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MEDAC ADVICE ON LTMP FOR SMALL PELAGICS IN GSA 17 (NORTHERN ADRIATIC)

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In order to reply to the letters received by Croatian, Italian and Slovenian 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 (GSA 17) (Croatia: 7/10/2014 – ref. 525-13/034-14-1; Italy: 6/10/2014, ref. 19856; Slovenia: 10/10/2014 ref.342-29/2014-1), the Focus Group (FG) on long term management plan for small pelagic in GSA 17 drafted the following proposal of advice.

Advice

The FG met several times over the last two years and has investigated a wide range of topics to better understand the reality of small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17) and the activity of the Croatian, Italian and Slovenian fleets.
During some meetings, scientists were invited to present the results of current scientific studies. In particular, meetings were held on the following dates and venues:

October 8th, 2014 (Split – HR)
Presentations:

- Towards long term management plans - GSA07 and GSA17 – (Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni – coordinator FG)
- Anchovy and Sardine Stock Assessment in the GSA 17, according to GFCM- Alberto Santojanni (CNR ISMAR – Ancona)
- Gestione coordinata delle risorse marine in Adriatico – Marco Spinadin (Consorzio Alto Adriatico)

November 20th 2014 (Rome – IT)
Presentations:

- Towards long term management plans - GSA 17 Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni – coordinator FG
- Croatian fishing fleet status and management measures for small pelagic (Krstina Mislov Jelavic –HGK)

March 11th 2015 (Rome IT)
Presentations:

- Croatian proposal for the multiannual plan for GSA 17 (small pelagic) (Krstina Mislov Jelavic - HGK)
- Technical properties of purse seines targeting small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea (Alessandro Lucchetti – CNR ISMAR Ancona)

April 23 rd 2015 (Marseille FR)

Presentations :

- Presentation on summer temporary trawling closure in the Northern Adriatic Sea - S. Raicevich – ISPRA Chioggia

June 10th 2015 Madrid (ES)

Presentations:

- **Informative document on the state of small pelagic fisheries in GSA 17**
- EC Public Consultation on a regulation establishing a multiannual plan for the management of Northern Adriatic Sea small pelagic fisheries (May to September 2015).

November 10th 2015 (S. Julians, Malta)

Presentations:

- Assessment of the work done in the Focus Groups on the GSA 17 and GSA 7 (Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni – coordinator WG1)
- Study on the evaluation of specific management scenarios for the preparation of multiannual management plans in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: The Adriatic Sea case study (Carpi et al.- BEMTOOL Project)

On the basis of information acquired during meetings in 2014-2015,

THE MEDAC:

1. PENDING the Commission's proposal and the future basic regulation for a LTMP for small pelagic fisheries in the Northern Adriatic (GSA 17);
2. CONSIDERING that article 44, paragraph 2(A) of Regulation (UE) 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, establishes that Advisory Councils may submit recommendations and suggestions on matters relating to the management of fisheries and the socio- economic and conservation aspects of fisheries and aqua culture to the Commission and to the Member State concerned, and, in particular, recommendations on how to simplify rules on fisheries management; and that 2(B) may 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;
3. CONSIDERING that during the High-Level Seminar held in Catania on 9th and 10th February 2016, the European Commission recalled the need to adopt urgent measures to address the overfishing in the Mediterranean;
4. CONSIDERING that the Croatian, Italian and Slovenian fleets have already implemented emergency technical measures scheduled by GFCM recommendations (GFCM/37/2013/1 and following) and already officially informed the EC and GFCM Secretariat;
5. CONSIDERING necessary to define the long-term management framework in a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the European Council, on the basis of the approach adopted for the development of the plan for the Baltic Sea, and thus regulation should define the

general aspects, leaving decisions on technical measures to the Commission according to the principle of regionalisation under article 18 of Regulation (UE) 1380/2013;

