



Ref.:267/AV

Rome, 20 September 2013

To Tihomir Jakovina Minister of Agriculture (Croatia)

To Nicos Kouyialis Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (Cyprus)

To Frédéric Cuvillier Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (France)

To Athanasios S. Tsiftaris Minister of Rural development and food (Greece)

To Nunzia De Girolamo Minister of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (Italy)

To Roderick Galdes Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (Malta)

To Franc Bogovič Minister of Agriculture and the Environment (Slovenia)

To Miguel Arias Cañete Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment (Spain)

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

Copy to:

- MS administration
- PECH (Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament)
- Opinion committees to EMFF (BUDG, EMPL, REGI)
- EC DG MARE

