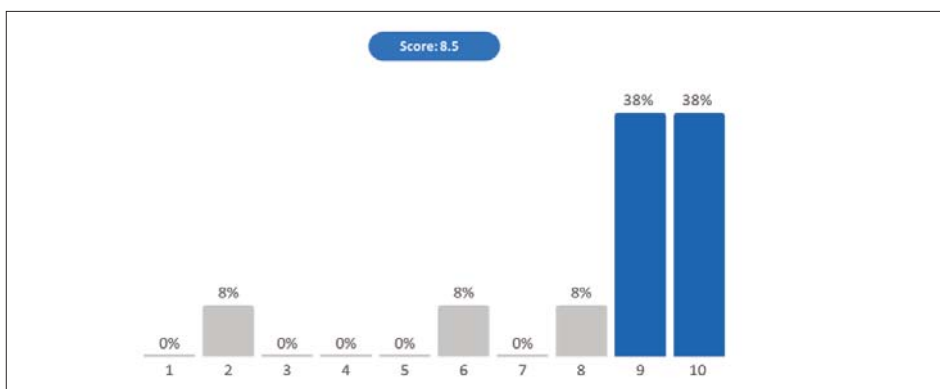
How important has been the **IMPOSSIBILITY/DIFFICULTY SELLING AT AUCTION** suffered by the fishing activity due to COVID-19? 1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)



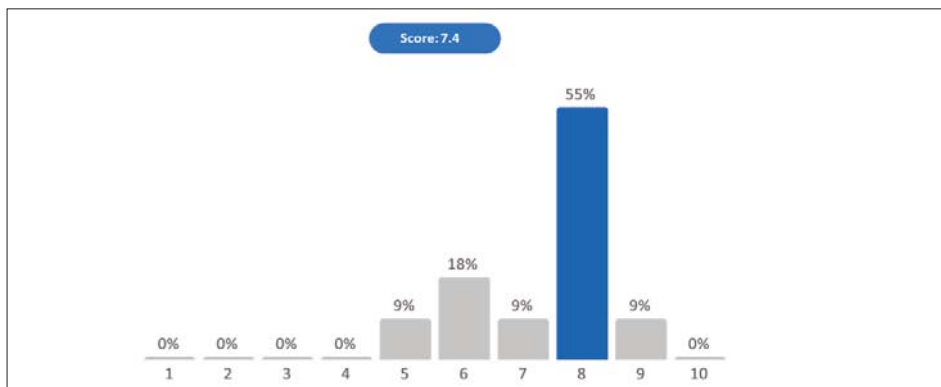
How important has been the LOGISTICAL RESTRICTIONS ON TRANSPORTATION suffered by the fishing activity due to COVID-19? 1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)



How important has been the LOSS OF MARKETS DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF TOURISTS suffered by the fishing activity due to COVID-19? 1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)



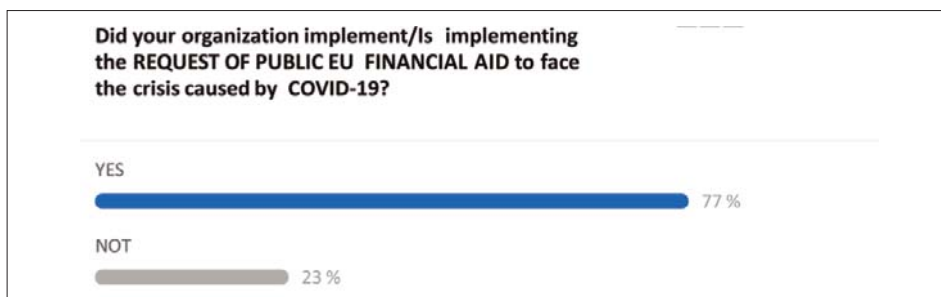
How important is it to find alternative sales channels, which guarantee the correct distribution of the products, in case of failure of intermediaries system?



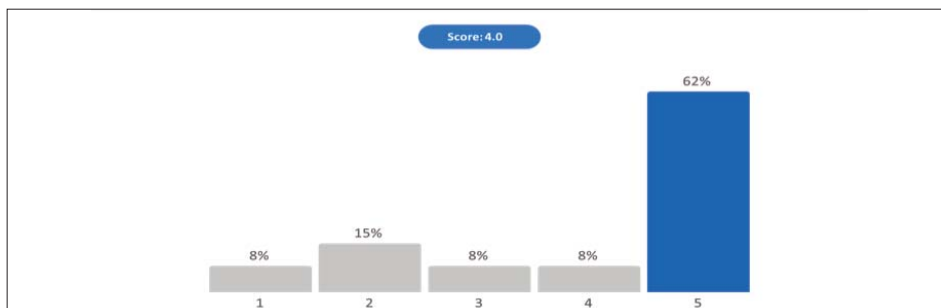
What are the main issues related to the direct sales of local seafood?

In descending order of importance considering the number of votes

- Price and lack of consumers due to local limitation of the citizen's possibility to circulate, no tourists
- Restaurant closures
- Limitations in the operations of the open markets
- Dramatic decrease of the citizen's purchasing power due to the extended duration of the pandemic
- Difficulties at the market and public auction
- Serious gap in law in order to permit fully application of direct sales
- Citizens scared of the virus



How important is the REQUEST OF PUBLIC EU FINANCIAL AID to face the crisis caused by COVID-19?

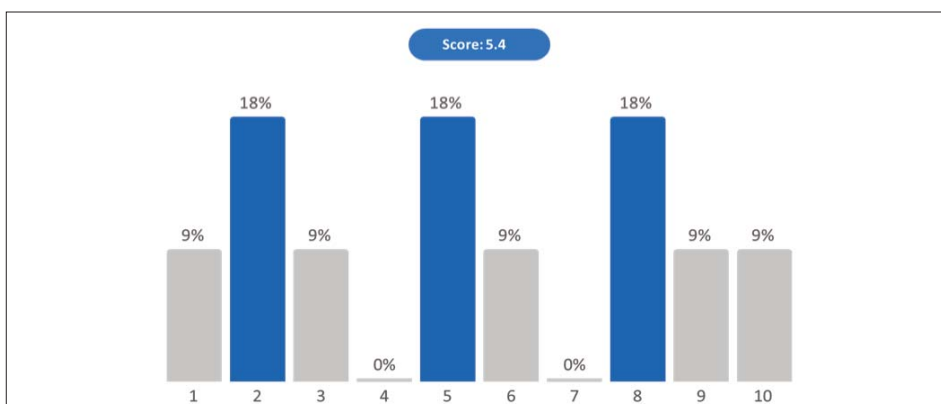


Which economic supports have been developed by Member States in order to tackle the Covid-crisis in the fishery sector?

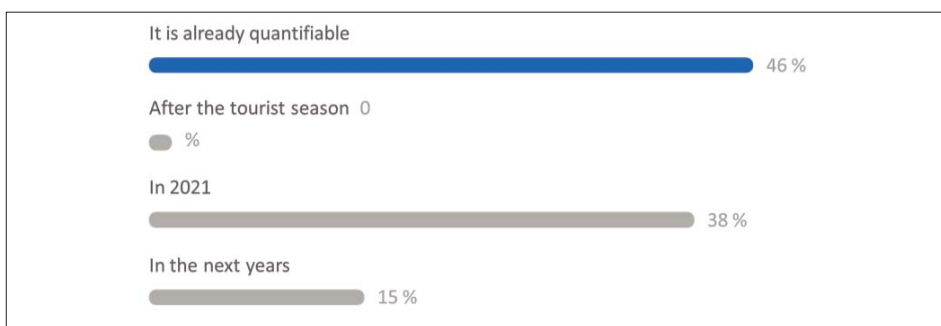
In descending order of importance considering the number of votes

- Financial aid from EMFF: compensation payment for temporary cessation and a soft loan (Recoverable Advance Payment)
- Monthly economic aid to enterprises and fishers
- Aid plans for temporary cessations
- De minimis support for associations For employees in case of no fishing part of the income
- Payments for regulation of fishing, i.e. hunting season in the period of covid 19 from EU and governments.

How important is the impact due to the LACK/SHORTAGE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (GLOVES, MASKS, HAND SANITIZER) on the health and well-being of fishers?
1 (=no importance at all) to 10 (=very high importance)



When the overall impact of Covid-19 on the fishery sector will be quantifiable?



What strategies the Commission should support to overcome the Covid-19 crisis in the fishery sector?

In descending order of importance considering the number of votes

- Encouraging the sale of local products and allowing SSF to sell fish without major restrictions e.g. cold chain etc in times of crisis.
- Economical support and compensation for loss of turnover.
- The implementation of the measure of temporary cessation of the operation of fishing vessels due to the pandemic, should be continued in 2021.

- 2 years suspension of CFP.
- From already existing and future EMFF there should be a possibility for each Member State to help fishery sector through direct payments, with existing funds from the measures that are not used.
- Economic support to the small enterprises.
- Fishing activities to be allowed in the period after the Covid-19 closures.

What fisheries-related activities have been developed to tackle the covid-19 crisis and should they be reinforced?

In descending order of importance considering the number of votes

- Only financial support can help the sector and the employment: compensation for turnover losses, credit access tools and social economic support.
- Direct sales by fishers (door to door).
- No fisheries related activities have been developed
- We have created an interactive map that presents the points of sale. The social networks were very useful during this period to inform where the families can supply.
- Reinforcing regulation of fishing hunting season in the following period for the sake of covid 19.

Please, write your comments and observations

In descending order of importance considering the number of votes

The operational program of EMFF should be supported in 2021 as well as the measure of the indemnities for the temporary cessation of the fishing activities due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The real impact of this crisis will be felt during, at least, the next few years in the fishery economy. We don't know today when it will finish. The future is unknown but will be, surely, difficult. This crisis must be an example to more prevent economical shock, like this Virus Covid 19 isn't over yet. Lots of countries are in lock down and it is very difficult to find the way for selling fish also ours fishers are afraid of getting virus. In local markets there is not buyers, people are lock in the houses, restaurants are not working, everything has stopped. Were hard time being for fishing industries.

THE FULL TEXT AND ALL THE GRAPHS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:

<http://en.med->

[ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2021/06/122_medac_results_questionnaire_covid_19_june_2021.pdf](http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2021/06/122_medac_results_questionnaire_covid_19_june_2021.pdf)

TOPIC: Small-Scale Fisheries

OPINION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN RAC ON A POSSIBLE DIFFERENTIATED REGIME FOR SMALL-SCALE COASTAL FISHERIES

81

3rd July 2010

1. The Mediterranean RAC, even if complains about the poor consideration of Mediterranean Sea in the Green Paper, has taken due note of the Commission's intention to consider introducing a differentiated regime, focusing on social objectives, for protecting small-scale coastal fleets, as well as introducing a system of direct allocation of quotas or of fishing effort or other collective mechanisms. This segment could also benefit from public funding in order to enable its adaptation to the future CFP. The CCR is favourable to such an orientation which could also enable the CFP to be better adapted to the specificities of the Mediterranean fisheries. On the other hand, Commission does not plan to grant special rules on conservation or control. It is therefore of primary importance to discuss precisely the characteristics of small-scale coastal fisheries in line with regional and local realities.
2. Small-scale fisheries production systems are often vulnerable because highly dependent on the evolving quality and quantity of catches, with a direct effect at the economic level. In turn, catches depend on marine ecosystems, which need to be healthy. For all these reasons, it is important to pay particular attention to small-scale coastal fisheries.
3. The only current element of definition is found in Article 26 of the EFF Regulation which defines *small-scale coastal fishing* as "fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 metres and not using towed gear as listed in Table 3 in Annex I of Commission Regulation (EC) No 26/2004 of 30 December 2003 regarding the fishing vessels register of the Community".
4. After studying the issue in many forums (seminars organised by the Commission and internal groups of our member organisations), it appears that the ambition of a having a single definition of criteria common to all segments of the fleet in Europe is simply impossible, given the many regional, if not local, socio-economic and environmental features.
5. As indicated above, it is difficult to agree on a single definition of small-scale coastal fisheries at the European level because of the variety of segments that fall under this heading. Among the criteria often cited to define small-scale inshore fisheries, we can mention: environmental and resources impact, overall length, gross registered tonnage (GT), power (KW), distance from the shore or from the base port at which the vessel operates, the number of onboard personnel, number of continuous days at sea, volume and capital structure of the owning company, reference market (fresh, local, export, deep-frozen), presence or not of the owner on board, business type (sole proprietorship, SME, cooperative, PO, remuneration system, etc.). However, the use of a limited number of physical parameters may prove be inappropriate if we want a future CFP that is simple and consistent. Indeed, these criteria may be mutually exclusive in some segments of the fleet in Europe.
6. In addition, it should be noted that the Green Paper omits the question of gender in the future CFP in spite of the fact that women are an integral part of the activity of family fisheries undertakings in the Mediterranean Sea. Despite the EC Directive 86/613, which recognizes

women's status of collaborator in the family fishing business, some Mediterranean Member States have not yet implemented the Directive and the recognition of this status. The Mediterranean RAC calls on the Commission to put pressure on the Member States concerned to recognise at national level the status of women in family businesses, in particular as the role played by women goes far beyond working within the business; they are the custodians of the values and traditions of their region.

7. By way of conclusion, the Commission's (top-down) approach regarding a possible differential regime applicable in future to small-scale coastal fisheries is still too attached to the outdated spirit of the current CFP. The 'top-down' approach is, in our view, far from the specific realities on the ground and the daily management of fisheries.
8. Therefore, the Mediterranean RAC is of the opinion that the Commission should :
 - a) move towards a generic definition or towards guidelines on small-scale coastal fisheries at Community level. It makes more sense for Member States to then establish more detailed criteria for definition in the light of these generic guidelines, on the basis of the long term management plans, respecting local fleet characteristics and in conformity with the subsidiarity principle referred to in the Green Paper;
 - b) the Mediterranean RAC also calls for the maintaining of the 12 mile zone in order to protect the fragile coastal strip;
 - c) regarding recreational fisheries which is mainly active in the same area as the small coastal fisheries (12 mile zone), the Commission should adopt, a sector legislation so that Member States would be able to define in the short term, the rights and obligations of the recreational fishermen by means, for instance, of a generalized license system for those entitled for a better management of the catches through gears revision as well as the total ban on trading the catches;
 - d) develop in the framework of the new Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union, initiatives aiming at controlling and minimizing the impact on the marine environment of other human activities (transports, sources of pollution in urban areas, agriculture, industry, uncontrolled constructions on the coast, extractive activities, etc.) and even through Marine Space Planning;
9. The Mediterranean RAC's approach is more compatible and consistent with decentralized decision-making which is the direction in which things appear to be moving in the Green paper, in particular on technical aspects. Regarding this point, the Mediterranean RAC recalls its opinion adopted on occasion of the Executive Committee held in Marbella on 8 June 2010 and particularly the impact evaluation and an urgent review of the Reg. 1967/06 which could allow, thanks to the scientific opinions, to justify and to evaluate technically and scientifically those measures causing more problems (filament thickness, minimum cod-end size, distance from the coast, minimum size, etc.).

82 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DRAFT RPOA ON SSF

Rome, 24th April 2018

Please find attached the MEDAC contribution to the draft of the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) on small-scale fisheries (SSF), approved by consensus by the ExCom members.

The discussion that took place during the MEDAC Working Group 5 meeting, held on 13th April 2018, highlighted the fact that there is a widespread desire to see how to deal with the problem of

the definition of small-scale fisheries, given that the current definition is considered, according to the circumstance, to be either not inclusive, too rigid or not coherent with the real situation within the sector. The MEDAC raised this issue in 2010 with the approval of the “RACMED Opinion on a possible differentiated regime for small-scale coastal fisheries” prot.31/2010 of 3rd July 2010, which is attached in case it is required.

In connection with this, the MEDAC also believes that the concept of “low impact” applied to SSF should be discussed considering the aspects related to aid policies and access to fishing resources. Lastly, the MEDAC would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the recognition in the RPOA of the role of women in the sector.

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA

MALTA, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

MEDAC CONTRIBUTION

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

ADOPTING A REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA

Preamble

- 1 We, Ministers, heads of national delegations and the European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, have met in Malta, on 26 September 2018 ***to support and promote*** small-scale fisheries for the coming ten years through the adoption of a Regional Plan of Action in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;
- 2 This Regional Plan of Action (hereafter the “Plan”) aims ***to establish*** the objectives, principles and concrete actions that should be applied for ensuring the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability of ***the Mediterranean Coastal Fisheries (including also small-scale fisheries)***;
- 3 Since millennia, the small-scale fisheries sector ***has supported*** the livelihood of the coastal communities and local economies. ***It provides socio-economic value, and, in cases of subsistence economies, it may play an important role for food security.*** In the world, 37 million people are estimated to be directly employed by the small-scale fisheries activities, while 100 million people are estimated to find employment in connected activities;
- 4 In the Mediterranean and Black Sea, small-scale fisheries constitute over 83% of the fishing fleet and 31% of fishing capacity, employ at least 57% of total on-vessel fishing labour and account for approximately 22% of the total landing value from capture fisheries in the region;
Small-scale fisheries are “labour intensive” activities with a strong direct involvement of fishermen on multi-gear and multi-species activities, strictly linked to the seasonal variations
- 5 Small-scale fishers are firmly rooted in local communities, traditions, cultural heritage and values. Many of them are self-employed and provide fish for direct human consumption within

their households or communities, ***contributing to their food security as well as an important source of direct and indirect employment***. They play a pivotal role in social inclusion and cohesion by maintaining populations in remote ***or disadvantaged coastal*** areas;

- 6 Small-scale fisheries create added-value for local development, social and environmental sustainability, thanks to their abilities to produce short-chain products, to provide consumers with fish of quality and variety, to have in general a relatively low impact on environment and by giving women a significant role through diversification of fishing activities;
- 7 However, in some countries the sector lacks recognition and ***dedicated*** representativeness, in particular due to the ***atomisation of*** fishing activities, ***the economic difficulty for fishers to leave their business while representing their sector's interests*** and due to the presence of other industries and maritime economies. Furthermore, there is lack of clear characterization of the sector ***and the lack of dedicated and specific small-scale and low impact fishing organisations organized and connected at all levels***;
- 8 As a result, in some cases, small-scale fishers may not be enough involved in the decision-making processes at all levels (*local, regional, national and international bodies*), notably in the participative approaches. Their lack of voice also weakens the weight of small-scale fishers in the market, as well as their possibilities for access to financial assistance, access to waters and fishing opportunities ***preventing also that their ecological knowledge, collective ideas and proposals are heard and taken into account***;
- 9 ~~The small scale fishing sector's capacities are limited in terms of human capital (*ageing fishers, difficulty to attract young people, lack of access to proper education, working conditions, safety rules on board*), investment (*access to credit*) and innovation. As a consequence, the sector has difficulties to meet minimum compliance requirements regarding, in particular, data collection, traceability, monitoring, control and surveillances measures;~~
- 10 Many other maritime activities interact with the small-scale fisheries over access to marine space, infrastructure and ports leading to marine pollution and altered marine ecosystems which have an impact on small-scale fisheries. The maritime economies particularly ***interacting with*** Small-Scale Fisheries are, *inter alia*, ***other commercial fisheries***, hydrocarbon extraction, ocean energy projects, recreational fishery, other "métiers", ***sand extractions for beach regeneration***, aquaculture, coastal tourism and maritime transport;
- 11 Nonetheless, there ***could be*** synergies and positive interactions between small-scale fisheries and other maritime activities, for instance through sharing facilities and suppliers, through the ecological tourism and ***community-based fisheries-management and co-designed and in some cases through fishery co-management*** in Marine Protected Areas (MPA). ***Keeping watch, as a sentinel for marine environment during SSF fishers' long presence at sea, can be encouraged and appraised***
- 12 Due to their close knowledge of and connection with the marine ecosystems, small-scale fisheries are well placed for observing major environmental and climate changes. Consequently, small-scale fishers are not only resource users but ***can*** also play a role as "guardians of the sea". In this context, they should therefore play an important ***role in plastic garbage collection, providing their traditional knowledge for fisheries and environment management. Also could develop a key role*** on waste management and recycling and be recognised as actors of the circular economy;

- 13 This Plan is based on the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (November 2013, Malta), the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (2014), the Conclusions of the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (Algiers, 7-9 March 2016), *the Sofia High-level Conference on the Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture (7 June 2018)*, the Bucharest High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture (24-25 October 2016), the Malta Ministerial Conference on the Sustainability of Mediterranean Fisheries “MedFish4Ever” (30 March 2017) and on the GFCM Mid-term strategy (2017-2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (2016) as well as on the Blue Growth Initiative;
- 14 The present Plan serves as a response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “Transforming Our World”, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015, and in particular to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on food security and nutrition and its target 2.3; to SDG 5 on gender equality and its targets 5.a and 5.b ; to SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and its target 8.5; to SDG 13 on climate change and to SDG 14 on *conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and more specifically* its target 14.b.

We agree to ensure the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability of small-scale fisheries on the basis of the following objectives and principles:

- 15 Recognize the status of the small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea which should take into account their regional specificities, experience, knowledge and contribution to the cultural heritage of local communities;
- 16 Recognise the socio-economic specificities of the small-scale fisheries, such as the seasonality *need of polyvalence* of their activities and unstable income *dealing at the same time with declining catches due to IUU practices, overfishing and climate change*;
- 17 Support livelihoods for coastal communities, especially in remote *or disadvantaged coastal* areas, through sustainable small-scale fisheries;

Promote co-responsibility and awareness among all stakeholders of the need to achieve sustainability at all levels (economic, social and environmental);

- 18 When relevant encourage the creation of bodies/ associations in view of better structuring, organising and representing the sector *in a dedicated and specific way* in all decision-making processes. *Strengthen and recognize the existing dedicated organisations and platforms of small scale fishers and associations of women as stakeholders to also have into account*;
- 19 Improve *data collection* on small-scale fisheries;
- 20 Provide *fair* access to fishery resources *and fishing grounds* for small-scale fisheries *while* taking into account their socio-economic and cultural role in the local communities *as well as their low-impact potential on the resources and marine environment*;
- 21 Facilitate *direct* access to markets and public services for small-scale fisheries communities, *actions should be taken to promote and valorize local and fresh fish*;

- 22 Give adequate attention and financial support for small-scale fisheries
- 23 Ensure proper establishment of control, monitoring and surveillance system for small-scale fisheries;
- 24 Promote small-scale fisheries access to new technologies and their use aiming to improve their safety, monitoring, control and surveillance;
- 25 Promote the utilisation of fishing practices that minimize ***unwanted catches*** and damage to the ***marine*** environment;
- 26 Prevent any practice that would contribute to underground economy and the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities (IUU). ***Extend surveillance against IUU which often jeopardises economic profitability of coexisting SSF;***
- 27 Avoid policies ***and financial support*** that contribute to overcapacity that can negatively affect the ***marine ecosystems and the*** small-scale fishing communities;
- 28 Reinforce the value chain of the sector, notably for locally caught fish, ***often with a low commercial value and with low-impact fishing techniques***, in order to maximise the ***social and*** economic benefits of small-scale fisheries;
- 29 Promote the diversification of the catch and promote quality over quantity that provides an advantage to small-scale fisheries with benefits for consumers, fishers and environment;
- 30 Support the diversification of activities with the aim of ensuring the sustainable development of the sector of coastal communities ***and the protection of the marine environment;***
Raise the qualification levels and skills of fishermen
- 31 Make efforts so that the ***establishment of MPAs and FRAs is done as a result of a bottom-up process where local small-scale fishers are involved, they*** are perceived positively by the fishers and that their ***long-term benefits of their*** establishment does not create competing constraints for fishers. ***At the same time, legally establish those MPAs that are initiative and proposed by the fishing sector. Regularly scientifically assess biomass improvement from MPA implementation, and share this data with fishers;***
Recognise the social dialogue processes and establishment of co-management policies as key factors that can guarantee the good governance in the sea and sustainable management of the fisheries resources;
- 32 Take due account of small-scale fisheries in maritime spatial planning and in interaction with other sectors, such as ***industrial and*** recreational fishing, aquaculture, ***renewable marine energies*** oil drilling, transport and tourism;
- 33 ***Ensure*** the visibility and participation of small-scale fisheries representatives in the national and local decision-making and advisory processes when addressing fishery and other relevant policies, such as environment, transport, ***marine spatial planning and MPA management*** tourism and infrastructure. ***Convince them to use these dialogue opportunities to promote sustainability efforts implemented by the sector;***
- 34 Promote decent work and working conditions throughout the entire value chain for small-scale fisheries;

- 35 ***Recognize and support*** the particular role of women in the economy of small-scale fisheries and coastal communities;
- 36 Recognise and take into account the impact of natural and human-induced disasters and climate change on the small-scale fisheries ***and their potential role in the recovery of the fish stock***;
- 37 Encourage the regional organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations and other interested stakeholders to play a significant role in promoting the objectives and principles of the present plan and to continue their contribution to the sustainability of the small-scale fisheries;
- 38 **Consequently, we commit to implement the actions foreseen in the Plan by 1 January 2028. To this end, the aforementioned objectives, principles and actions shall be implemented in the National Strategies and /or Plans.**

Signed in Malta, on 26 September 2018, in two originals in English.

REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA

The Plan is composed of the following actions:

- 39 To adopt, as soon as possible, a characterisation of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, reflecting their socio-economic relevance and specificities on the basis of a set of indicative criteria (*dimension of vessel, gear used, activities of non-vessel-based fisheries, low impact fishing practices etc.*).

A) Scientific research

Setting thresholds and proxies to assess the state of coastal marine resources. Different data limited assessments may be used and should be encouraged in different scientific fora such as STECF, or the GFCM -SAC and the participation of SSF should be favoured in each scientific protocol

- 40 Initiate integrated regional research in order to collect accurate, valid and complete data on the value and socio-economic impact of small-scale fisheries;

Understand the social aspects of fisheries household and the social structure of fisheries communities and women contribution

- 41 Develop scientific studies to strengthen knowledge about the interaction between small-scale fisheries and marine ecosystems and ***their impact on*** marine resources;
- 42 ***Develop scientific studies to strengthen knowledge about the interaction between recreational fisheries and small-scale fisheries***;
- 43 Design implementation of pilot and innovative projects covering all aspects of small-scale fisheries ***including self-monitoring systems combined with observers on board to collect data on target species, unwanted catches bycatch and impact on benthic communities***;
- 44 Consider the assessment of small-scale fisheries within the forecast studies on adaptation to the climate change, including its carbon-binding potential;

B) Small-scale fisheries data collection and scientific evaluation

45 Using all appropriate tools, develop information and data collection systems that involve small-scale fisheries in the collection of regional-level data on fleets and fishing activities, including the record of all catches **and regular scientific assessments of stocks targeted by the sector**;

46 Establish national fishing fleet registers that record **all** small-scale fishing vessels;

Incorporate the traditional ecological knowledge of small scale fishers into fisheries management

C) Small-scale fisheries management measures

47 Implement, where appropriate, ***ecosystems based multiannual*** management plans which establish specific rules designed ***to restore and maintain the populations of fish stocks and ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability of fishing activities, including both commercial and recreational fisheries favour, within the commercial sector***, access for sustainable and small-scale fisheries along the coastal band

48 Taking into account management measures and their impact on the resources, facilitate equitable access to marine resources that should be based on sustainable fisheries and their socio-economic role;

49 Support investments for small-scale fisheries to improve selectivity, protect biodiversity, minimise unwanted catches, ***minimize interaction with protected species and predators*** or promote energy-efficiency;

50 Guarantee good and fair access to the landing sites that should be adequately equipped to facilitate small-scale fisheries activities (***fully serviced docking areas, moorings, refrigerated warehouse, drinking water service, ice machines, etc***);

51 Promote the reduction of ***unwanted*** catches by, inter alia, ***spatial-temporal closures*** selectivity of gear, ***promoting mitigation and suitable management measures exhaust traps***, training fishers and strengthening ***marine wildlife*** rescue and first aid centres;

52 Encourage small-scale fisheries to be fully equipped with efficient communication, navigation and catch preservation on board equipment, according to the flag state requirements. ***Develop small scale fishers training programs for optimal use of such technologies***;

53 Require that small-scale fisheries vessels be easily traced through the use of most appropriate and cost-effective technologies based on radio frequencies, satellites or internet applications;

54 ***Require the*** traceability of gears used by small-scale fishers, such as marking of fishing gears;

55 Promote, where appropriate, participative surveillance of the fishers, in particular in the identification of the IUU fishing practices;

56 ***Strengthen control and surveillance of all fishing activities, including commercial and recreational fisheries, both at sea and land, making efforts to avoid IUU fishing practices***;

57 Promote, ***where appropriate and in line with scientific advice***, the construction of artificial reefs according to the GFCM Practical Guidelines for Artificial Reefs in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and in respect of environment. Using unsuitable materials and dumping of waste shall be strictly avoided;

58 Prepare best practice guidelines to extend and share good experiences at the regional level;

D) Value chain of small-scale fisheries

- 59 Promote the creation **or reinforcement of the existing ones** of cooperatives, producers' organisations or other collective organisations in order to improve market access **to small scale fisheries products** and to increase the availability of local food and market opportunities to coastal communities;
- 60 Establish regional plans for the fisheries producer organisations in order to increase their profitability and improve the quality **and traceability** of their products;
- 61 Enhance the promotion of direct sales of fresh fish, **and commercial communication about local SSF good practices** in accordance with the national legislation;
- 62 Organise information/ awareness campaigns towards consumers on the importance of responsible consumption of local products, on the short-chains guaranteeing freshness and on the consumption of less-known **and underutilized** species, aiming at increased diversity of catches;
- 63 Promote the creation of **seafood** product labels and certified brands to encourage operators and consumers to buy local **and sustainable fished seafood**. Encouraging the creation of **affordable** certified brands should promote responsible local and small-scale fishing and make the consumer aware of sustainable fisheries;
- 64 **Encourage the first processing of landings by the fishers themselves, their cooperatives or their producers' organisations to expand the shelf-life of food.**
- 65 Ensure traceability of small-scale fisheries products which guarantees that the local products introduced in the market are of good quality and environmentally sustainable.

