

Exchange of opinions with the European Commissioner on Fisheries and Oceans Costas Kadiš, Malta 19 June 2025



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MEDAC activities and main issues



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Article 44 - Tasks of Advisory Councils

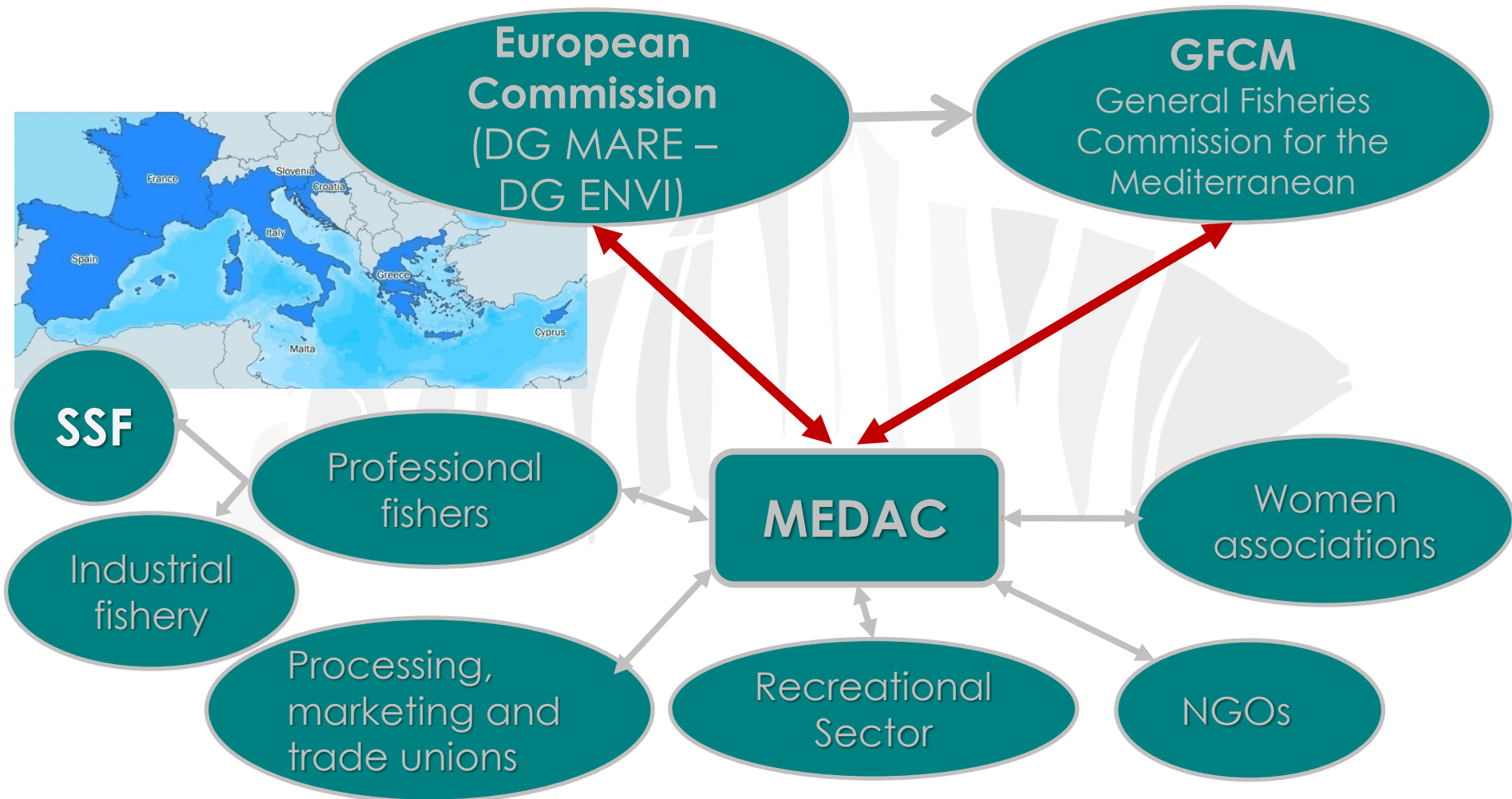
[...] 2. **Advisory Councils may:**

a) **submit recommendations and suggestions** on matters relating to the management of fisheries and the socioeconomic and conservation aspects of fisheries and aquaculture **to the Commission and to the Member State concerned**, and, in particular, recommendations on how to simplify rules on fisheries management;

