

**MEDAC advice on the call for evidence on
EU Strategy for Coastal Communities**

The MEDAC,
in response to the consultation on the “EU Strategy for Coastal Communities” launched by DG Mare on February 23, 2026 (Ref. Ares (2026)2003132), informed MEDAC WG1 by its coordinator at the meeting on February 25, 2026, in Naples,

considering that:

- The Commission Communication aims to launch a reflection process on the definition of an integrated strategic framework for the development of coastal areas, where 90 million citizens live, including through greater coordination of existing sectoral policies, improving climate resilience, and promoting a sustainable and innovative blue economy;
- takes into account the particular challenges faced by fishing and aquaculture communities operating in coastal areas, due to a combination of environmental, economic, and social pressures, ranging from climate change and ecosystem degradation to declining profitability, an aging workforce, and limited alternative economic opportunities;
- notes that recent geopolitical developments, including the escalation of tensions and conflict in the Persian Gulf, are contributing to increased volatility in energy prices, disruptions in global supply chains, and heightened uncertainty in seafood markets, thereby exacerbating the economic vulnerability of coastal communities, particularly those dependent on fuel-intensive fishing activities and external trade flows;
- Reference is made to the European Pact for the Oceans, which includes support for coastal and island communities among its priorities, based on a holistic approach;
- It recognizes that the problems of coastal areas, linked to different sectors (fishing, tourism, infrastructure, transport, etc.), make it difficult for Member States and local authorities to implement coherent strategies and that integrated action is therefore necessary.

States the following considerations:

- agrees with the general objectives of the Communication, especially with regard to the holistic strategy for achieving them;
- regrets the fact that no socioeconomic impact assessment is planned, which should form the basis of any initiative, whether legislative or non-legislative. Indeed, given the complexity of the issue and the impact of any policies on all sectors, businesses and citizens operating in coastal areas, it would be appropriate to base decisions on solid economic considerations, such as the potential creation of new jobs, as well as on a rough estimate of the resources required;

Disclaimer - This advice reflects only the MEDAC's view and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information that it contains

- considers that, despite providing funding for coastal communities, the EMFF is difficult to access due to excessive bureaucracy;

proposes that the new multiannual financial framework (MFF), which has just been finalized, should enable policy planning and development to proceed as quickly as possible: the approval phase of the multiannual financial framework, which at present still has to go through all the stages of the ordinary legislative procedure, should make it possible to quickly forecast both the amounts and the methods of use of the funds and, above all, the room for action available to individual Member States;

expects that the initiative will truly “contribute to developing a coherent approach to EU sectoral policies, initiatives, and funding instruments, making it easier for Member States, particularly smaller ones, to implement national strategies for coastal areas and communities,” by reducing “administrative barriers and costs for authorities and stakeholders, enabling territories to better realize their economic, social, and environmental potential.”

considers that there is a risk that the emphasis on “economic diversification” could push fishing communities towards other sectors (such as overtourism), leading to a potential loss of cultural identity and local heritage, which the strategy itself claims to want to protect. A further risk of economic diversification is the loss of food security for coastal communities.

In particular, MEDAC considers that the following areas of intervention should be prioritized:

- Tackling extreme weather events, which are becoming increasingly frequent due to climate change and having an ever-greater impact on coastal communities (coastal erosion).
- Reducing pollution in coastal areas, which is exacerbated during periods of high tourist traffic
- Developing port areas with parts designated for fishing and services for the proper disposal of waste.
- Promoting and protecting cultural heritage related to the tradition of small-scale fishing in coastal communities.
- Improving connectivity, including access to WiFi networks, not only for control purposes, but also to provide the necessary knowledge tools for access to funds, planning, and collaboration with other communities.
- Simplification of fishing regulations in highly insular geographical areas to facilitate compliance with specific local logistics (e.g., Greece and Croatia)
- Develop local markets that are closely integrated with the territory and facilitate direct sales in compliance with food safety regulations.
- Fully involve coastal communities and civil society in the future of the communities themselves from the inception, with a particular focus on young people to ensure generational renewal in primary sectors.



- Co-management is a critical tool for inclusive and participatory decision-making and for effective sustainable management in many coastal fisheries.