E) Engage with small-scale fisheries to establish participative decision-making processes

- 64 **Integrate** small-scale fisheries **sector, included women organisations**, in the creation and implementation of maritime and local development strategies;
- 65 **Ensure that there is dedicated and specific small-scale fisher representatives in the local, national and regional decision-making process, with a direct stake in small-scale fisheries;**
- 66 **Ensure a participative approach in the designation and** management of Marine Protected Areas of small-scale fishers, **through** co-management, **which will enable** the commitment and compliance with rules **of all stakeholders**, conflict resolution and sustainable management through an integrated **ecosystem-based** management plan **in line with scientific recommendations;**
- 67 Ensure that maritime spatial planning at the national and regional level takes account small-scale fisheries and that it is **specifically** represented through the entire process;
- 68 Promote participative management systems, **for responsible, low impact fisheries** such as co-management bodies, where fisheries management measures and accompanying socio-economic programmes **defined** and implemented;
- 69 Where necessary, at the national level reinforce the analysis of legislation and institutional mechanisms which ensure the **recognition of dedicated small-scale fishers organizations and their** inclusion in all activities regarding the sustainable development of the sector;

- 70 Establish roadmaps / plans ***with the participation of the small-scale fishing sector*** that would enable positive synergies between the small-scale fisheries and other closely related marine economies, in particular coastal and ecological tourism, marine bio-technology, Marine Protected Areas and ***sustainable*** aquaculture;
- 71 These plans should result in concrete benefits for ***responsible*** small-scale fisheries, such as: shared infrastructure, ***direct selling opportunities and*** suppliers or workers, multi-purpose activities, , collection of marine organisms for marine technology, better monitoring and understanding of marine ecosystems for sustainable fishing;
- 72 Organise supporting structures with the aim to address competing situations that may occur between small-scale fisheries and other interacting sectors;
- 73 Encourage good cooperation ***and understanding*** between small-scale fisheries and recreational fishery activities, ***notably in mutual efforts to improve public awareness to marine environment (information boards in harbours and on beaches describing shared uses and best practices; co-writing of informative leaflets);***

F) Capacity building

- 74 Establish a regional platform to engage and promote ***cooperation*** among small-scale fisheries associations (***including women associations***) in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This platform is expected to build on and reinforce existing sub-regional and national platforms in order to provide a participatory mechanism for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and the dissemination of best practices;
- 75 Reinforce capacity building of small-scale fisheries and give specific priority to the financial assistance. This would enable their participation in the decision-making processes and would ensure a level-playing field, in particular through the following actions:
 - a) Creating and reinforcing technical and financial support (*direct / indirect incentives, bank loan schemes, etc.*);
 - b) Assisting small-scale fishers ***and women organizations to simplify the*** accessing to the institutional funds including funds ***to ensure transition towards long term selective and sustainable fisheries;***
 - c) Supporting sustainable development and reinforcement of the existing small-scale fisheries organisations and their networks;
 - d) Ensuring access to consultancy bodies;
 - e) Facilitating education and training opportunities ***for men and women of the fisheries sector,*** such as ***low-season*** universities, aiming at developing fisheries-specific skills, policy knowledge (*fisheries, environmental*) and, in particular, knowledge of innovative solutions and technology developments;
- 76 In the context of the local community's development, implement regional diversification schemes that help small-scale fishers (***including women of the fisheries sector***) diversify their activities (for example, ***entrepreneurship and*** leadership training, nautical and ecological tourism, recycling waste found at sea, ***marine scientific sampling missions***);

- 77 The above measures shall be applicable to the small-scale fishers and their families. Particular attention shall be given to women and young fishers. ***Generational transmission of the small fishing activity may economically depend on occupation evolution towards multi-activity (fishing and ecological tourism for example);***
- 78 Develop a regional programme aiming to provide support and technical assistance, in particular to the developing countries, in order to build capacity of small-scale fisheries;
- 79 ***Ensure that*** local and national administrations to disseminate and communicate information on the fisheries policy developments, including on innovation and technology.
- 80 ***Improve and increase the professional training of fishermen aiming to facilitate the generational turnover;***

G) Promote decent work

- 79 Promote decent work and improve working conditions and social protection for all small-scale fisheries workers ***in line with the ILO Fishing Convention No.188 (2007);***
- 80 With the assistance of the GFCM, by 2019 organise a Conference that shall address the issue of social development, employment and decent work related to the small-scale fisheries.

H) Role of women

- 81 Support projects dedicated to enable women to endeavour small-scale fishery activities. ***encourage social protection and an improvement in working conditions for women;***
- 82 ***Progressively*** secure equal participation of women in decision-making processes in the policies directed towards small-scale fisheries;
- 83 Encourage ***and financially support*** the development of better ***and appropriate*** technologies dedicated to women's work in small-scale fisheries;

I) Climate and environment

- 84 Involve small-scale fisheries in ***providing knowledge and in*** the development of policies and plans addressing climate change in fisheries, in particular adaptation and mitigation plans, including within the context of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) set forth through the Paris Agreement;
- 85 Assist and support small-scale fisheries communities affected by climate change or natural and human-induced disasters;
- 86 Promote innovative solutions for ***minimizing the impacts of invasive species, such as valorisation and utilization of invasive species, (setting proper measures to ensure that the introduction of these species is not incited) and adaptation of small-scale fishery sector.***

Specially support areas which are extensively and continually impacted by invasive species which have a direct effect on the livelihood of Small-scale Fishers;

- 87 Encourage small-scale fishers to actively participate in the circular economy, by, for instance, establishing a plan for the disposal and recycling of recovered nets in order to reduce the impact of ghost fishing gears. This plan may include ***economic advantages*** for collecting marine litter. ***Collection of marine litter can be seen as in-kind activity to be included as co-financing in request of national or regional funds to improve long term fishery sustainability.***

Role of the GFCM

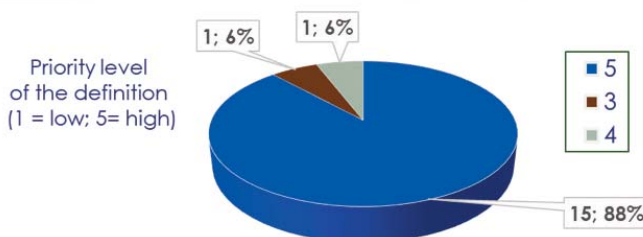
- 88 The GFCM shall provide technical assistance to developing States to create participative and cooperative management plans for small-scale fisheries;
- 89 The GFCM shall present at its 43rd Annual Session a timetable with the short-term and mid-term targets for the implementation of the actions listed in this plan;
- 90 The GFCM shall steer and coordinate actions to ensure the implementation of the Plan, and to provide an annual report on the implementation of the actions set forth in this Plan, reflecting the reports provided by riparian countries;
- 91 The GFCM shall organize a mid-term conference in 2024 to evaluate the progress of this Regional Plan of Action on small-scale fisheries.

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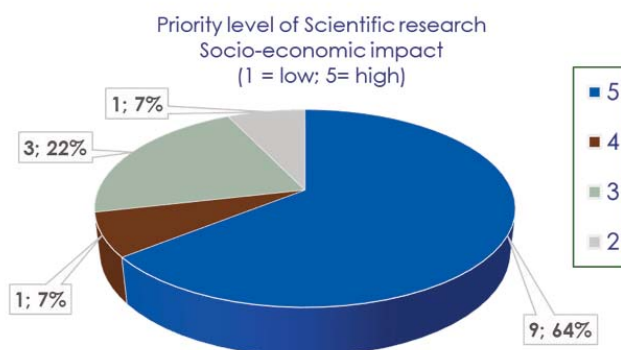
MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON SOME ELEMENTS OF THE RPOA ON SSF

4th March 2019

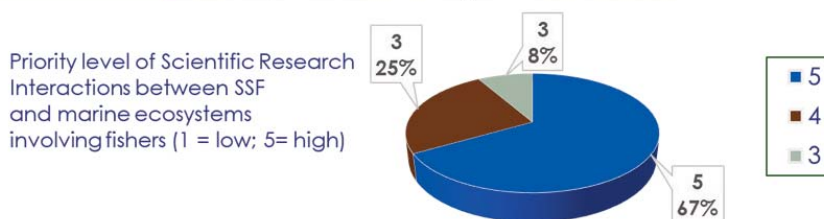
Proposed by EC:	Definition of SSF	Local Specificities and notes
"1. Adopt, as soon as possible, a characterization of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, reflecting their socioeconomic relevance and specificities on the basis of a set of indicative criteria (vessel size, gear used, duration of fishing trip, non-vessel based fishing activities, etc.)"	ICCAT Definition (Rec. 18-02) "Catching vessel with at least three of the five following characteristics: a) length overall <12 m; b) the vessel is fishing exclusively inside the territorial waters of the flag CPC c) her fishing have a duration of less than 24 hours, or d) the maximum crew number is established at four persons, e) the vessel is fishing using techniques which are selective and have a reduced environmental impact.	SP – EMPA + FACOPE + FBCP: All vessels of SSF in Spain, less or more than 12 m, accomplish at least 3 of 5 criteria, regardless of the length and the gear (TW, 24h, 4 pax). ICCAT definition should be extended to minor arts. ETF: implementation and STECF data are needed at regional level Medreact + LIFE + OCEANA: not go away from EU and/or GFCM definition WWF follows the mechanism of characterization that will be defined by the Friends of SSF platform, . WWF then would not go away from GFCM definition/characterization matrix SP - CEPESCA: lenght shouldn't be considered in the definition GR - PEPMA Quantities of catches should be taken into account Voted also by : FR - AMOP + CRPMEM Paca + IT – Coldiretti+ IT- Federpesca - ETF - OpduSUD + CY - PAF



Proposed by EC:	A. Scientific research	Votes and Comments
2. Initiate an integrated regional research activity in order to collect accurate, valid and complete data on the value and socio-economic impact of small-scale fisheries; (vote 4 by medreact)		SP - EMPA + FBCEP - Balearic Islands already implemented. Need of more scientific information on socio-economic impacts. + FACOPE In the same way that it is necessary to have all the scientific knowledge, it is necessary to have all the knowledge about socioeconomics data.
		IT - ETF Collection of socio-economic data by the MS (ie. Employees, social security etc.)
		FR - OPduSUD (because it is complicate to do)
		Voted also by: FR - AMOP + CRPEMEMPACA + IT - Federpesca + CY - PAPF + Medreact + IT - COLDIRETTI + EAA + SP - CEPESCA + LIFE + WWF

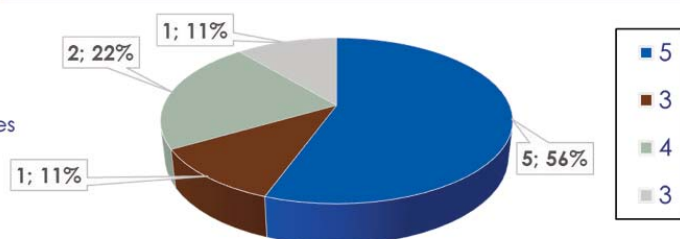


Proposed by EC:	A. Scientific research	Specific projects and best practices already in place
3. Develop scientific studies to strengthen knowledge about the interactions between small-scale fisheries and marine ecosystems and their impact on marine resources. When relevant, involve fishers in scientific monitoring activities, taking into account their traditional knowledge and ensuring that they are informed of the results of these studies;		FR - AMOP SELPAL and REPAST projects on Selectivity of longlines-bluefin tuna, cooperation with scientific research and awareness of fishermen
		FR - AMOP Strengthening of monitoring and research programs including fisheries associations in scientific programs: need of reinforcement and financing.
		FR - CRPEMEMPACA UEGC and PELAMED project: improvement of methods to increase the knowledge of species targeted by SSF. While there is the need of other spatial methods that include the polyvalence of vessels.
		OCEANA - ECOSAFIMED project: EU project that aims to establish management guidelines to improve ecosystem conservation and ensuring the maintenance of acceptable practice of SSF. Project developed in Spain, Italy and Turkey.
		FR- OPduSUD (PEEXNAC project 2018 - species knowledge - need of more information on climate change target species and environmental knowledge) + SP - FACOPE
		CRPEMEMPACA: need of scientific research on data poor methods
		CY - PAPF: Studies into the feasibility of finenced temporal closures on fishing grounds. In addition to MPA management would be an effective management strategy involving fishers. Action at European level is required to push these kind of management strategies further.
		Voted also by: IT -Coldiretti+ IT-Federpesca + EAA + LIFE + WWF



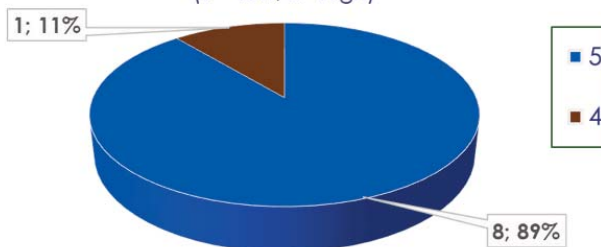
Proposed by EC:	A. Scientific research	Notes
4. Develop scientific studies to strengthen knowledge about the interactions between recreational fisheries and small-scale fisheries;		EAA : Initiate local pilot projects to assess the interactions between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries (RF) outside MPAs +. ES – FACOPE Not only the interaction, but also the impact of this activity on resources, Voted also by: IT -COLDIRETTI + IT-Federpesca Medreact + GR - PEPMA + LIFE + FR - OPduSUD (still many conflicts)
5. Design and implement pilot and innovative projects covering all aspects of small-scale fisheries		CY – PAPP: Novel methods and gears which could be fishery specific that Limit further the interaction with other fisheries so as to diversify the catch target, seasonality, etc WWF: Minouw project developed selective gears for SSF set and trammel nets. Pilot project to scale up the results should be implemented Voted also by: IT – COLDIRETTI+ IT-Federpesca
6. Consider the assessment of small-scale fisheries within forecast studies on adaptation to climate change, including its carbon-binding potential;		Voted by: IT -COLDIRETTI and GR - PEPMA

Develop scientific studies to strengthen knowledge about the interactions between recreational fisheries and small-scale fisheries
Priority level of the topic (1 = low; 5= high)



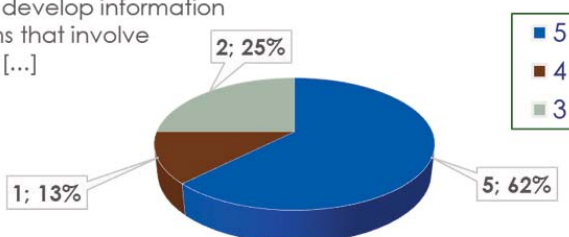
B. SSF data collection	Notes, observations, suggestions on Data collection
SP - EMPA + FBCP + FR - OPduSUD	Already implemented, data already available on sale documents and data collection of SSF is already improved by the new Control Regulation. Administrations should improve fishing records.
EAA - SSF catches data collection	should be put in place with no exemption + CEPESCA: data collection in the markets is still lacking (all catches should be reported) + FR - CRPMEM PACA
ETF	Request of a meeting with the technical responsible organizations
FR - AMOP + Medreact + WWF	Strengthening of data collection
IT - Federpesca:	sharing data from the various European countries and make them more accessible

Priority level of data collection in SSF
(1 = low; 5= high)



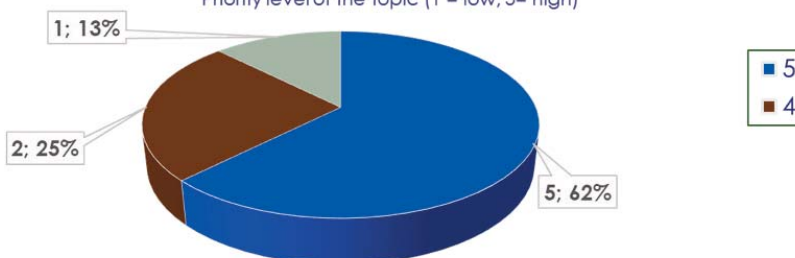
Proposed by EC:	B. SSF data collection	Notes, observations, suggestions on Data collection
7. Using all appropriate tools, develop information and data collection systems that involve small-scale fisheries actors in the collection of regional-level data on fleets and fishing activities, including the record of all catches;		<p>FR - CRPMEMPACA (need of multi-species and spatial methods) + LIFE and OCEANA (EU works on digital tools - Mlogbook mobile app in Croatia and "Cajas Vedes" in Andalusia)</p> <p>FR - AMOP Improvement of technologic tools not expensive for data collection + CRPMEMPACA IT - Coldiretti + CY - PAF (More onboard observation is welcome. The real situation can only be observed here. Logbooks and port surveys are not accurate)</p> <p>CY - PAF: Tracking via VMS of SSF will solve part of the issue of illegal fishing especially regarding areas of protection</p> <p>ES - FACOPE : Any implementation of a data collection system of this artisanal fleet, must take in account its characteristics: type of boat, number of crew, etc.,</p> <p>SP - FBCP Administrations should provide new technologies aimed to improve the management and reduce bureaucracy to the crew</p> <p>FR - AMOP Strengthening of working capacity in the scientific organisations to increase the number of monitored species</p>

Using all appropriate tools, develop information and data collection systems that involve SSF actors in the collection [...]
Priority level of the topic
(1 = low; 5= high)

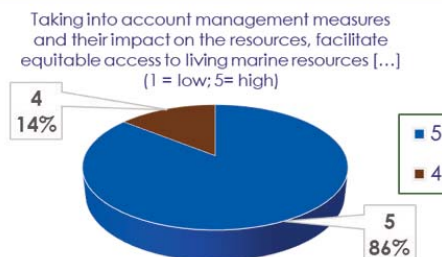
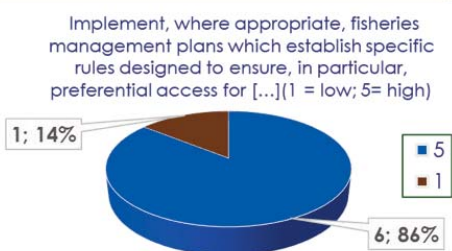


Proposed by EC:	C. SSF management measures	Notes, observations, suggestions on Management measures
12. Support investments in small-scale fisheries to, among others, improve selectivity, preserve biodiversity, minimize bycatch and interactions with vulnerable species and predators and promote energy efficiency		<p>FR - AMOP Improvement of "ecological-awareness" activities to encourage compliance</p> <p>FR - AMOP + OPduSUD Improve the selectivity through supporting investments in SSF + CRPMEMPACA Need of technical measures (selectivity etc) instead management measures based on outputs (quotas etc.)</p> <p>Voted also by: LIFE + OCEANA + WWF + IT - Coldiretti + CRPMEMPACA + IT-Federpesca</p>

Support investments in small-scale fisheries to, among others, improve selectivity, preserve biodiversity, minimize bycatch and interactions with vulnerable species and predators and promote energy efficiency
Priority level of the topic (1 = low; 5= high)



Proposed by EC:	C. SSF management measures	Votes by and Notes, observations, suggestions on Management measures
10. Implement, where appropriate, fisheries management plans which establish specific rules designed to ensure, in particular, preferential access for sustainable and low-impact small-scale fisheries along the coastal band		<p>Voted also by : IT - Coldiretti + CY - PFAF (Management plans should be enforced in areas of protection in all cases with the competent policing) + LIFE + OCEANA + WWF</p> <p>FR - OPduSUD: management measures of SSF have been already enforced. More data are needed before the implementation of management plans.</p> <p>ES – FACOPE: The preparation and execution of management plans are always good. The only problem we encounter is when we talk about exclusivity; it may be easier to live together than to create exclusive zones.</p>
Proposed by EC:	C. SSF management measures	Votes by and Notes, observations, suggestions on Management measures
11. Taking into account management measures and their impact on the resources, facilitate equitable access to living marine resources that should be based on sustainable fisheries and their socio-economic role		<p>IT - Coldiretti, IT-Federpesca ETF (including SSF in decisional processes of management plans) + LIFE + OCEANA + WWF + CY - PAF (Temporal closures should be imposed and financed)</p>



84 MEDAC CONTRIBUTION AND GRAPHS ABOUT THE RPOA ON SSF

24th April 2019

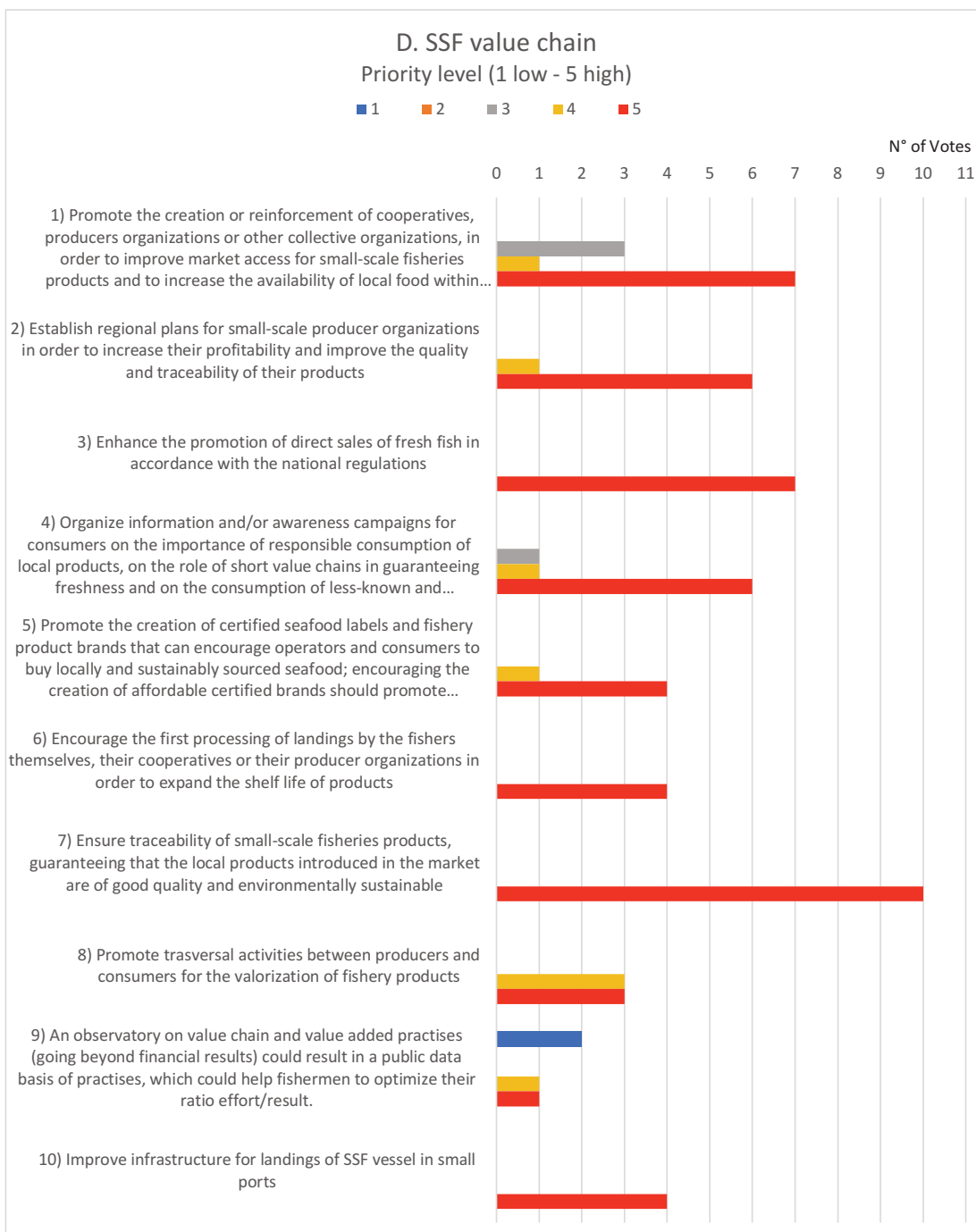
The Working Groups WG1 and WG5 met in Malaga on 9 and 10 April 2019. The following points were highlighted:

- During the meetings held in Venice in February 2019 a debate was started among the MEDAC members on the RPOA for SSF, as requested by the European Commission in light of the GFCM WG meeting in Montenegro and the GFCM High Level Conference MedFish4Ever Initiatives (11-12 June Marrakech);
- following the instructions of the coordinators of WG1 and WG5, the Secretariat asked the members to participate in a consultation which took place on the basis of a specific format established by the Secretariat;
- over the weeks that followed, various contributions were collected, which were subsequently examined by the Secretariat;

The Working Groups hereby enclose the results of the consultation of the RPOA for SSF and, following the contributions during the working sessions in Malaga on 9-10 of April, they would like to take the opportunity to draw attention on the following items in no particular order:

- Value chain: Encourage the first processing of landings by the fishers themselves, their cooperatives or their Producer Organizations in order to expand the shelf life of products;
- Capacity building: Encourage professional training opportunities for fishers on land and at sea, aiming to facilitate the generational turnover. Protect and preserve the traditional and cultural aspects of SSF;
- Decent work: Promote decent work, the improvement of working conditions as well as social protection for all small-scale fisheries workers;

- Role of women: Women should have equal opportunities and rights in the sector and should be recognized their role throughout the entire chain;
- Climate and environment: Assist and support small-scale fisheries communities affected by climate change or natural and human-induced disasters. In particular take into account and manage consequences of marine litter with the direct involvement of fishermen.



E. Participation of SSF in decisionmaking processes

Priority level (1 low - 5 high)

1 2 3 4 5

N° of Votes



F. Capacity building

Priority level (1 low - 5 high)

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5

N° of Votes

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

1) Establish a regional platform to engage and promote cooperation among small-scale fisheries associations (including women's associations) in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This platform is expected to build on and reinforce existing subregional...