(b) 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;

(c) **contribute, in close cooperation with scientists, to the collection, supply and analysis of data necessary for the development of conservation measures. [...]**

From the MEDAC to the Management process



The MEDAC contributions to GFCM SRCs

en.med-ac.eu/pareri_lettere.php

advice and letters



2024

advice and letters

MEDAC advice on pagellus bogaraveo in the GSAs 1-2-3



MEDAC contribution- EC Consultation mid term evaluation EMFAF



MEDAC contribuion on EC Consultation on the allocation on FOs (art.17)



MEDAC contribution EC Consultation of stakeholders on social data in fisheries



MEDAC advice on demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily in view of the GFCM/SAC SRC Central Mediterranean



MEDAC advice on Marine Recreational Fishery (MRF)



GFCM SRC-CM, Tunis/Hybrid 28-30 March 2023



MEDAC contribution on the
current management
measures in the Central
Mediterranean



GFCM SRC-WM, Malaga/Hybrid 12-14 April 2023



MEDAC contribution on the
current management
measures in the Western
Mediterranean



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to be made of the information that it contains
GFCM SRC-EM, May 10 - May 12, Athens, Greece (hybrid)



MEDAC contribution on the
current management
measures in the Eastern

GFCM WG MSE on Adriatic Sea small pelagics, May 29, Split, Croatia (hybrid)



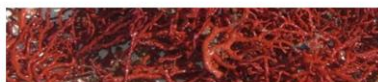
MEDAC advice on Management
Strategy Evaluation (WGMSE) on
Adriatic small pelagics
Session 1: preparatory meeting on methods



GFCM WGREDCORAL, May 23 - May 24, Rome, Italy (hybrid)



Medac advice on red coral
fishery management



MEDAC ADVICE ON
ENERGY TRANSITION

Meeting on the Decarbonization of the
fishing industry (WKDECA)

The added value of the MEDAC stakeholders engagement:

- Cover all the relevant languages of the area interested by the meeting
- The timing and the agenda of the meeting should be communicated at least 10 days before the meeting
- Be sure that the scientific information/request to the stakeholders is clear and understandable
- Check the attendance and participation of representatives of all relevant organizations and improve the involvement of the absent groups with an interest on the topic.





About **maritime spatial planning**, the MEDAC deems appropriate that “[...] ***coastal communities are involved in the decision-making process, that it should also factor in sea interactions, and that it should take an ecosystem-based approach, with the aim of ensuring that the collective pressure of all activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status***”¹.

¹ SWD(2023) 103 final COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Common Fisheries Policy - State of play

MEDAC advocates for the integration of disaggregated data



Disaggregated data allow for management decisions that are customised to the unique biological, ecological, and operational characteristics of specific GSAs, stocks, and fleets.

This finer-scale approach allows for the implementation of appropriate actions in the right area, at the right time, and for the right fishery.

The debate based on the update of the state of the demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily highlighted the need to improve a common level playing field for all the fleets operating in the area



Through the **identification and protection of critical habitats** to prioritize the **conservation of nursery and spawning areas** for key demersal species, as well as vulnerable marine ecosystems (**VMEs**), according to the resolution GFCM/47/2024/1.



During the debate, based on the update of the state of the demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily, the implementation of sustainable fishery management in the area was proposed



- **by encouraging the voluntary use of more selective fishing gears** to reduce discards and bycatch, and
- **by verifying through scientific data, the impact of other marine uses on fisheries resources** and regulate the use of equipment that has a negative impact on fisheries resources.



