



**CONFERENCE OF THE MAP FOR SMALL PELAGIC IN THE ADRIATIC SEA
SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE MEDAC
ZADAR 20TH MARCH**

First of all I want to express my appreciation to this initiative and thank the Croatian Authorities for the invitation of MEDAC. This Conference is giving us the opportunity to discuss about a very important and delicate topic that will affect the future of a lot of Adriatic fishermen.

In order to reply to the letters received by the 3 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, the Mediterranean Advisory Council has worked very hard creating a specific Focus Group in order to give an advice on LTMP for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 (only, not for GSA 18), and finally we achieved the goal of an unanimous agreement of the Executive Committee (and I can say that usually is not an easy task to reach a consensus between NGOs and fishermen Organizations from 3 MS).

So, in March 2016, we managed to send an advice after 2 years of fruitful meetings and a study on the national legal framework and general situation of the sector of the three MS concerned (documentation sent to EC in August 2015), and taking into consideration the available scientific data from stock assessment carried out by STECF and GFCM.

Our advice (that will be discussed in detail by our Vice President Krstina Mislov during the panel) took into consideration the GFCM recommendations and related emergency technical measures already in place, and the importance of preserving the activities of traditional fishing in certain areas of North Adriatic in order to avoid a serious fallout on employment and on the income of fishery enterprises.

MEDAC suggested an adaptive management of the fishing effort through a “traffic light” approach, in which according to the levels of SSB and F mortality of the stocks, detailed proposals have been put forward, with:

- Maximum number of fishing days /y/m at sea (different for W and E Adriatic)
- Spatial temporal closures

Other suggestions, in the MEDAC advice, were related to the duration of the plan (almost 3 years), control measures, LO, mandatory authorizations, stock assessment, socio-economic impact, etc.

The added value of the MEDAC advice is that the fishermen know what can be the best and the worst conditions and plan in time their activities accordingly.

Considering the current EC proposal regulation, we can only conclude that the MEDAC approach has not been considered as a valid one (apart from a suggestion about vessels control).

In fact the EC proposal for GSA 17 and GSA 18 (that is lacking at the moment of socioeconomic impact assessment) establishes ambitious targets and reference points ranges but does not define management measures to enforce after the approval of the plan. The proposal postpone their definition – when scientific advice indicates the remedial action is required – and adoption by the EC empowered to adopt delegated acts regarding up to 6 points (art. 6: from characteristics of fishing gears to the prohibition or limitation in depth, areas, periods, closures, etc.). Nobody knows today which one of the possible measures will be chosen and adopted.

I think that for a fishery enterprise it would be better to have today even an hard programme to realize, than going to fish tomorrow without any new rule and suffer sudden blocks or limitations, that are very difficult to manage, in a few months or weeks.

I’m sure that this meeting will be an useful occasion to reflect about this delicate aspect.

Thank you for the attention.

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