2) Reinforce capacity building of small-scale fisheries and give specific priority to financial assistance, in order to facilitate their participation in decision-making processes and ensure a level-playing field, in particular through the listed actions



3) In the context of local community development, implement regional diversification schemes that help small-scale fishers (including women of the fisheries sector) to diversify their activities



4) The above measures shall be applicable to small-scale fishers and their families, and particular attention shall be given to women and young fishers



5) Encourage local and national administrations to disseminate and communicate information on fisheries policy developments, including on innovation and technology



6) Encourage professional training opportunities for fishers, aiming to facilitate the generational turnover



7) Conservation of traditional knowledge and experience. Improve the opportunities to practice what is studied in the training courses



G. Decent work

Priority level (1 low - 5 high)

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5

N° of Votes

0 2 4 6 8 10 12

1) Promote decent work, the improvement of working conditions as well as social protection for all small-scale fisheries workers



2) With the assistance of the GFCM, organize by 2019 a conference to address the issue of social development, employment and decent work in relation to small-scale fisheries



3) Ratification and enforcement of the "C188 ILO Convention"



4) Some administrative measures, such as differentiated tax treatment, new recruitment systems, would also favour interest in activity, access for new generations and improvement of working conditions



H. Role of women

Priority level (1 low - 5 high)

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5

N° of Votes

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

1) Support projects dedicated to enabling women to undertake small-scale fishery activities



2) Secure equal participation of women in decision-making processes for policies directed towards small-scale fisheries



3) Women have equal opportunities and rights in the sector. It is true that due to the durability of the profession, it has traditionally been more devoted to other tasks than being...



4) Role of women should be recognize eventually with the creation of some ad-hoc job sub-categories tailored on the kind of job they do



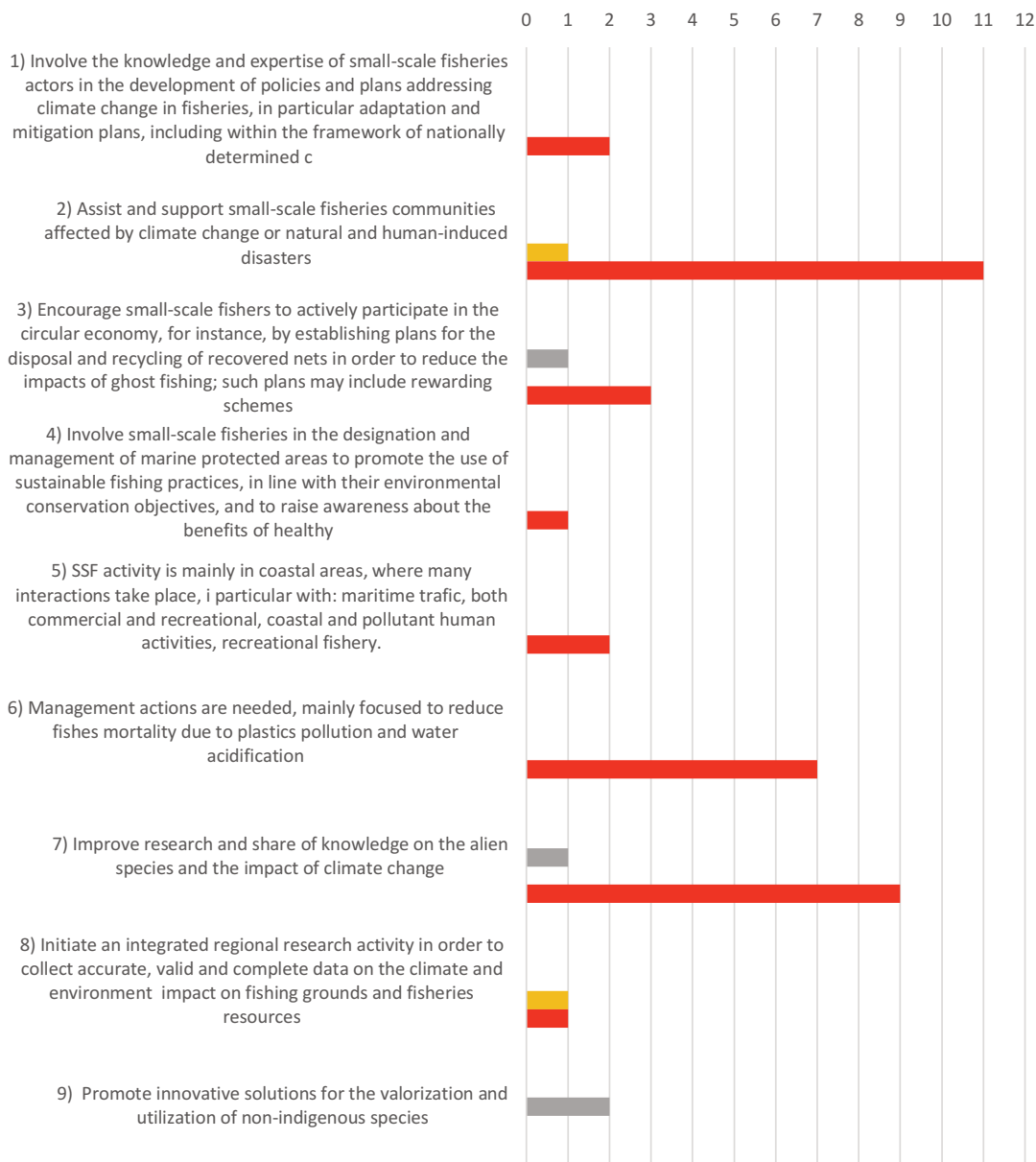
5) A mapping should take place of the real rope of women (for example in Cyprus) because it is misrepresented and ignored



I. Climate and environment

Priority level (1 low - 5 high)

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5



MEDAC REPLY TO DG MARE LETTER ABOUT THE “PLACE OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN ADVISORY COUNCILS” (REF. ARES (2019)6551530- 23/10/2019*Rome 29th November 2019*

Dear Ms Veits,

The Executive Committee members of MEDAC met in Rome on 12th of November and acknowledged the importance of the cooperation with DG MARE in improving the SSF participation in the advisory process. In fact, MEDAC shares the social, environmental and cultural role of the Small-Scale Fishery in the European coastal communities and, from the beginning of its functioning, has always paid attention to the characteristics and specificities of SSF in the Mediterranean basin.

Referring to the implementation of the rules included in the Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/242 and reported in the DG MARE letter sent to the ACs on this topic (Ref. Ares (2019)6551530 - 23/10/2019), MEDAC agreed on the considerations listed below.

The **MEDAC applies the “open door”** policy, as reported in the Statute Art. 3.1. *“European and national organizations representing the fisheries sector and any other stakeholder groups involved with the Common Fisheries Policy in the zone of interest may request to become members of the MEDAC”*.

Moreover, in the Statute this concept is reiterated in the Art. 4.3 *“The 60-40 proportions shall be fully maintained for the Executive Committee, while for the General Assembly they are to be considered the goal to be achieved, while not excluding any organization that wishes to apply for MEDAC membership”*.

Furthermore, the Art. 5.7 of the MEDAC Statute states that *“The Executive Committee is made up of 25 members, maintaining the proportions of 60% and 40%”* and *“After consultation with the EC, the General Assembly (GA) may decide, at the Chairman’s proposal, to appoint an Executive Committee of up to 30 members to ensure adequate representation of small-scale fisheries”*. **The General Assembly didn’t decide to appoint an ExCom up to 30 members because the associations participating in the Executive Committee already assure a clear prevalence of the SSF representation.**

The balanced and wide representation of all stakeholders is ensured by the deliberations of the organization bodies, according to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU)2015/242. Moreover, as reported by the MEDAC members contributing at the GFCM High Level Conference on SSF (Malta, September 2018), the EU Mediterranean SSF organizations are all represented by the MEDAC members in Spain (Cofradías de Pescadores), Croatia (Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts), France (CNPMEM and CRPMEMs PACA, Occitanie and Corse), Malta (Ghaqda Koperattiva tas-Sajd), Cyprus (Pancyprriot Association of Professional Fisherman) and Italy (Italian cooperatives). The Slovenian organization is the only one from Slovenia in the MEDAC and it has been confirmed by its Member States. Referring to Greece, up to now, no organizations are widely representing SSF in the country. Therefore, in the General Assembly and in the Executive Committee the SSF is widely represented. In order to provide a detailed assessment of SSF representation in the MEDAC, during the last meeting of the ExCom that was held in Rome on November 12, it was decided to collect from each member of the 60% data regarding SSF representativeness, by the end of the year. This exercise will allow to provide the Commission with an overall estimation of the real composition of the fleets represented in the MEDAC. Moreover, in the GA the SSF representation is further enhanced by the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) membership.

However, MEDAC acknowledges that – despite recent political will and own initiatives from the MEDAC itself to promote SSF in the Mediterranean Sea – the majority of the draft regulation the MEDAC participated to (West Med MAP, Control regulation, Adriatic MAP, ...) mainly target other fleet segments. In line with the RPOA of the GFCM, DG MARE should first begin the process of analyzing the structure of SSF fisheries and their needs in each of the Member States, supported by the WG5 on SSF, to encourage fisheries management plans to be developed for coastal areas, focused around SSF, following a bottom-up procedures (with objectives defined at EU level by the current Common Fisheries Policy).

Considering that the MEDAC is the only Advisory Council managing 7 languages (8, including English) with the same budget of the other EU ACs, the efficient and full participation of all members is assured by the following interpreting and translating activities:

- the website is translated into English, French, Italian and Spanish;
- the documentation (GA-ExCom-WG-FG Reports) is translated into English, French, Italian, Spanish and Greek;
- the interpreting activities at the MEDAC meetings are provided in English, French, Italian, Spanish and Greek (also in Croatian, when funds are available, and the participants don't speak English/Italian).

The selection of interpreted and translated languages is based on the knowledge of the actual MEDAC members. The list of translated/interpreted languages can be improved according to the new memberships, participant needs and knowledge.

Lastly, difficulties have been encountered concerning the additional compensation because further information are required:

- the Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/242 states “*Each Advisory Council shall offer additional compensation to fishermen representing small-scale fleet organizations for their efficient participation to its work on top of the reimbursement of their travel and accommodation expenses. Such compensation shall be duly justified for each case.*” No additional information has been provided on the quantification method to be applied for an eventual additional compensation, and so it should be detailed which kind of supporting documentation shall be needed to duly justify the relevant amount (self-certification? Tax declaration? Financial balance sheet of the fishing company of the last year, or of the last 3 years?)
- Each agreed payment should correspond to the economic loss of the working days. The Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/242 does not foresee that this amount can be agreed on a flat-rate basis or justified by some kind of documentation.

Moreover, one more difficulty in the application of the additional compensation is due to the fact that this item is not included in the budget form provided for the EC (and so it is not clear whether and where to allocate such amount).

The MEDAC ExCom is available for any further information and cooperation aiming at improving the participation of SSF in Advisory Councils.

Best regards.

FG - Focus Group
on the Adriatic Sea
(Small pelagics and demersal stocks)



FG - Focus Group on the Adriatic Sea (Small pelagics and demersal stocks)

MEDAC LETTER ON THE DEFINITION OF “FISHING DAY”

Rome, 9th May 2014

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To Stefano Cataudella (President of the GFCM); Lowri Evans (General Director, EC - DG MARE); Riccardo Rigillo (Direttore Generale della pesca marittima e dell'acquacoltura; MIPAAF, Italy); Jošt JAKŠA (Acting Director General for Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment); Ljubomir KUČIĆ (Assistant Minister for Fisheries Director General Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Fisheries)

Having learned of the DRAFT Recommendation GFCM/38/2014 on precautionary measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM-GSA 17 and the amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1, MEDAC Executive Committee¹, following the results of MEDAC Working group on discards which met in Portoroz (Slovenia) on May, 8, 2014 calls for the review of the definition of “fishing day”.

Considering that there will be economic and social consequences arising from the reduction in the number of fishing days and considering that there is a big difference between “fishing days” and “fishing activity”, as defined in Regulation 1224/2009, art. 4, par.1, the definition of fishing day should be revised as follows:

“Fishing days means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within the GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 and takes catches on board. “

Should this not be taken into account, paragraph 27, Part VII, (GFCM/37/2013/1) should then be modified as follows:

“Trawlers and purse seiners for small pelagic stocks as identified in paragraph 22 second paragraph above, irrespective of the vessel's length overall, shall not operate for more than 20 fishing days per month and shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year with the registered catch.”

We also take this opportunity to point out that stakeholders have not been involved in the discussion for the adoption of precautionary measures for 2015 for anchovies in GSA 17, thus contravening the spirit of paragraphs 4 and 5 of GFCM guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans in GFCM area. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this matter further in the future.

Best regards.

¹ With the abstention OF WWF, OCEANA and IFSUA

87 INFORMATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE STATE OF SMALL PELAGIC FISHERIES IN GSA 17 (Abstract)

**Coordinated by Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni (WG1 coordinator)- Contributions: Krstina Mislov (HR), Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni (IT), Snezana Levstik, Polona Bunic (SI)*

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Introduction

At the MEDAC meeting held in Split in October 2014 the decision was taken to create a specific Focus Group within Working Group 1 (EC fisheries policies) which, in view of the reformed CFP and employing a bottom-up approach, could contribute to the preparation of the Commission's proposal of regulation for a Long Term Management Plan for GSA 17 (North Adriatic), as requested at the meeting "Towards Long Terms Management Plan" held in Brussels on 9th September 2014.

The Focus Group is made up of representatives from Croatia, Italy and Slovenia. The FG has met several times:

- Split (Croatia) 8th October 2014
- Rome (Italy) 20th November 2014
- Rome (Italy) 11th March 2015
- Marseille (France) 23rd April 2015
- Madrid (Spain) 11th June 2015

Representatives of the European Commission DG Mare, the European Fisheries Control Agency of Vigo, the scientific research community, as well as industry representatives took part constructively in the various meetings. Several different aspects relating to the main issues surrounding small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic were covered.

At the meeting held in Rome in March 2015, it was decided to proceed in two phases:

- 1st phase: the preparation of an informative document on the state of small pelagic fisheries in GSA 17, to support the Commission in view of the preparation of the basic regulation for a LTMP in the area.
- 2nd phase: an in-depth analysis of possible technical measures to be applied, according to the procedures described in Article 18 of the regulation (EU) 1380/13 (regionalization), once the basic regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council has been definitively approved.

The objective of this document, the 1st phase of the work, is to provide the European Commission with information which is as up-to-date as possible on fisheries activities related to small pelagic species in GSA 17 – northern Adriatic Sea, so as to have a solid foundation on which to prepare its proposal for multiannual management plan.

The procedure which will lead to approval of the future European Parliament and Council regulation establishing a multiannual plan for small pelagics in GSA 17, established by DG MARE, involves various phases of consultation, including that with the Advisory Council of the area concerned. Moreover, prior to the preparation of the multi-annual plan, an extensive impact assessment must be carried out, to do this it is essential to possess a thorough understanding of the current situation and the possible impact in the three key thematic areas of the CFP: environmental, social and economic.

This document, therefore, illustrates the current situation of fisheries in GSA 17 with reference to small pelagics and by single Member State. The main items are: presence or absence of a management plan in the area for the fisheries involved; technical measures present at country level; marine protected areas; other protected areas; other constraints identified.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE INFORMATIVE DOCUMENT CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE:
http://en.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2015/07/110_state_small_pelagic_wg1_fg_gsa_17.pdf

MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DG MARE CONSULTATION ABOUT A REGULATION ESTABLISHING A MULTIANNUAL PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF NORTHERN ADRIATIC SEA SMALL PELAGIC FISHERIES*

Rome, 11th September 2015

Question 1. Is the existing legal framework sufficient to meet the objectives of the CFP in the northern Adriatic Sea?

The general legislative framework resulting from the Basic Regulation of the CFP (Reg.1380/ 2013) has the development of regional cooperation between Member States that have a direct interest in fisheries management (so-called Regionalisation) among its fundamental principles. However in order to implement this principle, except for the matters already set out in the basic regulation, for example those concerning the introduction of certain conservation measures, it is necessary for the co-legislators to adopt an ad hoc Regulation, giving the Commission the power to adopt “delegated or implementing” acts on the basis of joint recommendations from the Member States themselves which in turn shall be achieved after consulting the relative Advisory Council. It is therefore thought that the current legislative framework needs a regulation, to be adopted with the ordinary legislative procedure, in order to respond directly to the objectives of the CFP. This would establish the framework for a LTMP, the specifications for which should be decided at regional level.

In this context, which is already highly structured and complex, intervention in terms of EU regulations can only be limited to orientation and the determination of objectives, leaving the identification of management measures to the Member States, which must consider the actual conditions in which small pelagic fishing activities are carried out in the mid-northern Adriatic, through responsible self-determination of the productive sectors within the MEDAC.

However, during the year 2015 substantial restrictions in fishing effort have been implemented and it could be necessary to determine the effects before we begin to add new measures to regulate fishing.

Question 2. Is it necessary to complete it with an additional framework for fisheries management?

As stated in the answer to question 1, a regulation is considered necessary to define the long-term management framework: this Regulation, like the one that has been developed for the corresponding initiative concerning the plan for the Baltic Sea, should only contain the general aspects, leaving decisions on technical measures, that are specific to the area, to the delegated regulation to be implemented according to the principle of regionalisation under art. 18 of Reg. 1380/2013.

We suggest that the plan, defined in the delegated regulation, is implemented in two phases:

- 1[^] Phase: adjustment and stabilization of fishing effort, with the implementation of measures regulating fishing effort, the measures of temporary or permanent cessation of fishing and spatial/time fishing limitation. At this stage the planned monitoring for validation of the measures taken and to improve the quality of the scientific support would be implemented. Framework to reduce uncertainty would be placed in position. Duration: year 2016.-2018.
- 2[^] Phase: after a revision in accordance with Art. 10 of the Regulation 1380/2013, implementation of the possible amendments to established multi-year management plan.

Question 3. Would it be sufficient to amend the above-mentioned existing plans (national and GFCM) in order to introduce the objectives of the new CFP into the northern Adriatic Sea?

To create a standardised framework, it is deemed appropriate to proceed as described in the answers to questions 1 and 2. So it is not considered appropriate nor sufficient merely to modify the existing management plans, both national and GFCM.

In fact, we consider necessary to derogate, by regionalization, for example, the provisions of Art. 13 EC Regulation 1967/2006 about the length and the height of "*plivarica*" purse seine and about about maximal depth of deployment. Our proposal is a maximum length of 600 m, and the maximum height 1/3 lengths, and for maximal depth deployment we consider sufficient prohibition within 300m of coast or within the 50 m isobaths where depth is reached at shorter distance from the coast

Explanation: It is well known that the practice of fishing with *plivarica* which targets small pelagic fish, due to the configuration of the Adriatic Sea, has resulted in the application of tools with dimensions different from values as described in article 13 and Annex II of Regulation 1967/2006. Such a tool has a greater ability in use and searching for fish that matches the demands of the market, which significantly affects the catch with very small amounts of discard. Use of such a tool enables greater mobility of fleet and targets higher catch sizes. Moreover, such a tool is used in a way that its use has less negative impact on habitats and resources than tools in above mentioned Regulation. Regarding maximal depth of deployment, deploying the nets over the coraligenous habitat is not possible since the fishing activity will end with damaged or lost net. Overmore the limitation (prohibition of fishing within 300m of coast or within 50m isobat) assures that the nets will not be deployed over segrass areas.

Question 4: Do you think that the small pelagic fisheries in the northern Adriatic Sea would be better managed with a single, coherent management framework at EU level?

Yes, certainly. That has been clearly explained in the introduction part.

MEDAC welcomes the reform of the CFP, and in particular regional approach to the management of fisheries resources, as well as the expressed necessary appreciation for the socio-economic value of fisheries for the fishermen and for the wider community.

MEDAC believes that regional approach that takes into account the arguments of the fisheries sector is a correct path for long-term successful sustainability of the fishery.

Fishery is not only about the exploitation of resources, it is a way of life and the keeper of the cultural and traditional values of rural areas and coastal islands.

Therefore, our primary interest is sustainability of fisheries and cooperation with countries in the region in order to achieve the best fishing results with mutual respect, development of fishery economies and long-term friendly relations.

Management plan provide for measures that can influence in differently ways on the above mentioned values. The consequences of such plan's success or failure can be directly felt only by fishermen.

That's why MEDAC think we have the right to request a clear framework for the adoption of the management plan. We need to determine precisely the entity of the credits and responsibilities for the consequences of the measures adopted, in this way we can ensure that there will not be negative repercussions within the EC area.

To achieve this goal (a joint management plan designed for the Adriatic Sea and for fleets operating there) MEDAC has established a Focus Group within WG1 relative to the EC fisheries policies,

which in recent months has been working on this issue, pending the Commission's proposal and the future basic regulation for a LTMP for small pelagic fisheries in the Northern Adriatic. We have taken note of the scientist's assessment on the state of resources in GSA17. We have also taken note of their opinion that there is scientific indication showing the need to control or reduce the fishing mortality of small pelagic fish. However, we have noticed a significant disparity in some very important assessments produced by different scientific bodies (GFCM-SAC, STECF).

For this reason it is necessary to set up a management plan including the measures already implemented at the regional and national levels, and to promote scientific research aimed at increasing certainty of obtained estimates.

For the above mentioned reasons we have taken the position that the management plan should be made in the form of adaptive management in which the measures are implemented in order to achieve target directions, besides positioning of the reference points that are expected to be achieved with certainty by introduction of regulatory measures. This means that we propose the adaptive application of the measures regulating fishing effort.

Question 5. Do you consider an EU multi-annual plan for small pelagic fisheries in the northern Adriatic Sea which takes account of interactions between fishing activities to be an appropriate approach?

It is absolutely necessary and appropriate that a multi-year plan should take into account interactions between the different fisheries involved: this is therefore also true for the Northern Adriatic in relation to sardine and anchovy fisheries by pelagic trawl and purse seine. Nevertheless, traditional local fisheries must also be protected, such as "*menaidi*" (a kind of driftnet) in Trieste, which target the same species as pelagic trawl and purse seine fisheries, albeit with negligible catches. A joint multi-annual plan for the Northern Adriatic for all the states operating in the basin should also bear in mind the results of the new measures that have already been implemented, including for example, the landing obligation. Consequently the parameters for assessment should be tailored to the specific situation of the small pelagic stocks that, unlike other species, are subject to periodic fluctuations that are not caused by fishing activities.

It is also necessary to consider the importance of the impact of environmental factors on the oscillations of biomass.

Question 6. With regard to the above list, what elements should be included in a possible EU multi-annual management plan for fisheries in the northern Adriatic Sea in the light of the objectives and challenges of the new CFP?

Starting from a real, accurate assessment of the state of resources, the measures to contain fishing effort that may be necessary to achieve the objectives of the CFP, as well as a detailed analysis of the socio-economic situation of the fleets involved, the plan should achieve an overall design with a virtuous balance considering sustainability in environmental, economic and social terms for this specific fishery. In particular, to provide some sort of index, the following are proposed:

- 1 the definition of its scope in terms of the area, the species involved and the fishery (seine and pelagic trawl)
- 2 the exclusion of certain traditional activities from the obligations of the management plan (eg. local gillnet fisheries called "*menaidi*")

- 3 the purposes and the specific objectives of the Plan, in addition to the general ones of the CFP; the objectives regarding fishing mortality of the species involved will be specified, within a range of values; the reference values for conservation in terms of spawning stock biomass (SSB) with the possibility for progressive introduction in order to allow fishers to adjust without excessive difficulties;
- 4 timetable for achieving MSY, which could be different from that considered in the CFP
- 5 the implementation of the landing obligation
- 6 any exceptions
- 7 mandate to the Commission to adopt delegated acts on a regional basis pursuant to art. 18 of Reg. 1380/2013
- 8 control and enforcement measures.

Question 7. Do you think that the plan should include elements aimed at ensuring correct implementation of the landing obligation? If so, what elements should be introduced, according to Article 15 of the Basic Regulation of the CFP?

For the purposes of legal precision and uniformity in the regulations in force, it is appropriate that the Management Plan should repeat the measures concerning the landing obligation. However, in this case it would only be a mere repetition of the directives already in force in accordance with article. 15 of Reg. 1380/2013.

Question 8. What combination of means (including public support under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) should be preferred in order to achieve the environmental objectives of the CFP in the northern Adriatic Sea, while minimizing the short-term socio-economic effects on the fishing fleets and the coastal communities dependent on these fisheries?

It is clear that regionalisation helps in the definition of policies that are closer to the reality of the fisheries sector in the different areas, and as such it is a tool that can be more successful than others in reconciling the environmental protection requirements with the legitimate expectations of the operators from a socioeconomic point of view.

The EMFF, which includes measures that in some cases can alleviate the hardships and economic impact of technical measures necessary to achieve certain “environmental” objectives established in the Management Plan, is definitely the most important lever to speed up the process. However it would be desirable to see a reward system for access to the EMFF within the framework regulation of the management plan for small pelagics in the Adriatic. This applies, in particular, to the possibility of relaxing the rules on the inadmissibility of applications to the EMFF, notwithstanding the requirements of Article 10 of Reg. 508/2014 (and subsequent delegated regulations). This does not mean in any way that behaviour which does not conform to the provisions of the CFP would be in a sense “decriminalised”, the operator would, however, be encouraged to accept management measures (regardless of how they are established from a legal point of view, basic act or delegated act) that in the short term could have serious repercussions on income and employment.

Another tool that is essential to guarantee a true understanding of the measures to be implemented, is effective promotion and distribution of information: this way coastal communities can get a better picture of the motivations and aims of the Management Plan.

We suggest a combination of management tools presented here through the proposed measures for the management plan. We do not accept the proposal of the STECF on the introduction of

catch quotas for various reasons. Quotas will bring a significant increase of discard, especially of anchovies. Quotas will politically destabilise region and cause tension between fishermen in countries and between countries. Quotas will increase the likelihood of seeking ways to avoid compliance with regulations. Because of all above mentioned, quotas effect on the recovery of resources will be much smaller than effect of controlled use of fishing days. It will worsen the future cooperation in the region.

In accordance with Art. 9 point 4 of the Regulation 1380/2013 measures included in the multiannual plans plan should not be put into effect until impact of the proposed measures on socio-economic consequences it is determined and until the measures to address the expected socio-economic consequences are adopted. In accordance with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (Art. 2, point 1 1380/2013) those measures should be acceptable to all Member States.

Question 9. What combination of mechanisms is to be preferred in order to minimize the administrative burden for fishers and running costs for the administrations that are responsible for fisheries? Give reasons for your answers.

It is commonly accepted that measures are as effective as they are easy to apply and to monitor. For that reason, tools should be chosen on the basis of how easy they are for the operators to apply and for the authorities in charge to control: fisheries sector associations could therefore be involved at an advisory level to suggest how to streamline procedures. Modern technology makes it possible to achieve this result: an idea may be, for example, to substitute or to support temporary suspension of fishing activities with space-time closures, leaving the operators free to carry on with their activities but obliging them to comply with VMS and logbook requirements (with the exemption of small-scale vessels- to be defined regionally).

Ultimately the aim is to make the measures more accessible, reducing bureaucracy and improving simplification, both in presentation and in the approval of applications for EMFF support for operators and fisheries enterprises.

It is also necessary to provide a means for promoting public infrastructure, particularly landing sites and fishing ports, in order to most effectively be able to carry out controls.

Question 10. Which species can be identified as the species defining the fishery activities and which other (secondary) species should also be included in the plan?

The management plan should only concern sardine and anchovy resources, as they are the most important from a quantitative, commercial and economic point of view. Minor species, which are captured accidentally, are of negligible importance both for quantity and value and could be identified in the second phase of the management after the 2018.

Question 11. What management approach, tools and guarantees could be used for the management of secondary target species under the plan?

In the northern Adriatic there are no target species of secondary importance that require special management measures, nor do they need tools or guarantees. The fishers themselves have no interest in the capture of secondary species. The reply given to question 10 also applies to mackerel, horse mackerel and especially sprat. However, recording them would provide valuable information for scientific research.

Question 12. Within the final deadline of 2020, what time limit can we give to the achievement of MSY for small pelagic stocks in the northern Adriatic Sea? What is the most realistic date?

The situation concerning MSY data in the northern Adriatic is still unclear. The annual assessment still does not seem to define precise parameters. The deadline of 2020 would therefore seem rather too close and so it should not be brought forward, if anything, it should be postponed, albeit taking all possible precautions to prevent overfishing from continuing.