Considering the continued biological and socio-economic impacts of Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), the **MEDAC Focus Group (FG) for the Eastern Mediterranean Sea** convened to formulate updated technical contributions



✓ to support effective
management

✓ to improve stakeholder
participation

in forthcoming drawing up of Multiannual
Management Plans (MAPs).

In light of
this

The MEDAC deems appropriate:

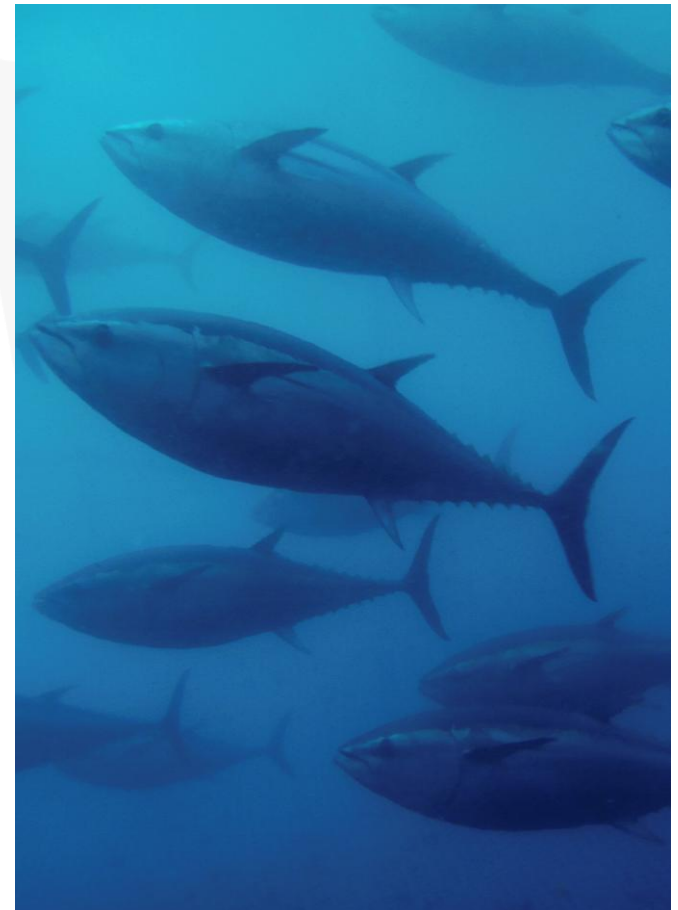
- ✓ the inclusion of a **dedicated advisory group** within the NIS-Observatory, composed of stakeholders from the fishing sector (including in particular SSF, academia, NGOs, etc),
- ✓ the **formal recognition of stakeholder inputs** in the preparation of MAPs through structured engagement methodologies and
- ✓ the development of guidance on **socioeconomic impact assessment tools to evaluate proposed MAP** measures with direct inputs from stakeholder consultations.



The MEDAC deems appropriate **to deepen the environmental drivers before to adopt further management measures for small pelagics.**

Finally, more than just one stock needs to be considered and the **true causes of the decline in small pelagics need to be understood**, in order to formulate **effective management measures that take into account the dynamics of the ecosystem:**

- the trophic chain,
- the climate change and
- the impact of other uses of the sea,
- with a multi-species approach.



About the **Blue crab** impact and possible way forward in North-Western Adriatic Sea the MEDAC deems appropriate:

- **to train younger workers to reconfigure the shellfish farming sector and the definition of novel, multifunctional business models;**
- **to calibrate the ecosystem approach for each area considered (e.g. each Venetian lagoon according to its dynamics and correlated trophic network);**



About the **Blue crab** impact and possible way forward in North-Western Adriatic Sea the MEDAC deems appropriate:

- **to identify the main predators in each ecosystem**, potentially considered as a useful enemy of the blue crab, **so that they can also be protected from recreational and commercial fishing** in order to keep the blue crab population under control;
- Furthermore, the **permission for recreational fishers to catch blue crab** can add a “predator” to this invasive species in the ecosystem.



