



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.D.1/LB

Subject: MEDAC advice on the enforcement of the new GFCM MAPs in the Strait of Sicily

Dear Mr Marzoa Notlevsen,

I would like to thank the Mediterranean Advisory Council for the advice 48/2023 in relation to the enforcement of the new GFCM MAPs in the Strait of Sicily (SoS) to protect the EU hake, deep water rose shrimps, giant red shrimps and blue and red shrimps.

I would like to stress that the demersal and deep-water shrimps MAPs explicitly aim at a balance between resources and capacities, and are well in line with MEDAC opinion. While the Commission is open to take into consideration climate change, it should be noted that at this stage, this is not included the scientific advice.

The Commission supports the protection of critical life phases of the key species. The plan explicitly mandates the SAC and GFCM Secretariat, with the CPCs support, to carry out work to better identify nursery areas of hake in 2023/2024, notably in the South of the SoS. For the deep-water red shrimps SAC is mandated to identify the periods where fishing could be stopped to protect juvenile or spawning aggregations.

Concerning selectivity improvements, the pilot project on trawl selectivity in the SoS has been launched and it should provide strong indications on which devices/practices could be introduced for all demersal fleets that would yield a higher selectivity and lower bycatches. Once these are identified, they would need to be translated into mandatory measures.

The fishing authorization regime is fully in place, with the newly adopted GFCM Recommendation mandating authorized lists of fishing vessels under the respective plans. As control and enforcement are key for the full implementation of such measures, International Inspection schemes have been extended (Demersals in the SoS) or newly established (Ionian Sea). In this context, the EFCA patroller has been deployed permanently in the Mediterranean. The Commission looks forward to the full support from all CPCs, with fleets fishing in these areas, to fight IUU.

In both the Strait of Sicily, Ionian and Levant new MAPs, fishing rights for the EU as well as third countries have been established. In addition, at sea transhipments have been

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forbidden. These are all measure that go in the direction of protecting the EU production. Stronger monitoring and enforcement will identify and/or prevent IUU. Ecolabelling is an option that can be pursued by stakeholders seeking a relevant certification.

Concerning the Marine Spatial Planning, the Commission takes note of the concerns expressed by MEDAC in relation to competing activities in the marine space in the SoS and could see the benefits of compiling different spatial uses. In this context, a distinction could be made between potential threats coming for example from oil&gas exploration and areas already excluding fishing activities.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck via the functional mailbox of the Advisory Councils MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

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