Question 13. What other possible management measures that have not yet been applied in the Mediterranean do you consider most appropriate in view of further limits on catches and/or fishing effort?

Space/time closures, possibly in rotation, of the areas in which the sensitive stages of anchovy and sardine are predominant could be a measure to be experimented in the future after specific assessment of their effectiveness has been carried out.

Another possibility would be the introduction of “statistical grids” the Adriatic that are larger than those identified by the GFCM (i.e. larger than 30' x 30"): in light of what was said in answer to question 9, this may allow for the introduction of a fishing effort management system with space-time closures and/or limitations, in exchange the fishers would have freedom of choice concerning the fishing days, so they would be free to choose whether to go to sea or not depending on the markets, which would be managed where possible by the Producers' Organizations which could also obtain a significant economic return from the EMFF for the achievement of the CFP objectives (see. Art. 66 EMFF).

A further option could be to extend the period in which anchovy and sardine fisheries are prohibited within the 6-mile limit in terms of time (for example for two months).

Question 14. What issues related to ecosystems may be considered under the plan, and what measures would be appropriate to minimise impact?

All activities have an impact on the ecosystems. This is also true for the fisheries sector. However it is common belief that careful and conscientious management of small pelagic fisheries with purse seine or with the pelagic trawl gear, in compliance with the existing regulations, can ensure limited impact on the resource. Effort management as described in answer to question 13 could be sufficient to protect the ecosystems.

It is necessary to take into account also the natural oscillation of the biomass of anchovies and sardines that depend on environmental factors.

It is necessary to estimate the effects of the protection of bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean on the state of stocks of small pelagic fish in the Adriatic. The growth of tuna population in the Adriatic directly affects stocks of sardines and anchovies in the Adriatic. We believe that the growth of tuna in the Adriatic is unproportional to the catch quotas to which Adriatic fisherman are entitled, and that Adriatic fisherman are, considering others on the Mediterranean, in a inferior, deprived position.

Question 15. Are there specific measures (for example, minimum mesh size, permanent or seasonal closures, etc.) which deserve greater flexibility in the context of the multi-annual management plans that could be introduced at regional level to help achieve the objectives of the plan?

As mentioned above, it is fundamental and indispensable that the specific technical measures (mesh size, minimum conservation size, height of purse seine nets, space-time closures, etc.) are considered at region level with EC delegated acts.

The role of the Advisory Council, the MEDAC, is clearly central to this process, providing advice to national administrations in order to put them in a position to give informed input, with the support of scientific research, the EC's delegated regulations. The framework measures, as well as goals, should on the other hand be inserted into the basic regulation, to be adopted through the ordinary legislative procedure by the co-legislators.

In the context of regionalisation other measures could also be evaluated and tested in macro areas (space-time closures and suspension of fisheries activities for biological purposes), with the possibility of verifying the effects, the measures could then be edited and re-calibrated depending on the areas, periods and types of fishery activities and the different target species.

* The document has been approved by all the members of the Executive Committee with the objections raised by OCEANA and WWF.

WWF agrees on the need to have a unique legal text with all provisions in force integrated in a management plan for small pelagics in the North Adriatic, the need to implement mechanisms allowing adaptive management, and supports the management of the fishery through limitation of fishing effort complemented with additional safeguard measures. However, WWF believes that besides the need to refine the scientific analysis, there are enough elements to elaborate a comprehensive management plan fully respecting provisions and deadlines contained in the CFP Basic Regulation (EU No 1380/2013).

OCEANA considers that the MEDAC proposal is not reflecting the principle driving the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP; EC Reg.1380/ 2013). The regionalisation should not undermine nor postpone the achievement of the principles and the obligation set in the CFP to recover EU stocks by 2020, at the very latest. Oceana believes that a multiannual plan (MAP) for the management of Northern Adriatic Sea small pelagic fisheries should set clear management objectives in line with the CFP. Also, the MAP should include, as advised by STECF, a reduction in both fishing effort and catches along with the implementation of a catch limit system, as also to ensure the correct implementation of the landing obligation. Moreover, support from public funding should only be foreseen within a multi-annual plan and intended to promote best practices.

89 MEDAC ADVICE ON LTMP FOR SMALL PELAGICS IN GSA 17 (NORTHERN ADRIATIC)

Roma, 11th March 2016

Krstina Mislov Jelavic - Focal point Croatia; Marco Spinadin - Focal point Italy; Snezana Levstik - Focal point Slovenia, coordinated by Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni

In order to reply to the letters received by Croatian, Italian and Slovenian Fishery Administrations asking MEDAC to submit elements to gather all the useful information and objectives that could contribute to the sustainable exploitation of the stocks and to the protection of the marine ecosystem concerned on small pelagic in Adriatic (GSA 17) (Croatia: 7/10/2014 – ref. 525-13/034-14-1; Italy: 6/10/2014, ref. 19856; Slovenia: 10/10/2014 ref.342-29/2014-1), the Focus Group (FG) on long term management plan for small pelagic in GSA 17 drafted the following proposal of advice.

Advice

The FG met several times over the last two years and has investigated a wide range of topics to better understand the reality of small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17) and the activity of the Croatian, Italian and Slovenian fleets.

During some meetings, scientists were invited to present the results of current scientific studies. In particular, meetings were held on the following dates and venues:

October 8th, 2014 (Split – HR)

Presentations:

- Towards long term management plans - GSA07 and GSA17 – (Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni – coordinator FG)
- Anchovy and Sardine Stock Assessment in the GSA 17, according to GFCM- Alberto Santojanni (CNR ISMAR – Ancona)
- Gestione coordinata delle risorse marine in Adriatico – Marco Spinadin (Consorzio Alto Adriatico)

November 20th 2014 (Rome – IT)

Presentations:

- Towards long term management plans - GSA 17 Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni – coordinator FG
- Croatian fishing fleet status and management measures for small pelagic (Krstina Mislov Jelavic –HGK)

March 11th 2015 (Rome IT)

Presentations:

- Croatian proposal for the multiannual plan for GSA 17 (small pelagic) (Krstina Mislov Jelavic - HGK)
- Technical properties of purse seines targeting small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea (Alessandro Lucchetti – CNR ISMAR Ancona)

April 23rd 2015 (Marseille FR)

Presentations :

- Presentation on summer temporary trawling closure in the Northern Adriatic Sea - S. Raicevich- ISPRA Chioggia

June 10th 2015 Madrid (ES)

Presentations:

- **Informative document on the state of small pelagic fisheries in GSA 17**
- EC Public Consultation on a regulation establishing a multiannual plan for the management of Northern Adriatic Sea small pelagic fisheries (May to September 2015).

November 10th 2015 (S. Julians, Malta)

Presentations:

- Assessment of the work done in the Focus Groups on the GSA 17 and GSA 7 (Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni – coordinator WG1)
- Study on the evaluation of specific management scenarios for the preparation of multiannual management plans in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: The Adriatic Sea case study (Carpi et al.- BEMTOOL Project)

On the basis of information acquired during meetings in 2014-2015,

THE MEDAC:

- 1 PENDING the Commission's proposal and the future basic regulation for a LTMP for small pelagic fisheries in the Northern Adriatic (GSA 17);

- 2 CONSIDERING that article 44, paragraph 2(A) of Regulation (UE) 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, establishes that Advisory Councils may submit recommendations and suggestions on matters relating to the management of fisheries and the socio- economic and conservation aspects of fisheries and aqua culture to the Commission and to the Member State concerned, and, in particular, recommendations on how to simplify rules on fisheries management; and that 2(B) may inform the Commission and Member States of problems relating to the management and the socio-economic and conservation aspects of fisheries and, where appropriate, of aquaculture in their geographical area or field of competence and propose solutions to overcome those problems;
- 3 CONSIDERING that during the High-Level Seminar held in Catania on 9th and 10th February 2016, the European Commission recalled the need to adopt urgent measures to address the overfishing in the Mediterranean;
- 4 CONSIDERING that the Croatian, Italian and Slovenian fleets have already implemented emergency technical measures scheduled by GFCM recommendations (GFCM/37/2013/1 and following) and already officially informed the EC and GFCM Secretariat;
- 5 CONSIDERING necessary to define the long-term management framework in a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the European Council, on the basis of the approach adopted for the development of the plan for the Baltic Sea, and thus regulation should define the general aspects, leaving decisions on technical measures to the Commission according to the principle of regionalisation under article 18 of Regulation (UE) 1380/2013;
- 6 CONSIDERING that it is recognized as a primary interest to achieve the best fishing results respecting the sustainability of stocks, to develop the fishery economies, to defend employment, encouraging long-term friendly relations;
- 7 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC has divided the work in two parts: the first part was carried out as an in-depth thorough study of the national legal framework in each of the three Member States (Croatia, Italy, Slovenia) relating to small pelagic in Adriatic. The output was a specific *“Information document on the status of small pelagic in GSA17”*, sent to the European Commission in August 2015. The second part was focused on the proposals of sustainable technical measures from an environmental, social and economic point of view, in light of a possible multi-annual management plan. This second part was closed in February 2016, after an extraordinary technical meeting held in Rome.
- 8 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC, in accordance with the provisions of the CFP, has always held the balance between the environmental, social and economic aspects, with particular attention to the impact that some management measures could have on traditional coastal small pelagic fishing communities. In particular, the MEDAC stresses the importance of protecting and preserving the activities of traditional fishing occurring in certain areas of the GSA 17 (see purse seines in Trieste Bay: i.e. Gulf of Trieste and the West coast of Istria, down to Lim Channel)
- 9 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC took note of the conclusions of the STECF EWG 15/14: *“Small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea - Mediterranean assessment - Part 1”* and that it pays attention to the most recent assessments carried out within the GFCM
- 10 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC decided to draft this advice, considering the results of the stock assessments prepared by the STECF (EWG 15/14), the work of the first meeting of GFCM SRC-AS, Catania Seminar conclusions, and that the MEDAC is willing to provide a contribution to address the problem, so as to avoid the serious fallouts on employment and on the fishing business income;

- 11 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC took note of the results of various scientific research presented during the various meetings held on the subject;
- 12 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC reacted to the consultation of EC Commission “*on a regulation establishing a multiannual plan for the management of Northern Adriatic Sea small pelagic fisheries*” ran from May to September 2015;
- 13 CONSIDERING that it is necessary to implement, among other measures, mechanisms allowing adaptive management of fishing effort;
- 14 CONSIDERING the importance to include the Professional Organizations/Producer Organizations throughout the decision-making process: evaluation of the resource in cooperation with the scientific research, proposals/discussion of technical measures, implementation and control;
- 15 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC underlines the problem of a time gap between the scientific advice and the related application of measures;
- 16 CONSIDERING that on the basis of the geographical and spatial situation and traditional practice of small PS vessels technically adapted to the situation in Trieste bay without damage to the sea ground, the MEDAC agrees to exclude the PS fleet in Trieste Bay from general rules for GSA 17
- 17 CONSIDERING that, according to the “*2015 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 15-07)*” the purse seines fishing fleet segment <12m is participating less than 2% in total catch of total purse seines catch of Italia, Slovenia and Croatia; that on the other side this fleet segment represents 13% of total number of purse seines fishing vessels in these three Member States and that the small purse seines are mainly situated in coastal areas and have significant impact on the economies of those areas. Considering furthermore that the very northern part of the Adriatic Sea is very shallow and only a restricted number of purse seines <15m is operating there, that the purse seines <15m operating in the Western Coast of Istria and Gulf of Trieste are limited to that fishing ground and have very important role on the local economy. Considering lastly that named fleet segment is fishing only for the local fresh market, having negligible impact on targeted stocks, the MEDAC considers that, according to the strong socioeconomic and ecological arguments, these fleet segments (<12 m for whole GSA 17 and <15m for Western Coast of Istria down to Lime Channel and Gulf of Trieste) should be excluded from the proposed management measures in yellow and orange zone of the proposed traffic light approach;
- 18 CONSIDERING that, in line with the provisions of article 44, paragraph 2(B), MEDAC is going to propose a solution for PS in Adriatic Sea, derogating the provisions of article 13, paragraph 3 of Regulation (CE) 1967/2006 (“Mediterranean Regulation”);
- 19 CONSIDERING that the following proposal of the MEDAC is considered in line with the provisions laid down in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, as it contains obligations and prohibitions that snap to the achievement of reference points linked in some way to MSY;
- 20 CONSIDERING that the MSY level should be identified as a range value set by the research, as it was described in the “*Study on the evaluation of specific management plan for the preparation of LTMP in the Mediterranean and the Black sea*” (Carpi P. et al. and BEMTOOL Project) presented at the November 10th, 2015 MEDAC meeting held in Malta; and considering upgrades on the above mentioned study which has been done at the beginning of 2016, during the preparation process for the GFCM SAC meeting .
- 21 CONSIDERING that the MEDAC reached a compromise position among the sectors of the Croatian, Slovenian and Italian fisheries, shared by scientific research, in March 2016;

SUGGESTS

the following advice which defines measures that Member States or the EC could adopt to reach the objectives set by the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, without affecting the viability of fishing enterprises, the existing trade agreements, employment and income levels of the industry, traditional fishing activities.

Framework:

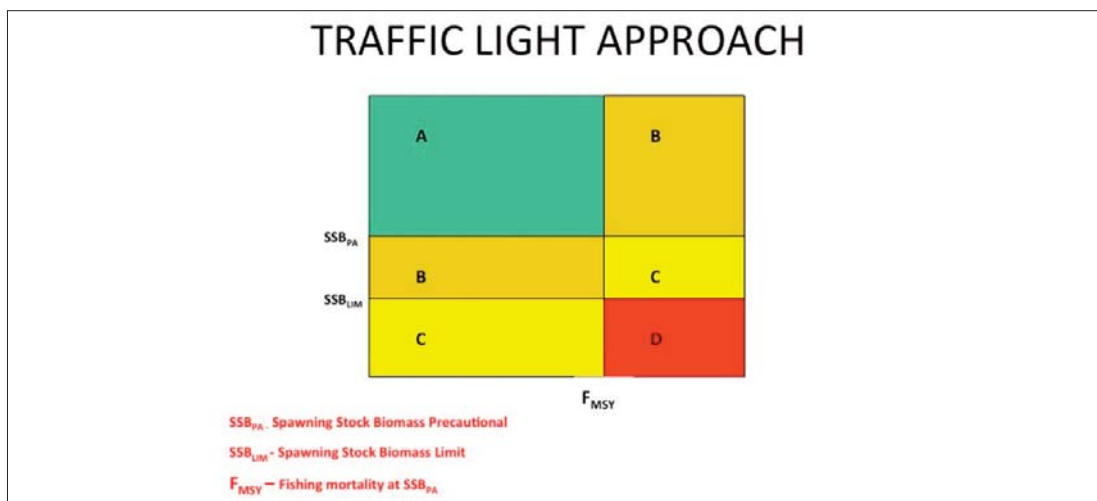
GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM-GSA 17 (Northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in GSA 18 (Southern Adriatic Sea)

GFCM/38/2014/1 amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM GSA 17

GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18)

Additional measures (different for sardines and anchovies):

The additional measures to be implemented will be differentiated on the basis of the current level of the SSB and F_{MSY} , using a “Traffic lights” approach:



Actions:

Depending on the aforementioned parameters, obtained from scientific research the following measures could be taken.

ZONES ACCORDING TO THE TRAFFIC LIGHT APPROACH

PROPOSAL

A – GREEN ZONE

Max 180 fishing days per year, max 20 fishing days per month, to be applied on all fleet segments.

B – ORANGE ZONE

Max 180 fishing days per year, max 20 fishing days per month, to be applied on all fleet segments.+Introduction of spatial-temporal closures, not to be applied on fishing vessels <12m LoA¹ in GSA 17 and on fishing vessels <15m LoA in the area of Trieste Bay, i.e. Gulf of Trieste, Western coast of Istria, down to Lim Channel:East Adriatic: 30% of closure of national territorial waters for at least six months.West Adriatic: 50% of closure of national territorial waters for at least four months.

ZONES ACCORDING TO THE TRAFFIC LIGHT APPROACH

PROPOSAL

C – YELLOW ZONE

Max 180 fishing days per year, max 20 fishing days per month, to be applied on all fleet segments.+Introduction of spatial-temporal closures, not to be applied on fishing vessels <12m LoA in GSA 17 and on fishing vessels <15m LoA in the area of Trieste Bay, i.e. Gulf of Trieste, Western coast of Istria, down to Lim Channel:East Adriatic: 30% of closure of national territorial waters for at least six months.West Adriatic: 50% of closure of national territorial waters for at least four months;+According to GFCM Recommendation, introduction of an additional temporal closure of minimum 15 continuous fishing days in the spawning period of the target species for all fleet;+Max 144 fishing days/year for target species.

D – RED ZONE

Emergency measures adopted by the European Commission under Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013

The MEDAC also suggests:

- A minimum 3-year plan duration or more, to allow fishing enterprises to plan their investments on the basis of a reasonable timeframe;
- The measures contained in this plan should be applied as soon as possible, at the latest by 1/1/2018;
- All vessels actively fishing in GSA 17 for anchovies and/or sardines should have on board an effective electronic system to control and monitor their position and their fishing activity. In particular, electronic logbook is mandatory for all vessels;
- Landing obligation fully implemented;
- To confirm in the Long Term Management Plan *de minimis* exemption from the landing obligation as defined in Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014 of 20 October 2014 establishing a discard plan for certain small pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea, i.e.in the northern Adriatic Sea, up to 5 % of the total annual catches of species subject to minimum sizes in the small pelagic mid-water trawl and purse seines fisheries for anchovy, sardine, mackerel and horse mackerel.
- Fishing authorization mandatory for all vessels actively fishing sardines and anchovies in GSA 17;
- Before the adoption of the management plan (Considering Art. 2 of the Reg. 1380/2013) the MEDAC finds important to obtain evaluation of impacts of the possible management measures on food availability and socio-economic aspects on the fishing enterprises;
- In order to reduce the time gap between data collection and the measures to be implemented according to the traffic light approach, in addition to traditional methods, more time-responding systems, such as echo surveys;
- According to the document – “*Technical properties of purse seines targeting small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea*” (Alessandro Lucchetti – CNR ISMAR Ancona) presented on March 11th 2015 MEDAC meeting (Rome IT), we recommend to include the derogation for the article 13 of the Reg. (CE) 1967/2006 concerning the size of the purse seiners (max. height and length and depth of the deployment) into the multiannual management plan for small pelagics in the Northern Adriatic Sea.

¹Lenght over All

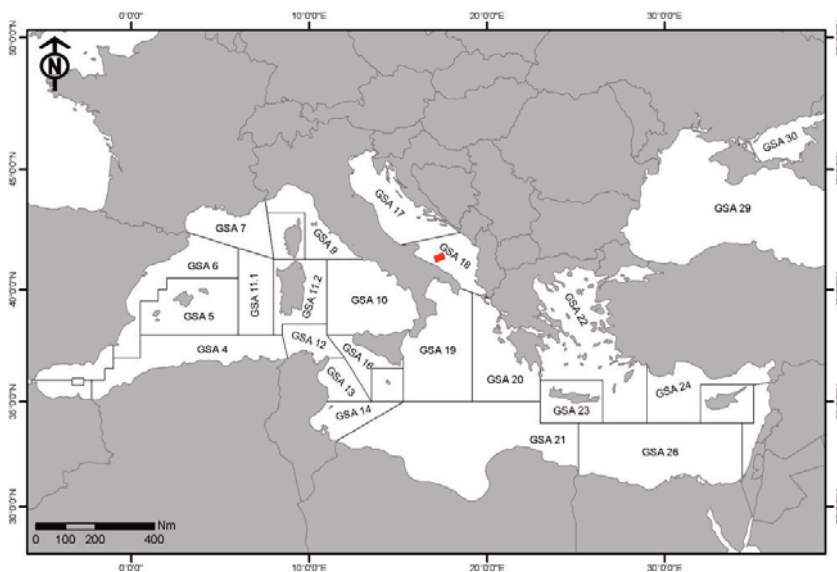
MEDAC OPINION ON THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A FISHERIES RESTRICTED AREA (FRA) IN THE ADRIATIC SEA: BARI CANYON

Rome, 5th June 2019

The MEDAC was officially commissioned by the Italian Fisheries Administration (with a letter registered as Prot. 5229 of 25th March 2019) to prepare a contribution and an opinion on the proposal to establish a Fisheries Restricted Area in the Adriatic Sea, presented to the GFCM in April 2018 by ISMAR-CNR, IUCN, University of Bari, COISPA.

The points that were raised during the WG1 debate are that the promoters of the FRA did not organise a consultation with the stakeholders, (which is why the Italian administration directed it request for collaboration to the MEDAC before proposing this FRA). During the GFCM WG meeting on MPAs (Marine Protected Areas), held last February, it was highlighted that the promoters had carried out a socio-economic assessment and a consultation with stakeholders and this analysis will be presented during the meeting of the GFCM Sub-Regional Committee on the Adriatic Sea to be held at the end of May.

During the MEDAC discussion, the members noted that the promoters had carried out a socio-economic evaluation and a stakeholder consultation both in the initial (meeting of 25th May 2018) and final phases (5th April organised in Bari²).



EXTRACT FROM FRA PROPOSAL³

“In 2013 the number of fishers in the western side of GSA18 was around 2159 professional units, among which 1146 fishers were working onboard trawlers, 147 onboard longlines and the number of workers in the small-scale fishery was 866 (Spedicato et al., 2016). It is likely that the number of employees has not been varied significantly since then. Considering the fishing effort deployed in the Bari canyon the number of professional fishermen potentially involved in such fishing activities should be quite small. There is no however information on the number of recreational fishers involved in fishing activities in that area and the impact from them on the resources and the habitats.”

“In order to manage at best the Bari Canyon ecosystem, it is advisable to ensure the involvement of local communities, including fishermen, as well any other potential stakeholders.

“The main threats are represented by the fishing activities, mostly longlining and occasional trawling carried out by Molfetta, Bari, Mola di Bari and Monopoli fisheries. The fishing operations are occasional in the canyon and the number of vessels operating is variable according to the season. Fishermen sometime deploy longlines to catch large individuals of valuable species but often they lost or damage their fishing gears.

Other threats are due to dumping of waste and litter, in particular discarded/lost fishing gears and plastic debris. No projects for prospections have been planned or are active or seem to be plan in the near future”

“Considering that among the 44 (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA, 2014) local long-liners often fish in the canyon with the aim of catching large specimens of valuable species, a certain socio-economic impact over the short-term will derive from the spatial closure establishment of the FRA. More comprehensive information for the evaluation of socio-economic impacts of the FRA and adequate programme to mitigate these impacts should be part of the FRA implementation of measures.”

EXTRACT FROM GFCM WG REPORT (Marine Protected Areas) 18-22 February 2019

46. Ms Maria del Mar Otero, Project Officer at IUCN-Med, provided an update on the Bari Canyon FRA proposal submitted to the SAC and the Commission in 2018. She explained that the proposal was considered complete from a scientific point of view, but a deeper socio-economic assessment of the effects of the FRA on local fisheries, including small-scale fisheries, was requested by the Commission. The fisheries affected by the FRA and its proposed management measure (i.e. prohibition to fish with bottom contact gear) would be demersal longliners mainly as few trawlers operate in the area. The socio-economic assessment was currently being carried out, in consultation with local stakeholders, on around 50 percent of the entire fleet operating in the area (around 178 fishing vessels in total). She also said that data on smallscale fisheries were being collected also according to the GFCM methodology to survey small-scale fisheries. The results of such analysis would be submitted to the next session of the Subregional Committee for the Adriatic Sea (SRC-AS), in May 2019. She also mentioned the upcoming meeting organized by the University of Bari, COISPA, ISMAR CNR and IUCN with fisher stakeholders from the region of Bari to discuss the proposal.

47. The WWF expert informed that WWF was organizing a series of meetings with the Monopoli fleet (Apulia, Italy) on a WWF ongoing project about shark bycatch reduction. She added her organization would also like to be informed on upcoming meetings for the FRA.

48. The GFCM Secretariat welcomed the efforts that were being done in order to meet the request of the Commission and underlined the importance of presenting again the FRA proposal, including the new results of the socio-economic assessment with the stakeholders, in advance of the SRC-AS meeting in order to allow time for the subcommittee to review the FRA proposal.

OPINION

With reference to the above, the MEDAC expresses a favourable opinion on the proposal to establish an FRA in the Bari Canyon. The MEDAC will evaluate the results of the socio-economic assessment that will be presented at the next meeting of the SAC annual meeting that will be held at the end of June (24-27).

² “Debate on the proposal to establish a FRA in the Bari Canyon- Conservation of marine ecosystems and sustainability of fisheries: discussion between researchers, fisheries operators and administrators”, University of Bari, 5 April 2019

³ Bari Canyon submitted by ISMAR-CNR, IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation, University of Bari, Coispa Bari, on April 2018.

91 MEDAC LETTER ON MAP FOR DEMERSAL RESOURCES IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

Rome, 21st June 2019

To João Aguiar Machado (Director General, EC – DG MARE); Roland Kristo (GFCM Chairperson)

The MEDAC Focus Group on the Adriatic met on 4th June in Thessaloniki and, among other matters, discussed some of the issues related to the multiannual plan for demersal resources in the Adriatic Sea that had already been mentioned during the 4th meeting of the GFCM SAC SRC-AS, held on 23rd and 24th May in Split.

On that occasion, draft elements for the management of demersal resources in the Adriatic were listed in order to evaluate their inclusion in the formulation of a MAP, among which there were:

- depth restrictions
- Other spatial restrictions
- Distance from the coast

Debate on the matter highlighted the well-known fact that the average depth of the Adriatic basin is 252 m, however in the Northern part (GSA17) it rarely exceeds 100 m. Moreover, there are already several spatial constraints and restrictions (these include military sites, marine protected areas and biological protection zones, offshore regasification facilities, oil platforms) that reduce the free movement of the fishing fleet in the areas concerned. In the case of some ports or in the area around Trieste and the Slovenian coast these restrictions make the available space extremely limited and this is coupled with very shallow waters.

Deep concern was expressed by the majority of participants that in the forthcoming formulation of a MAP for demersal resources in the Adriatic, the same approach used for the equivalent Plan in the Western Mediterranean would be applied, without considering the unique geomorphological characteristics of the Adriatic basin that would make the same restrictions completely unfeasible. However, MEDAC acknowledged the results of the spatial measures that were implemented in the Jabuka pit, showing substantial increases on biomass of key commercial species (hake, nephrops and pink shrimp) that were presented.

We also wish to point out, as noted by the MEDAC representative who was present in Split, that for each alternative management measure fleet capacity should also be taken into account, to make sure the number of vessels that would be sustainable after the implementation of a given measure is known. Furthermore, socio-economic impacts should be deeply assessed in order to avoid the same socioeconomic approach applied for the equivalent MAP in the Western Mediterranean.

The concerns expressed herein reflect our wish to contribute constructively to the implementation of the GFCM recommendations in the Mediterranean based on the best scientific advices by STECF and GFCM and we are certain that you will take these matters into due consideration, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

92 MEDAC WORKING DOCUMENT ON A MULTIANNUAL PLAN FOR THE FISHERIES EXPLOITING DEMERSAL STOCKS IN THE ADRIATIC SEA (GSAS 17-18)

Rome, 16th September 2019

Whereas

According to the Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013), the objective of sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources is more effectively achieved through a

multiannual approach to fisheries management, and hence multiannual plans (MAP) reflecting the specificities of different fisheries shall be adopted as a priority.

MAPs should, where possible, cover multiple stocks where those stocks are jointly exploited. The MAPs should establish the framework for the sustainable exploitation of stocks and for preserving marine ecosystems concerned, defining clear timeframes and safeguard mechanisms for unforeseen developments.