An **Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)** assessment for **Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs)**, particularly for **juvenile blackspot seabream**, could evaluate new EFH designations in a **multispecies context** and should be balanced between the Northern and Southern parts **to ensure a common level playing field in the area.**



The MEDAC deems appropriate to anticipate as much as possible the joint **STECF-GFCM benchmark of hake** before to adopt further management measures for demersal species.

Stock assessment should consider a variety of models and complementary datasets to **ensure a better understanding of the stock dynamics with the particularities of each region.**

The environmental factors and the movement of the hake population due to the climate change should be considered in the assessment of the stock (e.g. Panzeri et al., 2024).



The **status of Western Mediterranean fisheries** is described by MEDAC's technical contribution: **the EU fishing fleet has been overcome the break-even point.**

The **additional measures** due to the **compensation mechanism** and aimed to avoid further reductions in fishing days **are decided too late** during the year and the annual and multi-annual planning is not viable for the fishing enterprises.



Socioeconomic impact on the fishing communities and the entire value chain: **the food sovereignty and the competitiveness of the sector are heavily impacted.**

The lack of prospects for the future and of the information needed to plan fishing activities is the **main obstacle to generational turnover.**

The SAC in 2024 acknowledged the three-step reflection initiated to evaluate the effectiveness of existing management measures/MAPs and **emphasizing the importance of approaching it from biological, ecological and socioeconomic performance.**



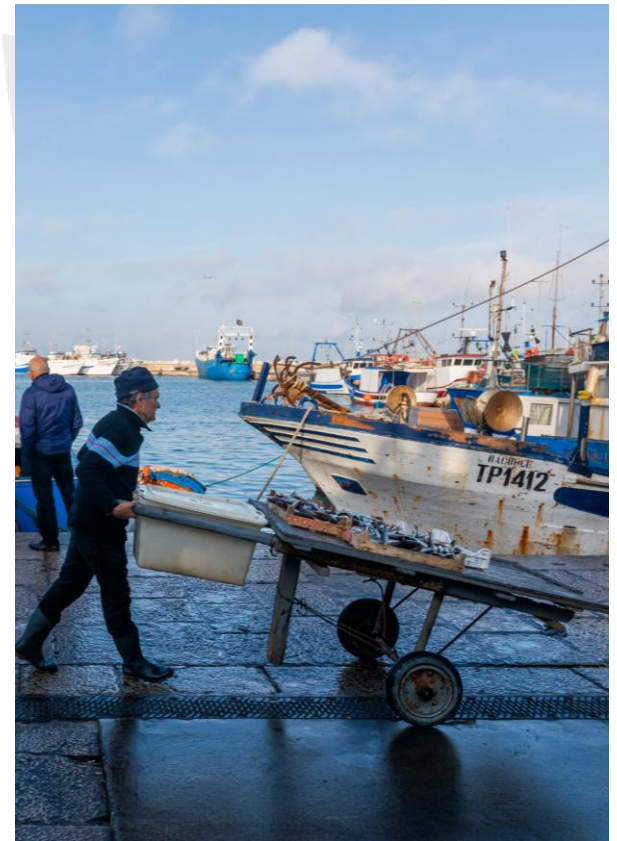
The Committee further stressed the need to **identify socioeconomic indicators** that would be conducive to understanding the repercussions of management on livelihood.



Follow-up towards assessing effectiveness of MAPs

Challenges and questions in tracking the possible indicators:

- **Very limited and partial information** on the social and economic performance of the fisheries
- Different levels of aggregation of data in comparison to the MAP
- **Time lag in reporting the data (n-2)**
- **Short time series for observation of trend**
- Importance of understanding and interpreting socioeconomic indicators (which can be influenced **by other factors beyond management measures**).



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