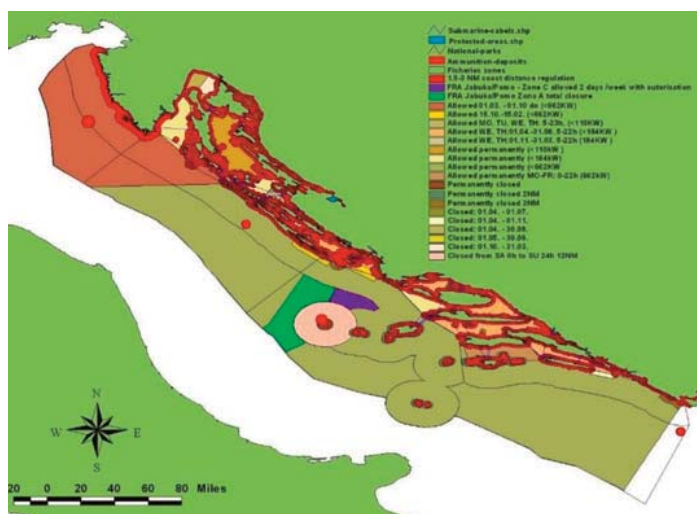
According to art.18 par. 2 of Reg. (EU) 1380/2013, Member States having a direct management interest affected by the measures referred to conservation, such as Multiannual Plans, shall also consult the relevant Advisory Councils. Therefore, MEDAC should play a key role in providing advice on conservation and management measures reflecting the views of its members from the fishing industry, scientists, NGOs, recreational fisheries and other stakeholders having interests in the area of application. Prior to including measures in a multiannual plan, account shall be taken of possible impacts of the plan under environmental, economic and social point of view based on best available data.

Some relevant opinion on MAP for demersal in Adriatic Sea has been already sent to the EU Director General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and to the GFCM Chairperson by the MEDAC Letter on the Multiannual management plan for demersal resources in the Adriatic Sea (Ref. 163/2019) and the MEDAC Letter on socioeconomic indicators (Ref.164/2019) on 21 June 2019. According to the Reg. (EU) 2019/1022 (par. 18-19 of the introduction) it is appropriate to establish the target fishing mortality (F) that corresponds to the overarching CFP objective (Art. 2.2) of reaching mortality rates that are BELOW F_{msy} as ranges of values which are LOWER than MSY (FMSY): those ranges, based on best available scientific advice, are necessary to provide the flexibility to take account of developments in scientific advice, to contribute to the implementation of the landing obligation and to take into account mixed fisheries.

1) Geographical scope of the plan

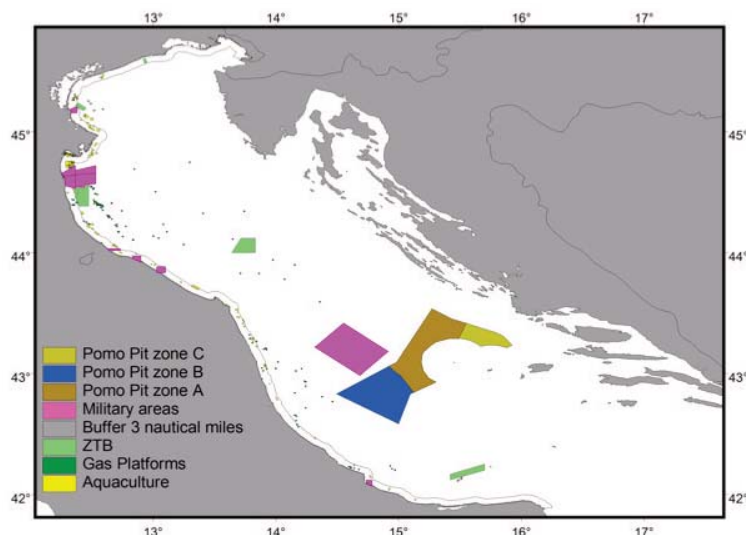
In the Adriatic Sea, there are already several spatial constraints and restrictions (these include military sites, marine protected areas and biological protection zones, offshore regasification facilities, oil platforms) that reduce the free movement of the fishing fleet in the areas concerned (Ref. MEDAC Letter Ref. 163/2019 and see maps a and b). In the case of some ports or in the area around Trieste and the Slovenian coast these restrictions make the available space extremely

limited and this is coupled with very shallow waters. More details on spatiotemporal restrictions are in the Annex 1.



Map a - Source Annex 5 of the STECF Report EWG 19-02, Spatio-temporal Restriction in Croatia¹

¹ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Multiannual Plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea (STECF-19-02). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019.



Map b – Spatial restrictions in the Italian side of the Adriatic Sea.

Deep concern was expressed by the majority of MedAC members that in the forthcoming formulation of a MAP for demersal resources in the Adriatic, the same approach used for the equivalent Plan in the Western Mediterranean would be applied, without considering the unique geomorphological characteristics of the Adriatic basin that would make the same restrictions completely unfeasible. Other members support the introduction of spatial measures, particularly to protect Essential Fish Habitats and sensitive habitats.

2) Stocks and gears

In the table below are reported the most updated results of STECF and GFCM on the status of the demersal stocks assessed in the Adriatic Sea and the main gears targeting those species. All commercially exploited demersal stocks should be considered, including target and bycatch species, together with the concerned fisheries and gears. Moreover, coastal demersal stocks should be included, as well as the impacts from Small Scale and Recreational fisheries.

Species	GSA	Fishery	Spawning Biomass	Stock	F (Fishing mortality)	Diagnosis	Advice and recommendation
Red mullet, <i>Mullus barbatus</i>	17-18	Bottom Trawl Nets; small amounts gill nets and trammel nets	Increasing from 2011	Decreasing, now slightly higher than reference point	In overexploitation with relatively high biomass	Reduce $F_{current}$ towards $F_{0.1}$ 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 1,17$	
Deep-water rose shrimp, <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	17-18-19	Bottom Trawl Nets	Increasing (max value in 2017)	Decreasing	Unstable results in the last years - Possibly in overexploitation, with relatively high biomass	Precautionary advice – Reduce fishing mortality 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 2,85$	
Caramote prawn, <i>Penaeus kerathurus</i>	17	Bottom Trawl Nets; Rapido trawl nets; gill nets and trammel nets	Stock biomass increasing above MSY	Increasing	In overexploitation, with relatively low biomass	Progressive reduction of fishing effort 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{msy} = 2,1$	
Mantis shrimp, <i>Squilla mantis</i>	17	Bottom Trawl Nets; gill nets, Rapido trawl nets			Intermediate overfishing, relative low biomass	Reduce $F_{current}$ towards $F_{0.1}$ 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 1,53$	
Mantis shrimp, <i>Squilla mantis</i>	17-18	Bottom Trawl Nets; gill nets	Increasing	Decreasing	In overexploitation, with relatively high biomass	Reduce fishing mortality 2017 - $F_{current}/F_{0.1} = 2,60$	
Norway lobster, <i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	17-18	Bottom Trawl Nets; small amounts traps gill nets	Decreasing	Decreasing	In overexploitation	Reduce fishing mortality (2017 - $F_{current}/F_{msy} = 1,47$)	
Common Cuttlefish, <i>Sepia officinalis</i>	17	Otter trawl, rapido trawl and set gears	Biomass in the last 4 years increased but is still below the B_{msy}	Decreasing	Sustainably exploited, with relatively low biomass	Do not increase Fishing mortality - Avoid any increase of catches to improve the status of the stock in term of biomass (2017 - $F_{current}/F_{msy} = 0,84$)	
Hake (benchmark)	17-18		Biomass around 70% the precautionary biomass		In overexploitation and overexploited	$F_{current}/F_{msy} = 3,4$	

As stated in the STECF EWG 19-02, values of dependency and contribution can be good indicators about how management measures will affect vessel groups in terms of their economy and what effect these will have on managed stocks. While some gears and segments have high dependency on only few species, they can have at the same time very low or negligible impact to overall landing of target species and vice versa.

FLEETS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE TOTAL LANDINGS (2014-2016 data)

- DTS (DEMERSAL TRAWL AND DEMERSAL SEINER) segments have the highest overall contribution to all species in the MAP, counting for more than 80% of landing per species:
 - 88% Norway lobster *Nephrops norvegicus*,
 - 95% Red mullet *Mullus barbatus*,
 - 81% Mantis shrimp *Squilla mantis*,
 - 88% Hake *Merluccius merluccius* and
 - 87% Deep-water rose shrimp, *Parapenaeus longirostris*.
- Common sole *Solea solea* dominated by Italian TBB (BEAM TRAWL) 18-24 m (29%) and PGP (POLYVALENT PASSIVE GEARS) 06 – 12 m (17%) segments.
- Mantis shrimp *Squilla mantis*: Italian DTS 12-18 m have the highest contribution (49%).
- Hake *Merluccius merluccius*: - dominantly represented in landings made by ITA DTS 12-18 m and 18-24 m covering 64% in total;
 - all other segments have individual contribution below 10%;
 - beside DTS segments only two HOK (GEARS USING HOOKS) segments have contribution over 1%.
- Norway lobster, *Nephrops norvegicus*: - Italian DTS segments (74%) has the largest contribution;
 - followed by the Croatian DTS segments with 18%.

ECONOMIC FLEET DEPENDENCY: Dependency is computed as the share in percentage of all MAP's stocks combined in the total value of each fleets' landing. Both Italian and Croatian

DTS (DEMERSAL TRAWL AND DEMERSAL SEINER) segments have dependencies on the six key species of 45% or more:

- Fleet segments operating farther from the shore show larger dependency on Deep-water rose shrimp, Hake and Norway lobster;
- While ITA DTS 06-12 m and 12-18 m in GSA 17 dominantly depend on Mantis shrimp *Squilla mantis*.

Beside demersal trawl and demersal seiner segments, some other have high dependency on only one or two species depending on the area they operate:

- ITA TBB (Beam trawl) 24-40 m and 18-24 m with dependency of 44% and 49% on common sole;
- HRV FPO (Pots and traps) 06-12 m dominantly depend on norway lobster representing 39% of landing value;
- DFN (Drift nets and fixed nets) 12-18 m which depend on common sole (50%).

All OTB (Bottom trawl) vessels showed high dependency on hake, Norway lobster and Deep-water rose shrimp.

Gears that have highest dependency:

- **on hake** -> Set longlines (53% ITA 12-18 m in GSA 18, 32% HRV 06-12 m)
- **on deep-water rose shrimp** -> Croatian Bottom trawl (21% 24-40 m -and 20% 18-24 m)
- **on mantis shrimp** -> Italian pelagic trawl¹ (71% ITA 12-18 m) and bottom trawl (51% 06-12 m) in GSA 17
- **on red mullet** -> 30% Croatian trolling lines 12-18 m and 24% Italian Bottom trawl 06-12 m in GSA 18
- **on norway lobster** -> 38% Croatian Bottom Trawl 24 -40 m and 33% Croatian pots and traps 06-12
- **on common sole** -> 81% Slovenian Drift Gillnets 0 – 6 m and 73% Italian Beam Trawl 6 – 12 m in GSA17, 60% Croatian Trammel Gillnets 0 – 6 m and others with dependency over 50% (Croatian and Slovenian Trammel nets and Gillnets)

It needs to be stressed that in some cases estimates at the gear level can be based on a small number of vessels

1) Management options.

During the SRC-AS meeting, the following Potential fisheries management measures were proposed. **The existing (*in italics*) and potential fisheries management measures applicable to demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea** include:

¹ MEDAC note: likely it is a typo of the EWG19-02 Report: pelagic trawls normally don't catch mantis shrimp

Potential fisheries management measures	STECF Tested Scenarios ⁴ (EWG 19-02 on Management Strategy Evaluation for demersal)	SAC technical comments ⁵ (21st Session of Scientific Advisory Committee – Appendix 6A)	MEDAC members contribution

⁴ "It is important to bear in mind that uncertainty is very large and, as such, these results should be taken as indicative only" (STECF EWG 19-02).

⁵ "Experts also noted that other additional scenarios could be identified in line with the procedure agreed by the SAC, and in support of the request made by the GFCM."

		species in the Adriatic Sea)		
Fishing effort regime		<p>No scenarios based on fishing effort regime by fleet segment were conducted and the simulations were directly based on fishing mortality adjustments⁶: F_{msy} in 2024 or linear decrease or fix reduction (by 10% in 2020, 8% in 2021 and then to F_{msy} in 2024).</p>	<p>The linear reduction scenario tested had the best performance in terms of both recovery and reaching the target of MSY. This is particularly true for stocks that are highly overexploited and for which a significant and continued reduction (as highlighted by the results of the stock assessment) may be needed to reach agreed targets.</p>	<p>WWF supports the linear reduction scenario as suggested by SAC report. In particular for <i>M. merluccius</i> and <i>N. norvegicus</i>.</p> <p>MEDREACT Fishing effort reduction should be based on 2019 effort level in order to be BELOW F_{msy} at <u>the latest</u> by 2024.</p> <p>MEDREACT, Croatian Trawlers Ass. and HOK It should be allocated proportionally to reduce the impact of the largest fishing fleets.</p> <p>MEDREACT Fishing effort reduction shall be based on a linear roadmap before the deadline. The experience of CFP shows that a “remote” deadline (2020) without intermediate roadmap does not work.</p> <p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopescas and Federpesca: The fishing effort regime is a valid management solution especially thought the fishing days. Nevertheless,</p>

⁶ “However, the relationship between nominal effort and fishing mortality is not necessarily linear and any effort reductions may not lead to proportional reductions in fishing mortality” (STECF EWG 19-02)

				<p>the reduction must be compensated by socio-economic measures, also foreseen in the new EMFF in order to face the economical unsustainability (and the consequent loss of fishing enterprises and workers). The diversified and not linear reduction of the effort between MS is not acceptable, considering the same reasons of the principle of relative stability. Moreover Federpesca believes that a change of philosophy is necessary in order to identify and regulate the number of days in which is authorized to fish and not vice versa.</p>
<p>FRA to protect EFH (Essential Fish Habitat)</p>	<p><i>Jabuka/Pomo pit (Rec. GFCM 41/2017/3)</i></p>	<p>Assumed that the effects are already accounted for in the most recent stock assessment</p>	<p>The overexploitation status of all priority demersal species, with the exception of common cuttlefish (<i>Sepia officinalis</i>), was also highlighted. First results from the Jabuka/Pomo pit monitoring programme were presented, such as increased abundance and</p>	<p>MEDAC Ref. 163/2019 MEDAC acknowledged the results of the spatial measures that were implemented in the Jabuka pit.</p> <p>WWF, MEDREACT, Croatian Trawlers Ass., HOK, AGCI Agrital, Legacoop and Federcoopesca hope that, since all stakeholders recognized the positive impact of Jabuka Pit FRA on the status of the stocks, further FRAs will be</p>

			size of many priority species within the FRA.	<p>established in GSA 17 and 18. WWF, AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopescas and Federpesca suggest that any further FRA will be established according to the participatory process.</p> <p>MEDREACT: MEDAC opinion Ref 122/2019 (May 2019) supports adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats and to further develop fisheries restricted areas and marine protected areas ensuring an effective protection of at least 10% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020</p>
		Sole Sanctuary: Assessment of the spatial measures were only carried out for the stock of sole	Regarding common sole, the most effective spatial measures to reduce F among the ones tested is the combination of the 6nm closure with the effort reduction.	<p>WWF, MEDREACT, Croatian Trawlers Ass. and HOK strongly suggest the establishment of the Sole Sanctuary according to the process developed when Jabuka Pit FRA was established, i.e. through participatory/bottom up approaches with all stakeholders (Administrations, NGOs, researchers, fishers).</p> <p>MEDREACT supports the 6nm closure with effort reduction.</p> <p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop,</p>

				<p>Federcoopescas and Federpesca: Sole Sanctuary is not necessary because the species showed large fluctuations in the quantity caught in the years. The forthcoming management measures for demersals will allow to calibrate further specific restrictions for common sole.</p>
	Others?	Not tested in STECF EWG 19-02. Not even tested for Norway lobster and European hake (as in the ToR 4 of STECF EWG 19-02 was initially requested)	The Scientific Advice Committee highlighted the importance of identifying and implementing additional FRAs	<p>MEDAC Ref. 163/2019 The average depth of the Adriatic basin is 252 m, however in the Northern part (GSA17) it rarely exceeds 100 m and there are already several spatial constraints and restrictions. MEDAC supports the establishment of a FRA in the South Adriatic (Bari Canyon FRA). WWF, Croatian Trawlers Ass., HOK and AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopescas and Federpesca support the identification and implementation (with the full involvement of stakeholders) of additional FRAs as a tool to reduce fishing mortality based on scientific results.</p>

				<p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopesca and Federpesca</p> <p>recommend the need of socio-economic support for the enterprises impacted by the restrictions.</p>
Depth restrictions		No		<p>MEDAC Ref. 163/2019</p> <p>The average depth of the Adriatic basin is 252 m, however in the Northern part (GSA17) it rarely exceeds 100 m and there are already several spatial constraints and restrictions.</p> <p>WWF Nevertheless inshore trawling along Italian coasts should be strongly limited, both for demersal species and small pelagics (beam trawls are able to catch also small pelagic juveniles within the Po river front).</p> <p>MEDREACT, Croatian Trawlers and HOK</p> <p>Additional depth restriction should be considered, in order to protect EFH in coastal waters and in deep water such as a closure to trawling below 500 meters depths.</p> <p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopesca and</p>

				<p>Federpesca absolutely disagree with depth restrictions, while they confirm the already existent limitation foreseen in the art. 13 of Med Regulation (to 50 m depth) and the ban over 1000 m depth.</p>
Other spatial restrictions	Distance from the coast	Tested. The 6nm closure combined with effort reductions seems to amplify F reductions and improve SSB levels	<p>Closure of the 6nm mile strip to trawling in the western GSA17, Not applicable in the Eastern Adriatic Sea. [...] Regarding common sole, the most effective spatial measures to reduce F among the ones tested is the combination of the 6nm closure with the effort reduction.</p>	<p>WWF recommends taking into account recommendations of EU-funded sub regional projects (i.e. MANTIS) to identify suitable areas where management scenarios have been tested by scientists to improve species and habitat protection.</p> <p>WWF and MEDREACT Support the 6nm closure to towed gear combined with effort reduction</p> <p>Birdlife Spatial restrictions should take breeding, foraging, migration and wintering cycles of protected seabird species into account.</p> <p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoop, Federpesca and Federpesca don't fully disagree with the 6 nm closure, especially considering the objective of the modulation of effort reduction in terms of</p>

				fishing days. However, the closure should be adapted according to the local marine morphology and it should include the vessels over 15 m LOA.
	Others?			
Temporal closures	Authorized number of fishing days	No scenarios based on fishing effort regime by fleet were conducted and the simulations were directly based on fishing mortality adjustments ⁷ : Fmsy in 2024 or linear decrease or fix reduction (by 10% in 2020, 8% in 2021 and then to Fmsy in 2024)	The linear reduction scenario tested had the best performance in terms of both recovery and reaching the target of MSY. This is particularly true for stocks that are highly overexploited and for which a significant and continued reduction (as highlighted by the results of the stock assessment) may be needed to reach agreed targets.	<p>WWF recommends considering recommendations of EU-funded sub regional projects (i.e. MANTIS) to identify suitable areas where management scenarios have been tested by scientists to improve species and habitat protection. WWF Supports the 6nm closure to towed gear combined with effort reduction</p> <p>MEDREACT supports the SAC technical result</p> <p>Birdlife Spatial restrictions should take breeding, foraging, migration and wintering cycles of protected seabird species into account.</p> <p>Federpesca: The limitation of fishing days is acceptable if shared with the other countries facing the Adriatic and if supported by socio-economic measures</p>
	Temporal closures			

⁷ "However, the relationship between nominal effort and fishing mortality is not necessarily linear and any effort reductions may not lead to proportional reductions in fishing mortality" (STECF EWG 19-02)

				for supplementing incomes (EMFF compensations).
Gear restrictions	<i>Authorized/prohibited gear types</i>	Not tested in the STECF EWG 19-02		<p>WWF suggests taking into consideration the results of Minouw project (grids, lights, guarding nets) adopted on a temporal base or included as management measures to allow fisheries in FRAs buffer zones.</p> <p>MEDREACT: A precautionary moratorium on rapido trawlers should be considered</p> <p>Birdlife: For longliners, which are the main potential threat, the following measures should be considered in the first instance: tori lines, changes to line weights, hook shielding, and night-setting</p> <p>Croatian Trawlers Association and HOK support the enforcement of the already existing regulations on mesh size.</p>
	Gear characteristics including <i>mesh size</i>	Not tested in the STECF EWG 19-02		
Management of the fleet capacity	Fleet registry	No scenarios based on fishing effort regime by fleet segment were conducted	The Scientific Advice Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring fishing capacity is not increased [...]	MEDAC Ref. 163/2019 MEDAC pointed out that for each alternative management measure fleet capacity should also be taken into account,
	Number of vessels/fleet capacity			

		and the simulations were directly based on fishing mortality adjustments ²	The linear reduction scenario tested had the best performance in terms of both recovery and reaching the target of MSY.	<p>to make sure the number of vessels that would be sustainable after the implementation of a given measure is known.</p> <p>WWF, Croatian Trawlers Association, HOK, AGCI Agrital, Legacoop and Federcoopescas agree with the technical results of SAC</p> <p>Croatian Trawlers Association, HOK, AGCI Agrital, Legacoop and Federcoopescas support the fund provision for scrapping.</p> <p>Federpesca reiterates the need to always use updated data to 2018 (post scrapping)</p> <p>MEDREACT Supports the introduction of an authorized list of vessels. Fishing vessels with repeated infringement records should be banned from the area. Provisions on transfer of fishing rights (when a fisherman stops fishing) must also be included in the MAP.</p>
Minimum conservation reference size		Not tested in the STECF EWG 19-02	The Scientific Advice Committee highlighted the importance of enforcing	WWF recommends adding MCRS for the species listed in the table "Stocks and gears". In particular those missing from

			minimum landing sizes.	<p>the EU Reg. 1967/06 (<i>P.kerathurus</i>, <i>Squilla mantis</i>, <i>Sepia officinalis</i>)</p> <p>Croatian Trawlers Association, HOK, MEDREACT and Federpesca: MCRS should be based on best scientific advice.</p> <p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop and Federcoopescas disagree with the revision of MCRS.</p>
Control measures	VMS and electronic logbook			<p>WWF, MEDREACT, Croatian Trawlers Association and HOK: All fishing vessels must have VMS and electronic logbook</p> <p>Birdlife recommends monitoring and reporting bycatch (seabirds included)</p> <p>AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopescas and Federpesca: the electronic monitoring of trawlers should not require additional burden for the enterprises, and it should be based on the already existent technologies almost at zero costs. The electronic record of catches should be taken into consideration also for small vessels.</p>

				<p>Federpesca believes that the electronic monitoring should also be extended to vessels under 15 meters, possibly providing incentives for the purchase of equipment.</p>
	Pilot project for joint inspection schemes			<p>WWF and Federpesca Pilot project for joint inspection schemes should be identified both in Croatia and Italy, but also in Montenegro and Albania (within a GFCM data collection framework).</p> <p>Croatian Trawlers Association, HOK, MEDREACT, AGCI Agrital, Legacoop, Federcoopesca and Federpesca support joint inspection schemes.</p>

3) Other management recommendations

- To carry out a socio-economic analysis before the implementation of technical/management measures and to consult stakeholders in evaluating the socio-economic implications of the proposed measures in the Multiannual plan of demersals (MEDAC Ref. 164/2019).

MEDAC MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS:

MEDREACT - Any analysis should be based on best available data; pursuant to the definition of the precautionary principle (cf TFEU and others), the lack of scientific evidences should not be used as a pretext to delay recovery measures.

Annex 1

Source: Annex 5 of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Multiannual Plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea (STECF-19-02). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019,

1) Slovenia

Slovenian fisheries sector is very affected by the limited size of marine fishing area. The existence of two sea fishery reserves where all fishing activities are banned (Portorož and Strunjan fishery reserves) further limit the reduced Slovenian fishing area. Moreover, there is an important industrial port in the Gulf of Koper.

Due to the safety and international rules, a common routing system and traffic separation scheme was established in the Northern Adriatic, which also has an important impact on fisheries. For all these reasons, mentioned above, Slovenia already has a derogation for Demersal trawlers, which allows fishing up to 1.5 nautical miles distance from the coast (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2383). Establishment of the closure of the coastal zone up to 6 nautical miles would further reduce Slovenian fishing area to a minimum not suitable to maintain commercial fishing activities.

2) Croatia

The most important regulation measures in Croatia are temporal and spatial trawl fishing restrictions (temporary or permanent prohibition in certain areas). This is a complex system created as a consequence of long-lasting evolution process in balancing exploitation levels with necessity for the protection of demersal resources.

Croatian fishing sea consists of two parts: inner fishing sea with an area of 12,461 km², encompassing inner sea from coastland to starting line, and outer sea consisting of territorial sea (area of 19,267 km²) and Protected environmental fishing zone – ZERP/PEFZ (area of about 25,000 km²). Inner fishing sea is divided into three fishing zones (E, F and G), territorial sea into four fishing zones (A, B, C and D) and PEFZ into four fishing zones (H, I, J and K). The maximum engine power of bottom trawlers is limited to 184 kW in inner fishing sea (except in certain parts of the Northern Adriatic channels, where the limit is 110 kW), while in the outer fishing sea it is limited to 662 kW. Trawl fishing is permanently prohibited within 1.5 NM from mainland and island coast, 2 NM around outer islands (Palagruža, Galijula, Lastovo, Sušac, Svetac, Biševo and Brusnik and other smaller island in their vicinity) In the most part of northern Adriatic (western Istrian coast) and in some channel area of central Adriatic where depth is less than 50 m trawl fishery is prohibited 3 NM from mainland and island coast. In order to protect the juvenile stages of hake and Norway lobster trawl fishery is prohibited 3 NM around Blitvica and Jabuka islands. Trawl fishing is also prohibited in numerous bays and channels, e.g. Cres bay, Osor bay, Vinodol and Velebit channel, Novigrad sea, part of Zadar and Pašman channels, Kaštela bay, most part of the Split and Brač channels, part of the Hvar channel, part of the Neretva channel and part of the Koločep channel. In numerous parts of the fishing sea the trawl fishing is prohibited for certain part of the year or of the week.

Bottom trawl fishing in the most part of the channel area in central Adriatic is totally prohibited 6 months per year during spring summer period. In winter and autumn period, it is open for trawl fishery only two days per week (Wednesday and Thursday) during the day light, with engine power limitation (max 184 kW). The area of Rijeka bay is divided in half and trawl fishery prohibition is alternating every 6 months between halves. Trawl fishing is also prohibited on Saturday and Sunday

12 NM around Jabuka/Pomo island In order to protect recruits of hake and Norway lobster during the sensitive phase of life cycles, temporal trawl fishing ban of 30 days was introduced during September and October in fishing zones C, D, E, J and K. In addition, short-term emergency temporal fishery regulation measures are often set in power when it is needed (e.g. bottom trawl fishery ban of 6NM of island Blitvenica for protection of hake recruits during spring summer period). Furthermore, trawl fishing is prohibited above seagrass beds, coralligenous habitats and maerl. Any fishing activities are forbidden inside of 3 marine national parks (315 km²), disposal sites for explosives (266 km²) and in other sensitive areas (ornithological reservations, nature parks etc.). According to the existing regulations, trawl fishing is permanently prohibited in approximately 30% of the territorial sea of Croatia, with additional around 10% is prohibited between 100 and 300 days annually. It should also be emphasized that, considering technical characteristics of vessels and geomorphological configuration of the bottom of the Adriatic Sea, trawl fishing in Croatia is dominantly performed up to 350 – 400 m depths.

3) Italy

The Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food, Forestry and Tourism Policies (MIPAAFT) regulates the temporary closure of fishing activities for bottom (OTB and TBB) and pelagic trawlers in the Adriatic Sea (August-July). Since 2012 such Regulation also includes temporary spatial restrictions: 1) vessels enabled to coastal fishery (15 m cannot operate inside the 6 nm from the beginning of the temporary closure until 31th October. These regulations exclude the Maritime Departments of Monfalcone and Trieste because, due to the peculiar geo-morphology of the northern Adriatic, the fishing grounds of such Maritime Departments have a limited spatial extension. EWG 19-02 has focused on Italy GSA17, where a temporary fishing ban inside the 6 nautical miles has been enforced since 2012. In 2017, the Italian fleet operating in the GSA17 included 259 vessels having LOA < 15 m belonging to the category DTS (251 OTB and 8 TBB) and 361 vessels having LOA > 15 m and belonging to the category DTS (313 OTB and 48 TBB).

MEDAC OPINION ON THE MAP FOR SMALL PELAGIC RESOURCES IN THE ADRIATIC (I)

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Rome, 7th August 2020

In acknowledging the fact that

the European Commission has decided to withdraw the proposal for a multiannual management plan for small pelagic resources in the Adriatic Sea (COM/2017/097 final - 2017/043 (COD);

the European Commission plans to present a proposal for a GFCM recommendation in the spring of 2021 in order to include Montenegro and Albania in the management measures, otherwise the measures would not apply to them;

the European Commission has asked the MEDAC to provide an opinion by 9th September 2020, so as to be in a position to consider the proposals made by the stakeholders that are represented in the framework of this Advisory Council;

during the WG1 meeting held by videoconference on 8th July 2020 this subject was put on the agenda and a series of issues was given further consideration (further to the extensive discussions held since 2014), such as the best resource management strategy between quota systems (TACs) and fishing effort management systems; joint or separate management of the two stocks (Sardine and Anchovy); the impact on marine resources and ecosystems of other forces, such as pollution

or climate change; socio-economic aspects; the possible duration of the multiannual plan and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries.

The sector has repeatedly emphasised the difficulty in preparing an opinion in the absence of up-to-date scientific data on the state of the resources affected by the imminent MAP, especially following the application of emergency measures which have already led to a reduction in fishing effort relative to the two species in question, with the associated socio-economic impact on the sector.

The MEDAC upholds the view that:

first and foremost, the future MAP for small pelagic resources in GSAs 17 and 18 must be based on a socioeconomic assessment that is up-to-date, robust and corroborated by the best scientific advice available, this analysis should be capable of highlighting the impact of the MAP year after year, not only on the resources but also on the economic sustainability of fisheries enterprises and on safeguarding jobs at adequate levels of remuneration.

Before adopting a new MAP at GFCM level, the effects in biological and economic terms of all the emergency measures applied so far must be carefully assessed from a scientific perspective, at EC level and beyond, from 2013 onwards, because in some cases these measures have already caused fisheries enterprises to close bringing about a further reduction in effort, taking into due account the encouraging signs on the state of resources that are emerging from many sources.

The quota system does not adapt well to the area nor to the type of resource and it could create conflict between maritime districts and different métiers (pelagic trawl and purse seine) both within the Member States in question and between MS, especially considering the difficulty operators would have in implementing a quota for each single species; the two species cannot be managed separately. The fishing effort management system, which has been implemented so far through the various emergency measures, is more manageable and sustainable for the sector once some data collection methodologies have been perfected and the benchmarks have been defined.

It needs to be formally confirmed that the measures imposed through recommendations issued by of international supra-European bodies (RFMOs) will be eligible for support in the new EMFF, currently the subject of trilogues, which has not happened up to now;

The duration of the MAPs needs to be long enough to allow for medium-term planning where possible investments by fisheries enterprises are concerned.

A common, shared position must be found for scientific research by the MS involved and procedures must be established to ensure real-time resource assessment, so that the management decisions that are made reflect the real situation as closely as possible.

The MAP will also have to take the fight against IUU fishing into due consideration, and adequate measures should be included to prevent by-catch of vulnerable species, such as sea turtles and sea birds.

The MEDAC'S opinion greatly matches with the European Economic and Social Committee:

“Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks [COM(2017) 97 final - 2017/0043 (COD)]” (attached).

considering the need to the incoming expiration of the GFCM emergency measures to manage small pelagic in Adriatic, has opted to withdraw the EU proposal for a multiannual management plan for small pelagic resources in the Adriatic Sea (COM/2017/097 final - 2017/043 (COD));

the European Commission foresees to draft a GFCM recommendation to be tabled in the spring of 2021 in order to include Montenegro and Albania as well in the multiannual management plan for small pelagic resources in the Adriatic Sea;

the European Commission asked MEDAC to provide an opinion by 9th September 2020, so as to be in a position to consider the proposals made by the stakeholders that are represented in the framework of this Advisory Council;

during the WG1 meeting, held by videoconference on 8th July 2020, this subject was put on the agenda and to a series of relative issues was given further attention (to expand the already extensive discussions started since 2014), such as:

- the best resource management strategy between quota system (TACs) and fishing effort management system;
- joint or separate management of the two main stocks (Sardine and Anchovy);
- the impact on marine resources and ecosystems of other sources, such as pollution and climate change;
- the socio-economic aspects;
- the possible duration of the multiannual plan and the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fisheries.

During the WG1, the fishing sector has repeatedly emphasised the difficulty in preparing an opinion in the absence of up-to-date scientific data on the state of the resources, which should have been improved by the application of the ongoing emergency measures, which have already led to a reduction in fishing effort (and a consequent) socio-economic impact. However, the MEDAC has repeatedly emphasised that absence of up-to-date scientific data is not good enough reason to provide an opinion based on the precautionary approach and using best available scientific data since even further reduction of fishing effort is needed.

The MEDAC upholds the view that:

First and foremost, the future MAP for small pelagic resources in GSAs 17 and 18 must be based on the best available scientific data¹, robust and corroborated by the best scientific advice available, this analysis should be capable of highlighting the impact of the MAP year after year, not only on the resources but also on the economic sustainability of fisheries enterprises and on safeguarding jobs at adequate levels of remuneration.

The EC STECF and the GFCM SAC must align their research and provide annually a single evaluation of the status of the small pelagic stocks. Further, they should regularly assess the effects in biological and economic terms of all the emergency measures applied so far from a scientific perspective, at EC level and beyond, from 2013 onwards (because in some cases these measures have already caused fisheries enterprises to close, bringing about a further reduction in effort), and provide advice on the state of the stocks.

The EC STECF and the GFCM SAC should scientifically assess the encouraging signs on the state of resources that are emerging from evidences collected by the fishing sector.

The quota system does not adapt well to Adriatic nor to the type of resource² and it could be seen as a potential mechanism to create conflict between maritime districts and different métier (pelagic trawl and purse seine), between Member States, especially considering the difficulty that the

operators would have in implementing a quota for each single species. According to some MEDAC members the two species cannot be managed separately. They further believe that the fishing effort management system, which has been implemented so far through the various emergency measures, is more manageable and sustainable for the sector, once some data collection methodologies have been perfected and the benchmarks have been defined³.

Furthermore, MEDAC is seeking reassurance that the EMFF support would be eligible for measures introduced by the GFCM and transposed into the EU legislation⁴.

The duration of the MAPs needs to be long enough to allow for medium-term planning where possible investments by fisheries enterprises are concerned.

A common, shared position must be found for scientific research by the MS involved and procedures must be established to ensure at best real-time resource assessment, so that the management decisions that are made reflect the real situation of the stocks concerned as closely as possible.

The MAP will also have to take the fight against IUU fishing into due consideration, and adequate measures should be included to prevent any by-catch of vulnerable species, such as sharks, sea turtles and sea birds.

The MEDAC'S opinion greatly matches with the European Economic and Social Committee: "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks [COM(2017) 97 final - 2017/0043 (COD)]" (attached)⁵

¹ Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA support the following modifications to the sentence "given the critical state of the small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic first and foremost, the future MAP for small pelagic resources in GSAs 17 and 18 must be based on the best available scientific data and precautionary approach" and add "The sector is further committed to provide socioeconomic data that can contribute to assessment that is up-to-date".

² Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA support the following modification to the sentence: "With respect to quota system, there is no unanimity in the opinion."

³ While Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA would rather support the introduction of a quota system.

⁴ It is view of Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA that the EMFF should not finance harmful fishing subsidies and seek reassurance on this.

⁵ Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA disagree about the reference to Proposal of the European Economic and Social Committee.

MEDAC REPLY TO THE DG MARE LETTER ON THE DRAFT MAP FOR SMALL PELAGIC IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

Rome, 13th November 2020

To Charlina Vitcheva (Director General, EC – DG MARE)

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

Thank you for your reply of 12 October 2020 asking for additional information on the mechanisms for an effort regime and how these could be implemented for managing small pelagic in the Adriatic sea. Let me use this opportunity to stress that MEDAC as an organization that represents the fisheries sector and other interest groups related to fishing industry is not competent to provide you with the exact scientific information such as sustainability reference points or relations of fishing mortality and fishing effort. Our opinion indeed takes into account scientific arguments but also tries to balance the potential impact on fisheries sector.

Although scientific experts consulted by the MEDAC support the management through TAC and quotas, because it can be more easily managed, assessed and controlled, **the Mediterranean**

Advisory Council confirms its own opinion on the MAP for Small Pelagic resources in the Adriatic Sea (Ref. 207/2020). The reasons behind this statement are mainly due to the following relevant uncertainties still underpinning the related management measures to be included in the forthcoming MAP:

- the benchmark has not been still reached and the time series have some important shortcomings;
- the effects of the last emergency measures (Rec. GFCM/42/2018/8) have still not been assessed nor on the stocks nor on the socioeconomic aspects. This assessment can be relevant considering that the last measures are mainly based on fishing effort reduction, although a maximum total allowable catches has been fixed;
- there is still no one scientifically correct answer to the question on separated or mixed quotas on which to base management measures. Fishing gears cannot effectively distinguish between twospecies and during fishing operations for sure there will be mixing of the catch causing involuntary depletion of the stock;
- many factors are impacting the Adriatic Sea including plastic pollution, climate change and the consequent effect on temperature/salinity/nutrients, including alien species altering the food web. An ecosystem approach in assessing the stock fluctuation should be attempted before making management decisions.

Therefore, all these uncertainties can drive towards **Therefore, all these uncertainties can drive towards strong difficulties in implementation of TAC/quota system and finding an agreement between the coastal countries of the Adriatic Sea (EU and third countries)**¹²³

Currently, the management of these resources is carried out through the simultaneous application of the following measures:

- 1 MCRS for each species
- 2 Limit of fishing days for each species and total per year
- 3 Temporal closure up to 9 months of the coastal area within 6 miles (nursery area)
- 4 Fishing closure for 30 consecutive days for each species
- 5 Closed number of vessels authorized to fish for these species in the Adriatic
- 6 Reduction in the number of authorized boats by a two-year option for fishing small pelagic (Italian law only)

Excluding the first and last, all other measures can be modified in a restrictive way depending on the updated information on the state of the stocks⁴.

Any changes will have to take into account the effects of further limitations on the economy of fishing companies, allowing for a multi-annual economic planning and not their closure.

¹ Croatian fishery sector does acknowledge the theoretical benefits of such a system, but only for those stocks with solid and robust scientific assessment and in such circumstances where there is a level playing field in place across the entire area and for all the fleets concerned in terms of control, which at this moment is not the case in Adriatic. Therefore, the position of MEDAC is that the management framework should continue as it is, based on fishing effort management regime, with possible additional measures strengthening protection of both, resources and fleets.

² AgciAgrital, Federcoopescas and Legacoop highlight the need of a strong sharing action to allow an acceptable agreement on TAC system.

³ While Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA would rather support the introduction of a quota system.

⁴ Birdlife, Legambiente, MedReAct, WWF and EAA add "The sector is further committed to provide socioeconomic data that can contribute to assessment that is up-to-date.

FG WestMed - Focus Group on Western Mediterranean



MEDAC CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A MAP FOR THE FISHERIES EXPLOITING DEMERSAL STOCKS IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Rome, 13th September, 2016

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B. Fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the W-Med

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the perception of the problem described in the background document (i.e. “high levels of overfishing and limitations of the current management framework”)?

Neutral

On the 14th July 2015, during the Commission’s yearly meeting on “State of Fish Stocks and the Economic Performance of Fishing Fleets”, European Commission services emphasized the dramatic decline of Mediterranean stocks. All the efforts made by stakeholders, and the current management framework, have not produced the expected results considered the great reduction in the fishing efforts already implemented.

STECF report¹ on Western Mediterranean Sea, states that the exploitation levels of the stocks assessed are very high and concentrated on young ages. This over-exploitation is severely undermining the potential yield that could be obtained from these stocks and is likely to keep the biological risk of collapse at high levels.

On February 9th and 10th 2016, in Catania, European Commission services responsible for Fisheries Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and the MEDAC co-organized a High-level Seminar during which scientists presented a diagnostic of the status of the resources in the Mediterranean Sea. As clearly stated by Commissioner Vella, any facts were undisputed: fish stocks in the Mediterranean are declining, some are close to depletion. Overall, 93% of the fish stocks assessed, that are only 30% of the total of the fish population are over-exploited.

2. Are there any other aspects that you consider should be taken into account when defining the problem?

As it was pointed out in Catania, other important elements than the ones strictly related to the fisheries, must be taken into account when addressing the depletion of the stocks in the Mediterranean (environment, climate change, other human impact, etc..) as to implement the ecosystem base approach to fisheries management.

- WWF believes that the following aspects should be taken into account:
- In order to address overfishing in the area, the MAP should set clear objectives and time-frame for reference points (MSY, SSB, F)
- An ecosystemic approach should be adopted, ensuring a strong linkage between Marine Spatial Planning and fishery measures and the achievement of Good Environmental Status
- The management measures in the MAP should also take into account the impact of fishing activity by recreational fishers.

- Enforcement of control is crucial for the effectiveness of the measures. All fleets and vessels must be treated equally, using balanced monitoring and control methods according to their fisheries operations and characteristics. The EU and Member States need to alter their attitude towards chronic non-compliance and restrict EMFF funds to Member States with poor compliance records.

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current management framework (through national management plans) is sufficient to meet the objectives of the CFP (i.e. sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources) in the Western Mediterranean Sea?

Disagree

Most of the national management plans (NMP) in the Mediterranean have been adopted before the revised CFP and therefore they are not set on the objective to reach MSY within 2020. In addition, management plans at national level have to be supported by other management measures and cannot solve the problems because in most cases they are not yet fully implemented. Moreover, national MP do not include any measure related to recreational fisheries, despite the fact that in many areas this segment plays an important role in terms of exploitation of the stocks.

Moreover, they manage fisheries by fishing gear, but as Mediterranean demersal fisheries are highly multi-species, it would be more effective to approach by species or groups of species.

Nowadays, as scientist evaluation shows, fishing exploitation of marine biological resources is far of being sustainable.

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that complementing the current management framework with short-term measures such as emergency measures set at national or EU level (e.g. trawling ban, etc..) would be a sufficient solution to meet the objectives of the CFP?

Disagree

Multi Annual Management Plans (MAPs), should be a tool driving Mediterranean fisheries towards a sustainable exploitation of marine resources. Emergency measures should be only used as a last resource, when it becomes clear that CFP and MAPs objectives cannot be achieved without such measures.

The landing obligation is not taken into account in the current management framework. A MAP should integrate the management measures with the provisions set by the LO rather than focusing on how to deal with the fish that it is landed, the challenge of discards must be addressed in the water by promoting measures that support fish selectivity at sea and the minimization of impacts in sensitive species i.e. marine mammals, reptiles and seabirds, such as technical modifications of nets to include fish exclusion devices (eg. grids, panels, turtle exclusion devices) as well as avoidance of critical and sensitive areas, particularly during seasonal migrations.

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that amending the current management framework would be a sufficient solution to meet the objectives of the CFP?

Disagree

MAP for sustainable exploitation of marine resources in the Mediterranean is a crucial tool. Current NMPs fail to set clear management objectives and timeline in line with the best available scientific advice as to recover stocks to sustainable levels therefore failing to meet CFP obligations. However, in order to be effective and have significant impact in terms of conservation, the Plan must be properly implemented, enforced, monitored and assessed. However, external factors such as pollution, human impacts, environment, also play an important role for the health of a given stock. Such aspects cannot be always addressed in a management plan.

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current management framework is fully implemented?

Disagree

Current NMPs, poorly implemented or highly fragmented or incomplete although might be implemented in some areas, result not to be effective in achieving CFP obligations. Therefore, NMPs are not contributing to ensure long-term sustainable management of the fishery stocks. Also in different areas the following shortcomings are still present within the NMP:

- Biological reference points not fulfilled or totally missing; consequently:
- Fail in identifying management measures that can ensure the recovery of stocks in the short term;
- Trawling ban on maërl and coralligenous beds – as foreseen in Art. 4 of the MedReg² - is still not fully implemented in the Mediterranean region because of the lack of an appropriate mapping of the relevant areas.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that an EU multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean Sea, which would take into account the interactions between different types of fisheries, would be the best option?

Strongly agree

It is well known that Mediterranean fisheries are highly multi-specific. Managing the fisheries by species or group of species, taking into account the interactions between different gears and types of fisheries, it is the most effective approach for the sustainable exploitation of the stocks.

The existing national management plans refer to areas which are under the competence of one single Member State, while most of the fish stocks move across the territorial waters of more than one Member State. Not all the relevant areas and relevant species are covered by the existing national management plans, and some fisheries are not currently subject to measures aiming at achieving MSY and GES targets. Also, it would improve management of shared stocks between different Member States (MS).

8. Which objectives do you consider should be introduced in a possible EU MAP?

To attain sustainable exploitation of the stocks driving demersal fisheries VERY IMPORTANT

This is the main objective of MAPs under the CFP. As it has been said the multi-specificity of Mediterranean fisheries makes any approach more complex. Addressing the fisheries by groups of species (i.e. driving stocks) can be a solution.

To adopt an effective and transparent management framework VERY IMPORTANT

Taking into account all the pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, economic) is crucial for the effectiveness of a MAP.

To ensure socio-economic stability of the fishing sector VERY IMPORTANT

This is one of the goals that any management plan should achieve to guarantee the economic and social viability. Participation, stakeholders involvement and co-management, is a way to improve compliance.

To reinforce control, monitoring and surveillance systems IMPORTANT

The benefits of an effective control system, homogenously managed throughout all geographical areas, are evident in terms of compliance with the set of measures. Monitoring is also very important in order to align data collection and assessing with the real status of the stocks.

Other objectives:

- To ensure that the fisheries management includes an ecosystem based approach and contributes to the achievement of Good environmental status.
- Address the incidental catches of marine mammals, turtles and seabirds through the adoption of management measures aimed to reduce the impact of fisheries on protected and sensitive species.

9. Which of the following elements do you consider should be introduced in a possible EU multiannual plan?

Scope in terms of stocks, fisheries, area VERY IMPORTANT

Quantifiable targets with timeframe for achieving them VERY IMPORTANT

CFP objectives should drive both for reference points and timeline.

Safeguards and remedial actions VERY IMPORTANT

Measures should be flexible and aligned with the best scientific advices.

Provisions to implement LO VERY IMPORTANT

The measures relating to landing obligation should be included in the MAP in order to avoid any overlap.

Emergency measures IMPORTANT

All the needed actions should be undertaken to avoid any stock to get into emergency situations. However, systems are complex and it is not always possible to prevent emergencies. Or differently the measures adopted under the plan might result not effective as expected to recover targeted stocks. In these events, specific measures, especially those undertaken to check the quality of Mediterranean waters and those implemented to fight pollution and its dangerous effects, should be put in place in order to restore the good status of the stock.

10. Which species do you consider should be introduced in a possible EU multiannual plan?

ALL VERY IMPORTANT

- **GSA 1:** blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and red mullet (*Mullus spp*) blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*), deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), anglerfish (*Lophius sp.*)
- **GSA 5:** hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), surmullet (*Mullus surmuletus*), blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), anglerfish (*Lophius sp.*)
- **GSA 6:** blackbellied angler (*Lophius budegassa*), blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), blue whiting (*Poutassou Micromesitius*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris shrimp*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*).

- **GSA 7:** blackbellied angler (*Lophius budegassa*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*)
- **GSA 9:** blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), giant red shrimp (*Aristomorpha foliacea*), deep-water rose-shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), mantis shrimp (*Squilla Mantis*), common pandora (*Pagellus erythrinus*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*)
- **GSA 10:** hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), deep-water rose-shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), mantis shrimp (*Squilla Mantis*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*)
- **GSA 11:** giant red shrimp (*Aristomorpha foliacea*), deep-water rose-shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*)

11. Which technical/conservation measures do you consider should be introduced to manage the species included in a possible EU multiannual plan?

To establish spatio/temporal closures (e.g. reproduction period/area, etc.) VERY IMPORTANT

The protection of spawning and nursery grounds is key for the sustainable exploitation of the stocks

To establish seasonal or daily catch limit IMPORTANT

The multi-specific nature of Mediterranean fisheries, results to be difficult to address with catch limits. There would be many choke species to deal with. Limitation of the fishing effort (spatio-temporal closures) and capacity are key tool to reduce the fishing mortality.

To define ceilings for fishing capacity and/or fishing effort IMPORTANT

In such situations where an area is assessed to be overexploited, and even if it is not overexploited, ceilings to fishing effort can be considered a useful tool to recover or maintain stocks biomass above levels which can produce MSY.

However, capacity management strategies have proven not to be effective in managing stocks sustainably in the Mediterranean and in guaranteeing the sustainability of the fishery. There are strong limitations in identifying capacity limits and such an approach is resulted in reduction in nominal capacity but not in proper fishing mortality reduction, leading to the actual overexploitation rate.

To address the selectivity of the fishing gears IMPORTANT

Selectivity is a key issue to manage fisheries. Several projects are currently running to improve trawlers selectivity (i.e. MINOUW) and reduce discards. Measures to minimize and where possible eliminate the incidental catches of marine mammals, turtles and seabirds should be included.

To apply sorting grids or similar devices VERY IMPORTANT

12. Which technical measures do you consider should be introduced to facilitate the implementation of the landing obligation?

De minimis exemptions IMPORTANT

A regime of de minimis tailored on the reported discards level, would be an effective tool to facilitate the implementation of the LO particularly in its first stage.

Mechanism to promote reduction of unwanted catches should be promoted.

Measures designed to minimize unwanted catches by modifying the gear structure IMPORTANT
Selectivity of the gears both for size and species, is a key element.

Measures designed to minimize unwanted catches by spatio/temporal closures VERY IMPORTANT

Protection of essential fish habitats should be a priority for the MAP in order to ensure target values of SSB and recruitment.

Market incentives SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT

In the Mediterranean discards are mainly related to undersized specimens of those species with a MCRS according to the EU Reg. 1967/2006. The above mentioned species are all commercial and highly valuable for the market.

13. Which mitigation measures do you consider should be introduced to minimize short-term economic and social impacts on the fishing fleet and the coastal communities depending on the demersal fisheries?

To improve the added value of fish products, including the use of ecolabelling VERY IMPORTANT

For example, MSC certification which is in progress for several Mediterranean fisheries. Also, public ecolabelling is crucial for small scale fleets, to make available the possibility to get those labels to small entrepreneurs. In particular, local fresh products should be encouraged through market incentives in respect to imported far away products.

To promote the setting of new Producer Organizations/support existing ones VERY IMPORTANT

There are several good examples of PO which can be studied as a good practice: OP Fasolari in Veneto (North Adriatic Sea) is one. POs can help in adding value to productions driving the market and managing the resource. Other professional organization might have achieved good practices and should be supported.

To provide public support under the EMFF VERY IMPORTANT

14. Which other technical/conservation measures not yet applied in the Mediterranean Sea do you consider appropriate in view of ensuring sustainable exploitation?

To establish fishing opportunities NOT AT ALL (ITALIANS, FRENCH, CEPESCA)
VERY (OCEANA, EAA) IMPORTANT (WWF)

To increase the mesh size to avoid catches of juveniles fish NOT AT ALL (ITALIANS, FRENCH)
IMPORTANT (WWF, EAA, OCEANA, CEPESCA)

CEPESCA, however, considers it crucial to change the twine (torzal) of the net from 3 to 5 mm

To establish new MCRS VERY IMPORTANT (OCEANA, EAA, WWF)
IMPORTANT (CEPESCA)
NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT (ITALIANS, FRENCH,)

Other measures to be applied are:

- Incentivize more sustainable fishing practices through preferential approach to less damaging gears and fleets.
- Spatial-temporal management to avoid catching juveniles, to protect important habitats- Encourage the increase of the twine from 3 to 5 millimeters

15. Which impacts on the ecosystems do you consider should be taken into account in a possible EU multiannual plan?

Impact on habitats and benthic communities	IMPORTANT
By-catch of unwanted species	IMPORTANT
Impact on juvenile individuals	IMPORTANT

16. Are there specific measures (such as minimum mesh size, MCRS, permanent or seasonal closures, etc.) that merit increased flexibility under an EU multiannual plan and that could be introduced at a regional level? What would be the most appropriate legal framework for doing so, the technical measures regulation or the possible EU MAP?

Permanent and temporal spatial and seasonal closures, particularly relating to nursery and spawning areas, can be addressed as fish stock recovery areas under the MAP. Each GSA should define for target species the most sensitive areas to be fishery restricted on the basis of a MAP. MAP should define the framework of the management measures to be then locally and regionally implemented (art.18 CFP).

17. Which management framework do you consider better to manage the demersal fisheries in the W-Med?

National management plans set under the Mediterranean Regulation (with amendments)
SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT

NMP were implemented without taking in due consideration the conservation objectives of the revised CFP (e.g. MSY approach and 2020 targets, LO, ecosystem approach, etc.). Moreover, the Landing obligation has come into force in the meanwhile.

An EU multiannual plan
IMPORTANT

A MAP addressing conservation issues for priority stocks in the Mediterranean can be facilitated under the regionalization approach with shared stocks of UE Member States.

An international multiannual plan
VERY IMPORTANT

The best solution would be to think of a MAP at the basin level, involving EU and non-EU MS. For this reason, a close coordination and cooperation between the European Commission and the GFCM is highly recommended.

¹ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Western Mediterranean Multi-annual Plan STECF-15-09. 2015. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR XXXX EN, JRC XXXX, XXX pp.

² COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1967/2006 of 21 December 2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1626/94

97 MEDAC DOCUMENT ON A MULTIANNUAL PLAN FOR THE FISHERIES EXPLOITING DEMERSAL STOCKS IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Rome, 12th September 2017

According to the Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013), the objective of sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources is more effectively achieved through a multiannual approach to fisheries management, and hence multiannual plans (MAP) reflecting the specificities of different fisheries shall be adopted as a priority.

MAPs should, where possible, cover multiple stocks where those stocks are jointly exploited. The MAPs should establish the framework for the sustainable exploitation of stocks and marine ecosystems concerned, defining clear time-frames and safeguard mechanisms for unforeseen developments.

The MAP for the Western Mediterranean is the first one in the region concerning demersal stocks. It should also be governed by clearly defined management objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable exploitation of marine resources and to the protection of the ecosystems. The MEDAC should play a key role in defining measures and provide advice after consultations of the fishing industry, scientists, NGOs, recreational fisheries and other stakeholders having interests in the area of application. Prior to including measures in a multiannual plan, account shall be taken of possible impacts of the plan under environmental, economic and social point of view.

1) Geographical scope of the plan

Although the majority of MEDAC's members agree that the geographical scope of the MAP should be wide and inclusive, it is a shared opinion (with the exception of OCEANA and Legambiente) that including all the GSAs in the same plan could lead to a difficult implementation of the measures at local level. A wider geographical scope should be set for the Western Mediterranean to set a general framework of implementation, however management measures should take into account the specificity of each homogeneous area in order to meet the targets of the plan.

GSA	SpeciesA3	code	Main Gear	Fcurr/FMSY	Report
7	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB, OTT, LLS	3.59	STECF15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, LLS, GNS	3.21	STECF 14_17

2) Stocks and gears

GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/Fmsy	Report
9	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB	5.50	STECF 15_18
	Aristomorpha foliacea	ARS	OTB	0.25	STECF 15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GNS, GTR, OTB	1.17	STECF 14_17
	Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	OTB	0.97	STECF 15_06
10	Aristomorpha foliacea	ARS	OTB	1.40	STECF 15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GNS, GTR, OTB,	1	SAC 17
	Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	OTB,	1.70	SAC 17
	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB		
11	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	OTB	5.50	STECF 15_18
	Aristomorpha foliacea	ARS	OTB	1.61	STECF 15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB	9.73	STECF 14_08

All the MEDAC members agree with the stocks listed by STECF and reported here below, with some modifications. All commercially exploited demersal stocks should be considered, including target and bycatch species, together with the concerned fisheries and gears. Moreover, coastal demersal stocks should be included, as well as the impacts from Small Scale and Recreational fisheries.

GNS: set gillnets	OTB: bottom otter trawl
GTR: trammel nets	LLS: set longlines

3) Management options.

All the MEDAC members agree in including recreational fisheries in the MAP. As far as the management options are concerned, Federcoopesca and LegaCoop state that the reduction of 20% of fishing mortality should be considered instead of the fishing capacity. The majority of the members are not in favour of TAC and quotas for demersal species.

Legambiente, Oceana and WWF consider that fishing opportunities based on scientific advice should be adopted, including catch limits, when possible or effort limits (such as days/hour per day at sea per vessel or number of vessels i.e. quota effort) when multispecies fisheries occur. The allocation of fishing opportunities should take into account the impact on specific fishing areas, encouraging practices with the lowest impact on the stocks and ecosystems.

4) Other recommendations to reduce fishing mortality

All the MEDAC members listed a number of other recommendations:

- To implement new Marine protected Areas and Fishery Restricted Areas, with the involvement of all stakeholders; To establish spatio-temporal closures, in order to protect the spawning and nursery grounds. At this regard WWF suggests to take into account the outcomes of the project SafeNet – Sustainable Fisheries in EU Mediterranean waters through a network of MPAs on particular for coastal areas. The Report on the identification and characterization of nursery and spawning areas of selected stocks (Deliverable 2.3) aimed at identifying and describing the spatial-temporal distributions of the nursery and spawning grounds of the most relevant demersal stocks exploited by commercial fisheries in the GSAs 6,7,8,9,11 should be therefore taken into account. The aim of the project is to develop a spatial management model for the West Mediterranean to identify the best layout for spatial closures. The outcomes of the project should be available at the beginning of 2018.
- To improve the selectivity of the fishing gears; At this regard WWF suggests to take into account the outcomes of the project MINOUW aiming at encouraging the adoption of fishing technologies and practices to reduce unwanted catches and contribute to the elimination of discards in EU fisheries.
- To improve the diversification of fishing activities (ittiturismo, pescaturismo...);
- To consider special provisions for Small Scale Fisheries.
- To adjust the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) to the size at maturity and increase the number of species for which MCRS is set.

5) Other management recommendations

- To carry out a socio-economic analysis before the implementation of technical/management measures, in order to ensure stability of the fishing sector.

MEDAC OPINION FOR A MULTIANNUAL PLAN (MAP) FOR THE FISHERIES EXPLOITING DEMERSAL STOCKS IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Rome, 7th November 2017

1) Background

The MEDAC adopted this opinion in order to provide useful elements for the proposal of a Multi-annual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in Western Mediterranean.

The following meetings of the Focus Group on the West Mediterranean took place within the MEDAC:

- Rome (Italy) 21 February 2017
- Malta 28 March 2017
- Rome (Italy) 7 June 2017
- Palma de Mallorca (Spain) 10 October 2017

In each of these meetings the constructive spirit shown by all parties representing the social, economic and environmental interests, permitted to reach agreement and adopt this document.

2) Geographical scope of the plan

MEDAC's members agree that the geographical scope of the Multiannual Plan should be wide and inclusive. The general framework of implementation and measures should be applied for all the GSAs in the Western Mediterranean (GSA 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). However it is a shared opinion that the application of the same management measures when dealing with different stocks and gears and geographical areas, could lead to a difficult implementation of the measures at local level. Management measures should take into account the specificity of each homogeneous area and the state of the stocks in order to meet the targets of the plan.

3) Stocks and gears

MEDAC members agree on considering the following stocks as a priority for the multi-annual plan. However management measures should also be adopted for other relevant species including target and bycatch species and the number of stocks for which assessments are available, should be increased (see point 4c).

GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/FMSY
1	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, GTR, OTB	3.59
	Aristeus antennatus	ARA	OTB	3.41
	Lophius budegassa	ANK	OTB	1.56
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, GTR	4.85
	P. longirostris	DPS	OTB	1.65
5	Aristeus antennatus	ARA	OTB	1.75
	Lophius budegassa	ANK	OTB	10.50
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, GTR	6.64
6	Aristeus antennatus	ARA	OTB	2.08
	Lophius budegassa	ANK	OTB	6.50
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, GTR	3.27

GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/FMSY*
7	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB, OTT, LLS	3.59
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, LLS, GNS	3.21

GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/FMSY
9	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB	5.50
	A. foliacea	ARS	OTB	0.25
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GNS, GTR, OTB	1.17
	P. longirostris	DPS	OTB	0.97
10	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GNS, GTR, OTB	1
	P.longirostris	ARS	OTB	1.70
	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB	
	A. foliacea	ARS	OTB	1.40
11	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	OTB	5.50
	A. foliacea	ARS	OTB	1.61
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB	9.73

SOURCE: STECF reports

4) Management recommendations for the area of application

Following discussions among stakeholders, considering the worrying conditions of fishery stocks which are affected also by others factors, MEDAC members, instead of TAC and Quotas, agreed on the following measures to be adopted at sub-regional level:

- Extend the obligation for the **vessels** fishing in the area of application of the Multi-annual Plan, regardless of the length and gears in use, to be provided by an **electronic monitoring system** (taking into account of the new opportunities arising from emergent technologies and systems under development) to track fishing operations.
- Considering the Mediterranean Regulation, where and when necessary, extend the **bottom towed gears ban from 50 m to an appropriate depth**. This measure will contribute to increase the protection of coastal essential fish habitats for juveniles in line with Art. 8 of the CFP requirements. It will also improve sensitive and protected habitats preservation.
- MEDAC members agree on the need to **revise the minimum landing size** for all the species listed in Annex III of Reg 1967/2006, according to size at first maturity. Moreover the following relevant species, both for professional and recreational fisheries in coastal areas, should be subject to a minimum landing size: *Sciaena umbra*, *Umbrina cirrosa*, *Dentex dentex*, *Seriola dumerili*, *Lichia amia*. The above 5 species should also be considered for **stock assessments**, in addition to *Dicentrarchus labrax* and *Sparus aurata* and *Epinephelus marginatus*.
- In order to contribute to the reduction of fishing effort in the area of application, MEDAC members agree that in the context of EMFF, the measure for **fleet scrapping** (Reg. No 508/2014, art.34, Permanent cessation of fishing activities) **and temporary cessation** (Reg. No 508/2014, art.33, Temporary cessation of fishing activities), should be preserved in the future. It is an effective tool which allows a fast adaptation of the capacity to the state of resource and it is an important incentive for fishers.
- All the measures adopted within the Multi-annual plan should also apply to **recreational fisheries** in the area of application.¹

5) Management recommendations at sub-regional level (GSAs)

- MEDAC members agree on identifying Fishing opportunities based on scientific advice (**effort limits**²) as an effective tool to reduce the fishing mortality. Limitations regarding **days at sea/vessels per day**, should be introduced at GSA level, according to scientific advice and the stakeholders' involvement. Reduction of the fishing effort should be proportionate to Fcurr/FMSY and be based on stock assessments.

- b MEDAC members agree on identifying **spatial-temporal closures** of fishing activities to protect spawning and nursery areas, with the full involvement of all stakeholders. The implementation of new **MPAs** and **FRAs** in sensitive habitats is considered key in order to ensure a sustainable exploitation in the long term.
- c MEDAC members agree on considering Co-management an effective tool for the management of fishing resources at local level. Such approach should include the participation of the industry, scientists, national administrations, recreational fisheries and NGOs for the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks.

MEDAC members agree that before the implementation of management measures a socio-economic analysis must be carried out in order to evaluate the impacts and ensure the stability for different activities and interests both for commercial and recreational fisheries.

¹ EFSA considers that this point does not take into account the specificities related to the recreational fisheries and that could have negative effects to the sector's related activities.

² Oceana considers that fishing opportunities based on scientific advice should also include catch limits as much as possible.

99 MEDAC opinion on the Proposal for a Regulation of the EP and of the Council establishing a MAP for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea. (COM (2018) 115 final)

Rome, 6th July 2018

On 7 November 2017 MEDAC adopted by consensus the opinion concerning useful elements for the proposal of a Multi-annual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in Western Mediterranean (Ref.270/2017). Thereafter, the FG WMED met in Zagreb, last April, and in that occasion the DG MARE representative presented the EC proposal for a MAP for the demersal species in the Western Mediterranean. In that occasion the members raised up their preliminary comments on it. During the FG WMED meetings, held in Sète on June 12, 2018, the participants expressed the following general opinions on the Regulation proposed by the EC:

- The proposal doesn't include an ex-ante evaluation of the socio-economic impacts, as already highlighted in the previous MEDAC opinion (7 November 2017). Furthermore, the consequent job lost is a transversal issue that affects also different national administrations and not only the national DG fisheries. The right to work must be protected in the fishery sector such as in the other economic sectors.
- MS administrations should provide solutions to support the measures implementation in light of the economical efforts required to the fishermen.
- Some of the elements reported in the previous MEDAC opinion (Ref.270/2017, 7 November 2017) have been included partially in the proposal, without pointing out the rationale behind the contribution, in particular related to "the extension of the bottom towed gears ban from 50 m to an appropriate depth to increase the protection of coastal essential fish habitats" in which MEDAC clearly stated that "when and where necessary to provide a possible extension of the bottom towed gears ban"¹.
- Management measures should be specific for each GSA, taking into consideration fishing activities of extra-EU fleets too operating in the Mediterranean Sea.
- Co-decision and regionalization should be implemented and supported, whereas the delegated acts foreseen in the proposal don't improve this process. Co-management with participatory

- processes that can guarantee a bottom-up decision making and improved governance. The establishment of multi-stakeholder groups at local level would not just allow an adaptive management system but would entail the involvement and effective participation of the fishery sector and other stakeholders in the design and management of the necessary measures on the MAPs, including appropriate technical measures and spatial-temporal closures.
- The final measures included in the MAP should reach as much as possible the consent of stakeholders before to be enforced.
 - Given the shared nature of stocks with third countries outside of the EU – it is important that regional collaboration through the GFCM is implemented to ascertain that regional management plans are effective.

¹ NGOs (Archipelago, Legambiente, Medreact, Oceana, WWF) consider that the extension of prohibition of bottom towed gear in the EC proposal reflects the MEDAC opinion (7 November 2017). Scientific recommendation, based in Medisch project, suggests the extension of this ban to at least 100m to protect juveniles. This measure would also partially contribute to the protection of Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretion habitats, which can reach 150 m depths. Given the severe situation of the stocks we suggest increasing the trawl ban up to at least 100m depth all year round, not only for 3 months to improve the effectiveness of the measure. Other closures in deeper areas than 100m should also be taken into account for spawning and juveniles aggregations of other demersal stocks and sensitive habitats that occur at higher depth.

Furthermore, the proposal for a Regulation establishing a MAP in WMED has been analyzed article by article and the following aspects have been highlighted:

EC DRAFT MAP demersal species in WMED	MEDAC OBSERVATIONS
Article 1	No observations
Article 2	No observations
<p>Article 3 Objectives</p> <p>1. The plan shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the common fisheries policy, as listed in Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, in particular by applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management, and shall aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce MSY.</p> <p>2. The plan shall contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches as far as possible, and to the implementation of the landing obligation established in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 for the species which are subject to minimum conservation reference sizes and to which this Regulation applies.</p> <p>3. The plan shall implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in order to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are</p>	<p>1.- The precautionary approach is not an objective. ²</p> <p>2. - Suppression of par. 2 is required: The implementation of the LO is already included in art. 15 of the Basic Regulation.³</p> <p>3. - Socio-economic sustainability should be added among the objectives of the plan.</p>

² NGOs consider that the reiteration of some legislative reference, such as the precautionary principles, are key principles enshrined in the CFP and legally recognised. MAP is the operational, regional implementation tool of the CFP, therefore such principles should be kept in.

³ NGOs support paragraph 2 as it is in line with the content of the multiannual plans required by CFP (art10,1,f) and should not be suppressed. Deleting reference to LO would go against the CFPO principle.

<p>minimised. It shall be coherent with Union environmental legislation, in particular with the objective of achieving good environmental status by 2020 as set out in Article 1(1) of Directive 2008/56/EC and the objectives set out in Articles 4 and 5 of Directive 2009/147/EC and Articles 6 and 12 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC.</p> <p>4. In particular, the plan shall aim to:</p> <p>(a) ensure that the conditions described in descriptor 3 contained in Annex I to Directive 2008/56/EC are fulfilled; and</p> <p>(b) contribute to the fulfilment of other relevant descriptors contained in Annex I to Directive 2008/56/EC in proportion to the role played by fisheries in their fulfilment.</p> <p>5. Measures in the plan shall be taken on the basis of the best available scientific advice. Where there is insufficient data, a comparable degree of conservation of the relevant stocks shall be pursued.</p>	
<p>Article 4 <i>Targets</i></p> <p>1. The target fishing mortality in line with the ranges of FMSY defined in Article 2 shall be achieved as soon as possible, and on a progressive, incremental basis by 2020 for the stocks concerned, and shall be maintained thereafter within the ranges of FMSY.</p> <p>2. The ranges of FMSY shall be requested, in particular from STECF, based on this plan.</p> <p>3. In accordance with Article 16(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, when the Council fixes fishing opportunities, it shall establish those opportunities for the assemblage of stocks concerned, within the range of FMSY available at that time for the most vulnerable stock.</p> <p>4. By way of derogation from paragraphs 1 and 3, fishing opportunities may be set at levels that are lower than the ranges of FMSY.</p> <p>5. By way of derogation from paragraphs 3 and 4, fishing opportunities may be set above the range of FMSY available</p>	<p>1.- The target fishing mortality in line with the ranges of FMSY should be postponed to 4 years.</p> <p>3. – 4. – 5. It should be better clarified how the range of FMSY will be managed in the mixed fishery context⁴.</p>

⁴ NGOs support the CFP timeline and principles of achieving Fmsy by 2020 at the latest and oppose any delay in this obligation (adopted in 2013).

<p>at that time for the most vulnerable stock, provided that all stocks concerned are above the BPA:</p> <p>(a) if, on the basis of the scientific advice or evidence, it is necessary for the achievement of the objectives laid down in Article 3 in mixed fisheries;</p> <p>(b) if, on the basis of the scientific advice or evidence, it is necessary to avoid serious harm to a stock due to intra- or inter-species stock dynamics; or</p> <p>(c) in order to limit variations in fishing opportunities between consecutive years to a maximum of 20 %.</p>	<p>5.c – How has been calculated the 20%? Which is the scientific basis of this percentage? The interannual variation should be limited to 10%. The MEDAC underlined that it could be possible to set a limit related to the effort reduction throughout 5 years in order to take into account the socio-economic impact.</p>
Article 5	No observations
<p>Article 6 Safeguards</p> <p>1. Where the scientific advice shows that the spawning biomass of any of the stocks concerned is below the precautionary reference point (BPA), remedial measures shall be adopted to ensure the rapid return of the stocks concerned to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, by way of derogation from Article 4(3) and (5), fishing opportunities shall be set at levels consistent with a fishing mortality that is reduced within the range of FMSY for the most vulnerable stock, taking into account the decrease in biomass.</p> <p>2. Where the scientific advice shows that the spawning biomass of any of the stocks concerned is below the limit reference point (BLIM), further remedial measures shall be taken to ensure the rapid return of the stock to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, by way of derogation from Article 4(3) and (5), those measures may include suspending the targeted fishery for the stock concerned and the adequate reduction of the fishing opportunities.</p> <p>3. Remedial measures referred to in this Article may include:</p> <p>(a) measures pursuant to Articles 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of this Regulation; and</p> <p>(b) emergency measures in accordance with Articles 12 and 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.</p>	<p>Article 6 – it seems to be a repetition of what has been already foreseen in art. 4 with the risk that safeguard measures could be aligned with the ordinary management measures⁵.</p>

⁵ NGOs state that the article 6 shall not be modified because safeguard measures are a CFP requirement (Art. 10, 1 g), which are commonly found and necessary for MAPs.

<p>4. The choice of measures referred to in this Article shall be appropriate with the nature, gravity, duration and repetition of the situation where the spawning stock biomass is below the levels referred to in Article 5.</p>	
<p>Article 7 Fishing effort regime</p> <p>1. A fishing effort regime shall apply to all vessels fishing with trawls in the areas and length categories defined in Annex I.</p> <p>2. Each year, in accordance with the scientific advice, the Council shall set a maximum allowable fishing effort for each effort group by Member State.</p> <p>3. For the first year of implementation of the plan, the maximum allowable fishing effort shall be substantially reduced from the baseline provided for in paragraph 4, in accordance with the scientific advice.</p> <p>4. The baseline referred to in paragraph 3 shall be established as follows:</p> <p>(a) for the first year of application of this Regulation, the baseline shall be calculated for each effort group as the average effort expressed as number of fishing days between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2017 and take account only of vessels active during that period;</p> <p>(b) for the subsequent years of application of this Regulation, the baseline shall be equal, for each year, to the maximum allowable fishing effort for the previous year.</p> <p>5. Where the scientific advice shows significant catches of a particular stock with fishing gears other than trawls, fishing effort levels shall be set for such particular gear or gears on the basis of such scientific advice.</p> <p>6. Where the scientific advice shows that recreational fisheries have a significant impact on the fishing mortality</p>	<p>1. Fishing gears other than trawls should be defined and added in Annex I and the classification should take into consideration other characteristics of the fleet and not only the length of the fishing vessels⁶.</p> <p>2. It is not possible to plan the fishing activities in a such short range of time.</p> <p>3. What does it mean “<i>substantially reduced</i>”? It is too generic and can cause difficulties in the implementation. It is not reported information on the impact related to these measures.</p> <p>4.(a) – The reference period should be 2012-16 in order to improve the reliability of the data that are more representative of catches and effort.⁷ The calculation methodology of fishing days is not clear, and it could be included by MEDAC in this document. The beginning of the effort management should be postponed in February instead the 1st of January because, December is a very important month for fisheries activities.</p> <p>5. What does it mean “<i>significant catches</i>”? It is too generic and cause difficulties in the implementation. The proposal should include provisions to ensure that SSF are managed at local level, under specific management plans for SSF, under a co-management regime, and where its polyvalence should be guaranteed.</p>

⁶ NGOs suggest the amendment of Annex I considering the scientific advice of STECF on fishing effort regime classification.

⁷ NGOs support the Commission proposal of calculating the reference period for 2015-17 as it should be based on the most recent years in order to reflect the most recent fishing effort level and stocks status.

<p>of a particular stock, the Council may limit recreational fisheries when setting fishing opportunities in order to avoid exceeding the total target of fishing mortality.</p>	<p><i>"Fishing gears other than trawls"</i> should be defined in Annex I.</p> <p>6. No data collection on recreational fishery is still ongoing, therefore the MAP should include provisions to ensure recreational fisheries is studied and properly managed, including with effective monitoring, control and surveillance. <i>"Council may limit"</i> should be replaced by <i>"Council shall limit"</i>. Due to the relevance of recreational fishery, related management measures should be adopted⁸. Moreover, MEDAC reiterates its advice (ref.270/2017 7 November 2017) where consensus was made that:" e) <i>All the measures adopted within the Multi-annual plan should also apply to recreational fisheries in the area of application</i>" (with minority statement from EFSA).</p>
<p>Article 8 Total allowable catches</p> <p>Where the best available scientific advice shows that the fishing effort regime is not sufficient to meet the objectives or targets set out in Articles 3 and 4, the Council shall adopt complementary management measures based on total allowable catches.</p>	<p>- Applying TAC-Quotas system across all fisheries in the Mediterranean, especially demersal fisheries, will not be appropriate, given their multi-specific nature. This would not be efficient and would give rise to significant problems associated with discards. It could also be detrimental to small scale fisheries, due to the tendency for privatization of a public good and associated accumulation and concentration of quota by a few larger companies. Therefore, we ask to remove the article⁹.</p>
<p>Article 9 Obligations of the Member States</p>	

⁸ EAA suggests to add this sentence at the end of paragraph 6: "...fishing mortality; taking fully into account the socio-economic impact of such a limitation with regard to the recreational fishing dependent businesses and jobs and taking fully into account data or estimates of catches ten years back in time for all métiers engaged in the fishery of that species".

⁹ NGOs agree with article 8 and including catch limits when scientific recommend it and effort regime proves ineffective, in line with NGO position.

<p>1. Member States shall manage the maximum allowable fishing effort in accordance with the conditions laid down in Articles 26 to 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.</p> <p>2. Each Member State shall decide on a method for allocating the maximum allowable fishing effort to individual vessels or groups of vessels flying its flag, in accordance with the criteria in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. In particular, Member States shall:</p> <p>(a) use transparent and objective criteria, including those of an environmental, social and economic nature;</p> <p>(b) distribute national quotas fairly among fleet segments, giving consideration to traditional and artisanal fisheries; and</p> <p>(c) provide Union vessels with incentives to deploy selective fishing gear or use fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact.</p> <p>3. Where a Member State allows vessels flying its flag to fish with trawls, it shall ensure that such fishing is limited to a maximum of 12 hours per fishing day, five fishing days per week or equivalent.</p> <p>4. For the vessels flying its flag, each Member State shall issue fishing authorisations for the areas referred to in Annex I and in accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.</p> <p>5. Member States shall ensure that the total capacity, expressed in GT and kW, corresponding to the fishing authorisations issued in accordance with paragraph 4 is not increased during the period of application of the plan.</p> <p>6. Each Member State shall establish and maintain a list of vessels issued with fishing authorisations pursuant to paragraph 4 and make it available to the Commission and other Member States. Member States shall transmit their list for the first time within three months after the entry into force of this Regulation and subsequently no later than 30 November each year.</p>	<p>3. The rationale of the 12 hours/day is not clear. In the Med. the great variety of fishing activities timing doesn't allow the enforcement of this article. Furthermore, the time needed to reach the fishing area and the marine weather conditions should be duly taken into consideration. MEDAC could suggest a different effort unit, more specific for the fishing activities in the Med aimed to the effort reduction.</p>
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7. Member States shall monitor their fishing effort regime and ensure that the maximum allowable fishing effort referred to in Article 7 does not exceed the set limits.	
Article 10	No observations
Article 11 Closure areas 1. In addition to what is provided for by Article 13 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006, the use of trawls in the western Mediterranean Sea shall be prohibited within the 100 m isobath from 1 May to 31 July each year.	1. - The prohibition of trawls up to 100 m depth in the WMed ¹⁰ doubles the protected areas already existing: no scientific basis is mentioned in support to this paragraph. Furthermore, the already existing areas and their effects should be taken into consideration. Although this measure was partially mentioned in the MEDAC opinion, the meaning of the sentence has been completely changed. Indeed, MEDAC sentence suggested <u>“where and when necessary, extend the bottom towed gears ban from 50 m to an appropriate depth”</u> otherwise the geomorphological characteristics of the Mediterranean cause very different distances of ban along the coasts. Furthermore, the foreseen three months of ban covers the most profitable period in the year. Par.1 should report accurately the MEDAC opinion Ref.270/2017, 7 November 2017. In some areas, specifically Andalusia, given the morphology of the fishing platform, it ends at 100 mt depth, so trawling on this coast could not take place. The risk of fishing prohibition in that area (up to 100 m depth) is the

¹⁰ NGOs consider that the extension of prohibition of bottom towed gear in the EC proposal reflects the MEDAC opinion (7 November 2017). Scientific recommendation, based in Mediseh project, suggests the extension of this ban to at least 100m to protect juveniles. This measure would also partially contribute to the protection of Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretion habitats, which can reach 150 m depths. Given the severe situation of the stocks we suggest to increase the trawl ban up to at least 100m depth all year round, not only for 3 months to improve the effectiveness of the measure. Other closures in deeper areas than 100m should also be taken into account for spawning and juveniles aggregations of other demersal stocks and sensitive habitats that occur at higher depth.

<p>2. Within two years of the adoption of this Regulation and on the basis of the scientific advice, the Member States concerned shall establish other closure areas where there is evidence of a high concentration of juvenile fish and of spawning grounds of demersal stocks, in particular for the stocks concerned.</p> <p>3. Where the closure areas referred to in paragraph 2 affect fishing vessels of several Member States, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and Article 18 of this Regulation and on the basis of the scientific advice, establishing the closure areas concerned.</p>	<p>increasing of the effort in the allowed zones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A part of the coastal zone should be reserved for small-scale, low impact and selective gears to ensure their fair access to fishing grounds, protect breeding grounds and sensitive habitats, and to incentivize fishing in a more selective way, with a lower environmental impact. Current exceptions to the prohibition of trawling in depths of less than 50m should be reviewed and revised on a case by case basis. - The ban on the use of trawl nets in the Western Mediterranean within the 100 m isobath from 1 May to 31 July each year is unsustainable without the provision of an appropriate socio-economic support measure for businesses and workers. <p>2. – As consequence of the observations made to par.1, the par. 2 should be improved considering the co-management approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The scientific basis should be evaluated both for species and the socio-economic impacts according to the CFP objectives. - The already existing fishing restricted areas should be considered in order to estimate the overall percentage of surface that should be protected by each MS to guarantee equal conditions. - The efficacy of the already existing fishery restricted areas should be evaluated in order to assess the eventual need of their extension.¹¹ <p>3. - Co-decision and regionalization should be supported whereas delegated acts don't improve this process.¹²</p>
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¹¹ NGOs supports paragraph 2 as it is crucial to protect essential fish habitats, including in deeper areas to protect juveniles or spawning aggregations of demersal species with permanently or temporally closures in line with article 8 of CFP. This would also facilitate the implementation of the landing obligation.

¹² NGOs support this paragraph to allow the EC adopt delegated acts on fisheries management in closures mentioned in paragraph 2, based on scientific advice.

Article 12	No observations
<p>Article 13 Other technical conservation measures</p> <p>1. The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 18 supplementing this Regulation by establishing the following technical conservation measures:</p> <p>(a) specifying the characteristics of fishing gear, in particular mesh size, hook size, number of hooks, construction of the gear, twine thickness, size of the gear or use of additional devices to improve selectivity;</p> <p>(b) limiting the use of fishing gear, in particular immersion time and depth of gear deployment, so as to improve selectivity;</p> <p>(c) prohibiting or limiting fishing in specific areas or time periods to protect spawning and juvenile fish, fish below the minimum conservation reference size or non-target fish species;</p> <p>(d) prohibiting or limiting fishing in specific areas or time periods to protect vulnerable ecosystems and species;</p> <p>(e) setting minimum conservation reference sizes for any of the stocks to which this Regulation applies, to ensure the protection of juveniles of marine organisms;</p> <p>(f) on recreational fisheries; and</p> <p>(g) on other characteristics linked to selectivity.</p> <p>2. The measures referred to in paragraph 1 shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 3.</p> <p>3. In the absence of a joint recommendation as referred to in Article 15(2) and after expiry of the applicable deadlines set out in that Article, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 18 supplementing this Regulation by adopting the measures listed in paragraph 1, where the scientific advice shows that</p>	<p>- Art. 13 should be repealed¹³ for the above-mentioned reason. The wording of this article should be the same as for the other MAPs.</p> <p>1. - Co-decision and regionalization should be supported whereas delegated acts don't improve this process.</p>

¹³ NGOs support this article.

specific action is required to ensure that any of the stocks to which this Regulation applies is managed in accordance with Article 3.	
Article 14 Provisions linked to the landing obligation For all stocks of species in the western Mediterranean Sea to which the landing obligation applies under Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 15 supplementing this Regulation by adopting detailed measures for that obligation as provided for in points (a) to (e) of Article 15(5) or Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.	Co-decision and regionalization should be supported whereas delegated acts don't improve this process. Concerning the landing obligation, alternative measures raising by the cooperation of MS should be taken into account.
Article 15	No comments
Article 16	No comments (See in the introduction "Co-decision and regionalization should be supported whereas delegated acts don't improve this process")
Article 17 Monitoring and evaluation of the plan 1. For the purposes of the annual report provided for in Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, quantifiable indicators shall include annual estimates of F/F_{MSY} and SSB for the stocks concerned and, where possible, for by-catch stocks. They may be complemented with other indicators on the basis of the scientific advice. 2. Five years after the date of entry into force of this Regulation and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the results and the impact of the plan on the stocks to which this Regulation applies and, on the fisheries, exploiting those stocks, in particular as regards the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 3.	1. Socio-economic indicators should be estimated as well as the F/F_{MSY} and SSB for the stocks concerned. The results of monitoring activities of socio-economic aspects should be reported every 2 years. 2. – ¹⁴
Article 18 Exercise of delegation 1. The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission subject to the conditions laid down in this Article.	Art. 18 should be repealed. ¹⁵

¹⁴ NGOs support this proposal, given the status of fisheries in the region to be able to adapt plan if needs be.

¹⁵ NGOs support this article.

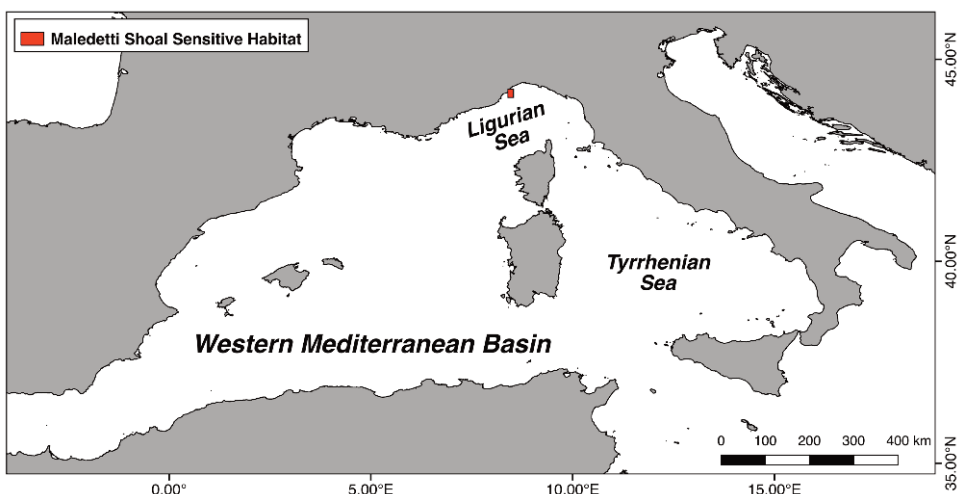
<p>2. The delegation of power referred to in Articles 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of five years from the date of the entry into force of this Regulation. The Commission shall draw up a report in respect of the delegation of power not later than nine months before the end of that period. The delegation of power shall be tacitly extended for five-year periods, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months beforehand.</p> <p>3. The European Parliament or the Council may at any time revoke the delegation of power referred to in Articles 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16. A decision to revoke shall put an end to the delegation of the power specified in that decision. It shall take effect on the day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union or at a later date specified in the decision. It shall not affect the validity of any delegated act already in force.</p> <p>4. Before adopting a delegated act, the Commission shall consult experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016.</p> <p>5. As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall simultaneously notify the European Parliament and the Council thereof.</p> <p>6. A delegated act adopted pursuant to Articles 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 shall enter into force only if neither the European Parliament nor the Council has expressed an objection within two months of being notified or if, before the expiry of that period, they have both informed the Commission that they will not object. The period shall be extended by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or of the Council.</p>	
<p>Article 19</p> <p>Support from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Temporary cessation measures adopted in order to achieve the objectives of the plan shall be deemed as temporary cessation of fishing activities for the purposes of points (a) and (c) of Article 33(1) of Regulation (EU) No 508/2014.</p>	<p>Supporting financing measures aimed to manage the socio-economic impacts due to the enforcement of the MAP should be provided.</p>

100 MEDAC OPINION ON THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A FISHERIES RESTRICTED AREA (FRA) IN THE LIGURIAN SEA: “MALEDETTI SHOAL SENSITIVE HABITAT”

Rome, 5th June 2019

The MEDAC was officially commissioned by the Italian Fisheries Administration (with a letter registered as Prot. 5230 of 25th March 2019) to prepare a contribution and an opinion on the proposal to establish a Fisheries Restricted Area in the Ligurian Sea, presented to the GFCM on 11th February 2019 by the Department for the Earth, Environment and Life Sciences of the University of Genoa.

The points that were raised during the MEDAC debate are that the promoters of the FRA did not organise a consultation with the stakeholders, (which is why the Italian administration directed it request for collaboration to the MEDAC before proposing this FRA). During the GFCM WG meeting on MPAs (Marine Protected Areas), held last February, it was highlighted that the promoters had contacted 41 fishers (not identified) who operate in the area in question and had interviewed 13 fishers.



EXTRACT FROM FRA PROPOSAL¹:

“Therefore, we propose to permanently close this area to any demersal fisheries, in order to safeguard a unique ecosystem and rebuild its stocks, in particular spiny lobster and European lobster, allowing for the long-term sustainability of the local fisheries. The establishment of this FRA would be a pioneering case study for the mesophotic Mediterranean region, prone to restoration and monitoring activities and would clearly be in accordance to the Ecosystem Approach, in line with the management objectives of GFCM, and based on the best available scientific information.”

“In summer 2018 an interview survey was carried out in the main marines of the area, allowing to quantify fishing effort in 25 fishing grounds included between Finale Ligure and Vado Ligure (FLAG PromoRiviera di Liguria, 2018). A total of 41 professional fishermen are reported from the harbor of Finale Ligure, Noli, Vado Ligure and Savona. Generally, fishermen work alone, and some of them own two or, in one case, three boats. Thirteen interviewed fishermen reported that, nowadays, the number of artisanal vessels operating in the area between Noli and Vado Ligure does not exceed 20 vessels, and that this number has been gradually decreasing since the 1980s. Four artisanal fishermen are known to fish on the Maledetti Shoal. This site is considered easily accessible

(2 and 3 NM from the harbor of Noli and Vado Ligure, respectively). Here, the traditional trammel net called “aragostara” represents the main *métier*, targeting the spiny lobster *Palinurus elephas* and the European lobster *Homarus gammarus*. Gillnets are also employed on the flat muddy plateau at the base of the vertical wall, down to 100 m depth. Fishermen declared to frequent the site no more than 10-30 times per year, mainly during summertime, when sea conditions are optimal. Indeed, due to the complex topography of the shoal and the strong bottom currents, fishermen consider difficult to operate on this fishing ground. The name “Maledetti”, which means “damned” in Italian, refers to the easiness to entangle on the sea bottom with the net and to the high likelihood to break it or lose it. Interviewed fishermen declared to strongly entangle on the bottom 2-5 times per years (up to 20) and at least three fishermen reported losing the gear. Data collected from scientific observer (Enrichetti *et al.*, in press), report on average up to 3.2 entanglement events per fishing set, generally followed by gear breakage.”

EXTRACT FROM GFCM WG REPORT (Marine Protected Areas) meeting 18-21 February 2019

58. Mr Francesco Enrichetti, PhD candidate from the Università degli Studi di Genova (Italy), presented a new FRA proposal: deep-sea sensitive habitats from the Ligurian Sea (north-western Mediterranean). VMEs are characterized by peculiar topographical and biocoenotic features, which make them particularly sensitive and poorly resilient to mechanical damages, such as those inflicted by demersal fishing activities. Spatial management is considered among the most effective measures for the protection of VMEs and for improving the long-term sustainability of commercial stocks. In particular, the protection of nurseries and spawning grounds has been advocated as an urgent measure, particularly the closure of fisheries in areas identified as sensitive habitat and essential fish habitats. The Maledetti Shoal – sensitive habitat, located in the GSA 9 (Ligurian Sea and North Tyrrhenian Sea), is herein proposed as fisheries restricted areas due to the unique topographic and biocoenotic characteristics, including the largest mesophotic red coral population of the Ligurian Sea, and for its important role in supporting relevant assemblages of commercial and non-commercial species. The proposed area has been selected on the basis of: i) extensive scientific knowledge about the benthic biocoenosis inhabiting the shoal; ii) the ecological and biological relevance of the assemblages thriving here, including species with critical life history stages; and iii) the strong impact of demersal fishing activities on vulnerable habitats and species, highlighted by ROV explorations and direct assessment. Therefore, the permanent closure of this area to any demersal fisheries, would safeguard a unique ecosystem and its stocks, in particular spiny lobster and European lobster, allowing for the long-term sustainability of the local fisheries. The establishment of this FRA would be a pioneering case study for the mesophotic Mediterranean region, prone to restoration and monitoring activities and would clearly be in accordance with the ecosystem approach, in line with the management objectives of GFCM, and based on the best available scientific information.

59. The WGMFA noted that most of the impact on these sensitive benthic habitats was deriving more from ghost nets (traps and trammel nets) than from direct active fishing gear. Mr Thompson underlined that the coralligenous habitat was still well conserved apart from the strong occurrence of ghost nets that became encrusted with sessile organisms, including corals.

60. Mr Enrichetti underlined that the lost nets were affecting the gorgonian community, with

colonies significantly smaller than in adjacent unfished areas. He also confirmed that the area, due to its particular topography, was well-known for destroying fishers' gears and that the name of the shoal "Maledetti" was chosen for this reason as in Italian it means "damned". Fishers were progressively leaving the area because they often lost their expensive fishing gear. Only around 4 of them were still fishing there. Mr Enrichetti also added that a project to clean the area from lost gear was currently in progress (FEAMP 2014-2020 Measure 4.63). The cleaning would be done by divers and ROVs paying particular attention not to impact coral assemblages.

61. Some participants noted that the area proposed as a FRA was very small (0.52 km²) and entirely located within national waters and considered that the protection of this area from fisheries could be achieved with internal bilateral communication between the University of Genova and the Italian Authorities. Possible management options included the establishment of a Zona Tutela Biologica (ZTB) (biological protected zone), which could act like a FRA, or the inclusion of the Maledetti shoal area within the boundaries of the adjacent MPA of Isola di Bergeggi.

62. Mr Enrichetti explained that the process to establish a FRA was considered more straightforward and simple as the only target of the proposal is to close the area to all fisheries (professional and recreational) and therefore the FRA tool matched fully with the proponent's conservation objective.

63. The GFCM Secretariat clarified that neither the total surface area of a FRA or its location within national waters would prevent a proposal from being submitted to the GFCM and that the procedure was monitored properly in the case of the Maledetti shoal FRA proposal. It was recalled that the mandate of the WGMPA was to assess the proposal from a scientific point of view only. Management measures and socioeconomic aspects of the proposal should be further analysed at the level of subregional committees, and in this case at the upcoming Subregional Committee for the western Mediterranean (SRC-WM), recalling that the next meeting of the SRC-WM would take place in France in April 2019.

64. Experts from the Italian administration present on the first day of the meeting provided information in relation to the FRA proposals in the Otranto Channel, Bari Canyon and in the Maledetti shoal, as follows: in relation to the Otranto Channel and Bari Canyon, they recalled that the Italian administration had not been contacted by the proponents since the presentation of the initial proposal in 2018 and that the involvement of Italian stakeholders in providing feedback was non-existent or limited. In relation to the proposal for the Maledetti shoal, dialogue with the Italian administration had not been initiated yet.

OPINION

The MEDAC reiterates that it is essential to envisage consultation with the sector to obtain economic data from the fishers operating in the area in question and thus have a clearer picture of the possible socio-economic impact that establishing this FRA would have.

¹"Maledetti Shoal Sensitive Habitat" submitted by Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra, dell'Ambiente e della Vita, Università degli Studi di Genova, on 11 february 2019

MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAP OF DEMERSAL SPECIES IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Rome, 5th August 2020

(Reg. (EU) 2019/1022 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014)

According to the DG MARE representative's request received just after the MEDAC meeting held online at the beginning of July, the MEDAC collected updated information directly or indirectly related to the main difficulties faced by stakeholders and MS in the first year of the MAP implementation. In addition, the request asked for data to be transmitted to all STECF experts, by August 15th, and any relevant information related to the following list:

- socio-economic data (by vessel: age, gender, number of crew, average annual margin, market price by species and by area etc.);
- data on landings and discards;
- length distribution and age composition of catches;
- estimate of recreational fisheries landings in your port/area;
- estimate of incidental catches (by species, by area etc.).

During the MEDAC Focus Group (FG) on the West Med MAP held at the beginning of July, the following main issues in the implementation of the Reg. (EU) 2019/1022 already raised up:

- in the Art.11, the incoherence between the par. 1 and par. 2 is an obstacle to the measure implementation and to the evaluation of its effects on the managed stocks. In fact, 3 months of closure within 6 nm/100m isobath (par.1) are clearly referred to the protection of the coastal demersal species included in the scope of the MAP, while the derogation justified by particular geographical constraints (par. 2) can be allowed when the reduction of 20% of juvenile hake is provided. The incoherence in the derogation is due to the completely different objectives in respect to the measure because the areas of hake juvenile's concentration are located over 100m depth, therefore not covered by the scope of the Art.11.1.
- some concerns have been referred to the reduction of 20% of hake juveniles because it is a condition never applied before (Art.11.2).
- the socio-economic impact of the MAP could cause the permanent closure of fishing activities of many vessels; therefore, the effort reduction can already overcome the foreseen 10% after the first year of implementation.
- the MAP should be agreed at the GFCM level, because the effect of management measures can be completely deleted by the fishing activities carried out by third countries.

Moreover, the FG highlighted the relevance of the following aspects to be taken into consideration in the MAP evaluation and in the forthcoming decisions about the fishing effort quotas in 2021:

- the timing of the MAP implementation is very tight, then the scientific experts will be not able to assess the effect of the MAP's application.
- the ecological aspects, such as pollution, climate change, nutrients, and the related influence on the stock's fluctuations should be considered.
- the collected and processed data should be updated and reliable.
- the COVID-19 impact on the fishery sector and the temporary (and even permanent) closure of the fishing activities due to the unexpected crisis should be considered also in terms of effort reduction already carried out in 2020.
- the socio-economic impact of the measures should be assessed.

The above-mentioned aspects should be considered by the EC as the basis for greater flexibility applied in the MAP implementation.

Concerning the MEDAC contribution related to the data transmission to STECF, the MEDAC members cooperated by providing the following data sources and projects results.

FRANCE

CNPMEM provided the link to the GEPAC MED project:

- brochure:

FR <http://www.amop.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEPAC-MED-Synthe%CC%80se-FR.pdf>

EN <http://www.amop.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEPAC-MED-Synthe%CC%80se-EN.pdf>

Full report FR: <http://www.amop.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEPAC-MED-Rapport.pdf>

Short notes on the project

GEPAC MED project 2017 - *Gestion et Pérennisation de l'Activité des Chalutiers de Méditerranée* (Management and Sustainability of the Mediterranean Trawler Activity).

- overview of the main socio-economic parameters of the trawlers fleet in 2017 in the Gulf of Lions and evidence of **fishing vessels reduction** in the last years (**from 2001 to 2017**): **from 131 to 59, then 45% reduction.**
- assuming a constant return related to each output, **the loss in turnover terms is proportional to the reduction in number of days at sea**: the variable costs decrease, while fixed costs remain. The average wage decreases equally, and the share system contract reflects the reduction in fishing days.
- **Estimated direct and indirect employment related to the trawlers fleet of the Gulf of Lions**: 59 fishing vessels => 240-260 fishers => 171-195 indirect employees (FTE= Full Time Equivalent) at the fishing harbor => 264-303 employees on the local economy
- **The scenarios related to the different percentages of fishing days reduction** have been evaluated through the comparison between the following indicators both on the fishing vessels and on the supply chain: **turnover, gross value added, salaries + payroll taxes, gross operating surplus, estimated average payment according to the share system.** The **threshold between a balanced financial situation and risky financial situation is approximately 177 days (instead of the yearly average of 199, therefore a 11% reduction).** The **sustainability is strictly related to the fuel price.**
- depending on the season, a day at sea may be more or less profitable: in order to optimize the trawlers days at sea, as monthly returns both in terms of volumes and value, **the best months to stop the daily activity are March and June. While during August and September the stop should be avoided.**
- **the effort reduction related to the permanent cessation of fishing activity** by some of the fishing vessels has been also estimated, because the consequence could be a stable fishing activity for the rest of the fleet still active (not need of fishing days reduction). **The consequences of fishing days reduction and the permanent cessation have been compared**: the fishing days reduction is more efficient in a social perspective because the fishers employment is saved, nevertheless the impact of a reduction in buying power is assessed, and the economic situation of fishing vessels could be balanced but risky. Otherwise, the permanent cessation of the fishing activities is an irreversible management choice in terms of fishing vessels and fisher's employment loss. In the latter option the first fishing vessels to be stopped should be those already in a critical economic situation.

Moreover, the CRPMEM PACA added the reference to the national program for data collection (SIH - Système d'information Halieutique) because it is proposing yearly synthesis across the different regions of the French Med (<https://sih.ifremer.fr/Publications/Fiches-regionales>). However, those data should be already available to the EC.

ITALY

ACI contributed to the collection of relevant information by sending the “Yearly Report on resources status and production structures in the Italian Seas, 2019”.

A comprehensive overview of the fishing activities and the main biological indicators in GSAs 9-10-11 is provided in the report, including the following information:

Biologic analysis (MEDITS data from 1994 to 2016 and Campbiol (from 2009 to 2016)

- Indicators about main commercial species: spatial distribution, abundance indices, length structure, demographic distribution with discard rate, sex ratio, reproductive period, Maturity at length, recruitment areas and intensity, adults-recruits relationship, stock assessment methods
- Community indices: biomass and diversity index, results of the abundance biomass comparisons Socio-economic results (survey in 2016)
- macro-economic framework at national level
- main trends of the fishing sector: fishing capacity and activity, catches and related incomes and prices, employees and labour costs, economic performance of the fishing fleet.

In the conclusions the results for each GSA are reported and summarized.

FEDERPESCA provided the GFCM data of the fleet register as useful information in evaluating the potential effectiveness of the effort reduction applied only to the EU fleets in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the report on the Development of the fishing sector in Italy released in 2019 and drafted by FEDERPESCA includes data of 2016. The overview of the socio-economic aspects of the fishing sector in Italy is mainly referred to official data and then most probably already available to EC.

SPAIN

UNACOMAR, in cooperation with the scientific expert, provided the most updated technical reports on the following information:

	Updated to	Data and information on	Language
Annual Fishery Status for Catalan Fisheries	September 2019	Survey on demersal species (abundance and biomass), setting the socio-economic study, Recreational fishery data	Catalan
Annual Fishery Status for Catalan Fisheries (annexes)			Catalan
Recreational data of the activity in the Catalan coast	2019	Survey on recreational fishery activity, fishing effort per area/gear/season, catches per area/gear/season, socio-economic impact per area/gear	Catalan
Implementation of Article 11.2 and mean objectives of ICM-CSIC and ICATMAR science	2019	GSAs 1,5,6 , size of hake first maturity and related areas where 20% reduction of juvenile catches can be achieved, Management measures alternative to the reduction of catches of hake juveniles by 20%	English

Scenarios of implementation of Article 11.2	2019	GSA 6, fishing days (from 2006 to 2019), FRA already in force, management scenarios based on different selectivity applied to hake catches of bottom trawlers, management scenarios of different spatio-temporal closures	Spanish
Fishery capacity and technical scenarios for its limitation in Palamós harbour	2019-2020	TipoArt Project testing technical innovations aimed to reduce the trawlers impact and NANSAS0120 including experimental trials to evaluate the traps selectivity in the blue and red shrimp fishery (<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>)	Spanish
Fishery capacity in Catalan fleet	2020	Current situation of engines power of Catalan fishing fleet (HP, CV, GT)	Catalan
Scenarios for the 30 % reduction in fishery effort		GSA6, Simulations on reducing fishing effort on the bottom trawler fleet according to the multi-annual plan ((UE) 2019/1022), simulation of stock recovery (Fmsy) on the demersal species prioritized by the multiannual plan assuming that fleets would not disappear due to effort reduction	English
Literature review in Selectivity	Released in 2020	Report of IMPEMED results on “improving the selectivity of trawls gears in the Mediterranean Sea to advance the sustainable exploitation pattern of trawl fisheries”: T90, Square and Diamond Mesh Codends, Sorting Grids	English
Regulation review in Selectivity	Released in 2020	Review of the legislative (national and international) provisions regulating technical aspects of trawl nets in the Mediterranean.	English
Socio-Economic study of Vilanova I la Geltrú harbour	2020	Pilot study on socio-economic aspects in Vilanova I la Geltrú harbour. Study on social aspects of the workers, main data on the fishing activity in terms of fishing day, geographical distribution and economic data (debts and costs, shared payments to workers)	Catalan
Landings and fish prices in Catalan auctions (comparative between years 2018 and 2019)	2019	Data on catches and prices, and number of fishing vessels from 2002 to 2019, comparison between main fishing fleet indicators and prices between 2018-2019	Catalan

Furthermore, the “Technical report on survey DESAL1219” on selectivity improvement through the fishing gear modification in the bottom trawlers in the Alboran Sea has been sent by UNACOMAR. The survey has been carried out at the end of 2019 by the IEO (Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia) and it has been financed by the Organization of fishers of Almeria (Organizaci3n de productores pesqueros de Almeria).

RECREATIONAL FISHERY

By IFSUA "Analysis of recreational fishery in Catalunya (2019)"

The document has been recently released by ICATMAR agency of the Catalan Autonomous Government and provides an overview of the catches referred to the recreational fishery in the northwestern Mediterranean. The study is written in Catalan and provides a detailed description of the sector.

The recreational fishers are about 50000 people (including both with license and an estimated number of recreational fishers without license). ICATMAR sent more than 40000 online questionnaires and collected about 13000 answers. Moreover, 400 field surveys have been carried out including the different gears: this is considered a significant sample size and improve the reliability of the study results.

The catches of the recreational fishery sector in 2019 have been 1366 t, about the 5% of the professional fishery sector.

In the study the socioeconomic impact is estimated (direct and indirect expenses of recreational fishers) in relation to the catches. The total reaches 89 million of euros, about the 86,8% of the professional fishing sector.

The data referred to 2020 will be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis because the fishing activities have been completely stopped during some months.

FG - Focus Group on the Strait of Sicily



Porto Palo di Capo Passero, Italy ©Sergio Vitale

FG - Focus Group on the Strait of Sicily

MEDAC OPINION ON THE MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN IN THE STRAIT OF SICILY

102

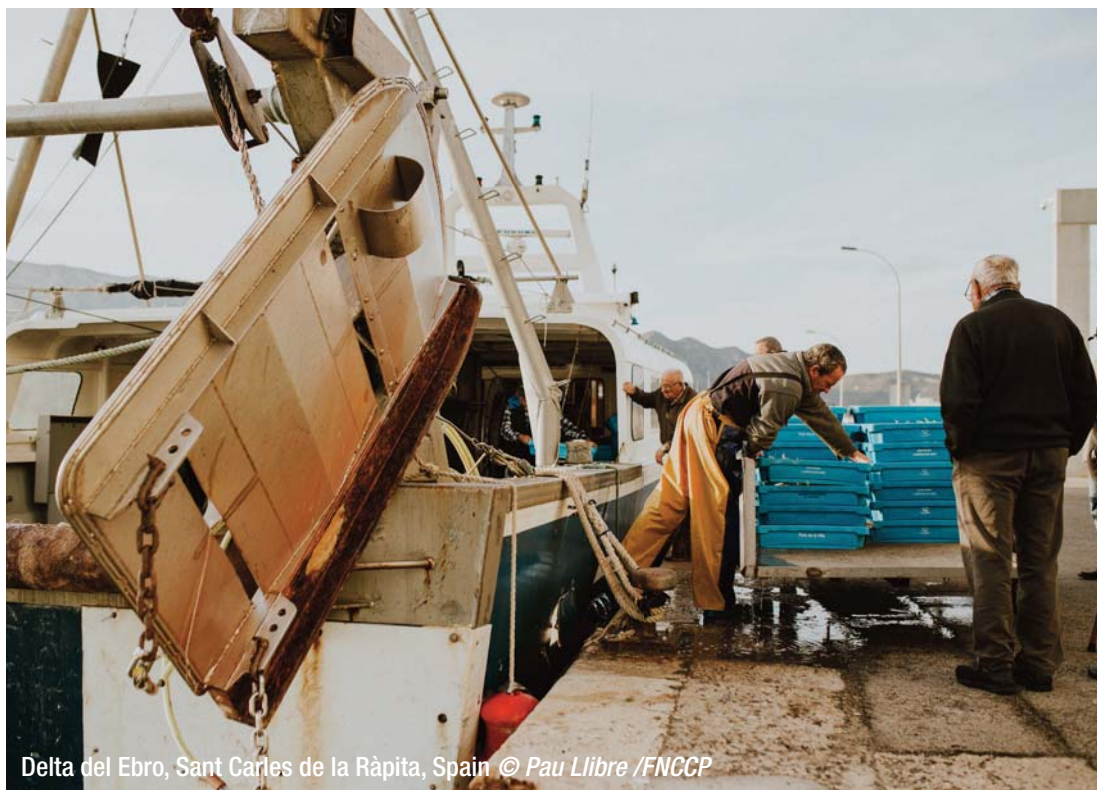
Rome, 16th May 2016

The Executive Committee members adopted the opinion proposed by the Focus Group on the Strait of Sicily that met on 20th of April in Split to discuss management measures to be identified within the framework to be implemented in the multiannual plan following up from GFCM Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2. In drafting the advice, the Focus Group has taken into account the following elements:

- GFCM Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom trawling fisheries of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily pending the development and adoption of a multiannual management plan;
- The outcomes from FAO Regional Project MedSudMed projects which identified management scenarios from consultation with the sector, NGO and administrators from Italy, Malta, Libya and Tunisia;
- The outcomes from the SAC Subregional Committees for the Central Mediterranean (SRC-CM) which tested and analysed the different management scenarios proposed within MedSudMed;
- The Report of the 18th Session of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) outlining the Technical advice on the management of the demersal fishery in the Strait of Sicily.

The MEDAC agreed unanimously on the need to establish three Fisheries Restricted Areas in the Northern sector of the Strait of Sicily, as identified by GFCM/SAC, as the most immediate and appropriate measure to improve the management of deep-water rose shrimp and hake in GSA 15-16. In line with the GFCM/SAC technical advice on the management of the demersal fishery in the Strait of Sicily, the three FRAs proposed should be included in a management plan aimed at regulating bottom trawling of hake and deep-water rose shrimp also incorporating the objective of protecting the biodiversity and decreasing bycatch (especially of incidental catches of vulnerable species) and increase profitability of fisheries.

The MEDAC also highlighted the importance of the list of authorized vessels as a management measure to ensure fleet management as well as surveillance and control of the fleets operating in the area for demersal fisheries.



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The Mediterranean Advisory Council, MEDAC, is a non-profit organization which pursues aims of general European interest, the headquarters is in Rome, Italy. The MEDAC is one of the eleven functioning Advisory Councils, co-funded by the EU.

The MEDAC has been established pursuant to Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy. The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1575 of 23 June 2017, amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/242 laying down detailed rules on the functioning of the Advisory Councils under the common fisheries policy.

The MEDAC is made up of European and national organizations representing the fisheries sector (including the industrial fleet, small-scale fisheries, the processing sector and trade unions) and other interest groups (such as environmental organizations, consumer groups and sports/recreational fishery associations) which operate in the Mediterranean area in the framework of the CFP. The area covers the maritime waters of the Mediterranean Sea to the east of the meridian of 5° 36' west longitude.

The role of MEDAC includes the preparation of advice on fisheries management and socio-economic aspects in support of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean, to be submitted to the Member States and the European institutions in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the CFP; MEDAC also proposes technical solutions and suggestions, such as joint recommendations (ex. Art. 18 Reg.1380 / 2013) at the request of the Member States.