6. CONSIDERING that it is recognized as a primary interest to achieve the best fishing results respecting the sustainability of stocks, to develop the fishery economies, to defend employment, encouraging long-term friendly relations;
7. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC has divided the work in two parts: the first part was carried out as an in-depth thorough study of the national legal framework in each of the three Member States (Croatia, Italy, Slovenia) relating to small pelagic in Adriatic. The output was a specific "*Information document on the status of small pelagic in GSA17*", sent to the European Commission in August 2015. The second part was focused on the proposals of sustainable technical measures from an environmental, social and economic point of view, in light of a possible multi-annual management plan. This second part was closed in February 2016, after an extraordinary technical meeting held in Rome.
8. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC, in accordance with the provisions of the CFP, has always held the balance between the environmental, social and economic aspects, with particular attention to the impact that some management measures could have on traditional coastal small pelagic fishing communities. In particular, the MEDAC stresses the importance of protecting and preserving the activities of traditional fishing occurring in certain areas of the GSA 17 (see purse seines in Trieste Bay: i.e. Gulf of Trieste and the West coast of Istria, down to Lim Channel)
9. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC took note of the conclusions of the STECF EWG 15/14: "*Small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea - Mediterranean assessment - Part 1*"and that it pays attention to the most recent assessments carried out within the GFCM
10. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC decided to draft this advice, considering the results of the stock assessments prepared by the STECF (EWG 15/14), the work of the first meeting of GFCM SRC-AS, Catania Seminar conclusions, and that the MEDAC is willing to provide a contribution to address the problem, so as to avoid the serious fallouts on employment and on the fishing business income;
11. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC took note of the results of various scientific research presented during the various meetings held on the subject;
12. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC reacted to the consultation of EC Commission "*on a regulation establishing a multiannual plan for the management of Northern Adriatic Sea small pelagic fisheries*" ran from May to September 2015;
13. CONSIDERING that it is necessary to implement, among other measures, mechanisms allowing adaptive management of fishing effort;
14. CONSIDERING the importance to include the Professional Organizations/Producer Organizations throughout the decision-making process: evaluation of the resource in cooperation with the scientific research, proposals/discussion of technical measures, implementation and control;
15. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC underlines the problem of a time gap between the scientific advice and the related application of measures;
16. CONSIDERING that on the basis of the geographical and spatial situation and traditional practice of small PS vessels technically adapted to the situation in Trieste bay without

damage to the sea ground, the MEDAC agrees to exclude the PS fleet in Trieste Bay from general rules for GSA 17

17. CONSIDERING that, according to the "*2015 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 15-07)*" the purse seines fishing fleet segment <12m is participating less than 2% in total catch of total purse seines catch of Italia, Slovenia and Croatia; that on the other side this fleet segment represents 13% of total number of purse seines fishing vessels in these three Member States and that the small purse seines are mainly situated in coastal areas and have significant impact on the economies of those areas. Considering furthermore that the very northern part of the Adriatic Sea is very shallow and only a restricted number of purse seines <15m is operating there, that the purse seines <15m operating in the Western Coast of Istria and Gulf of Trieste are limited to that fishing ground and have very important role on the local economy. Considering lastly that named fleet segment is fishing only for the local fresh market, having negligible impact on targeted stocks, the MEDAC considers that, according to the strong socioeconomic and ecological arguments, these fleet segments (<12 m for whole GSA 17 and <15m for Western Coast of Istria down to Lime Channel and Gulf of Trieste) should be excluded from the proposed management measures in yellow and orange zone of the proposed traffic light approach;
18. CONSIDERING that, in line with the provisions of article 44, paragraph 2(B), MEDAC is going to propose a solution for PS in Adriatic Sea, derogating the provisions of article 13, paragraph 3 of Regulation (CE) 1967/2006 ("Mediterranean Regulation");
19. CONSIDERING that the following proposal of the MEDAC is considered in line with the provisions laid down in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, as it contains obligations and prohibitions that snap to the achievement of reference points linked in some way to MSY;
20. CONSIDERING that the MSY level should be identified as a range value set by the research, as it was described in the "*Study on the evaluation of specific management plan for the preparation of LTMP in the Mediterranean and the Black sea*" (Carpi P. et al. and BEMTOOL Project) presented at the November 10th, 2015 MEDAC meeting held in Malta; and considering upgrades on the above mentioned study which has been done at the beginning of 2016, during the preparation process for the GFCM SAC meeting .
21. CONSIDERING that the MEDAC reached a compromise position among the sectors of the Croatian, Slovenian and Italian fisheries, shared by scientific research, in March 2016;

SUGGESTS

the following advice which defines measures that Member States or the EC could adopt to reach the objectives set by the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, without affecting the viability of fishing enterprises, the existing trade agreements, employment and income levels of the industry, traditional fishing activities.

Framework:

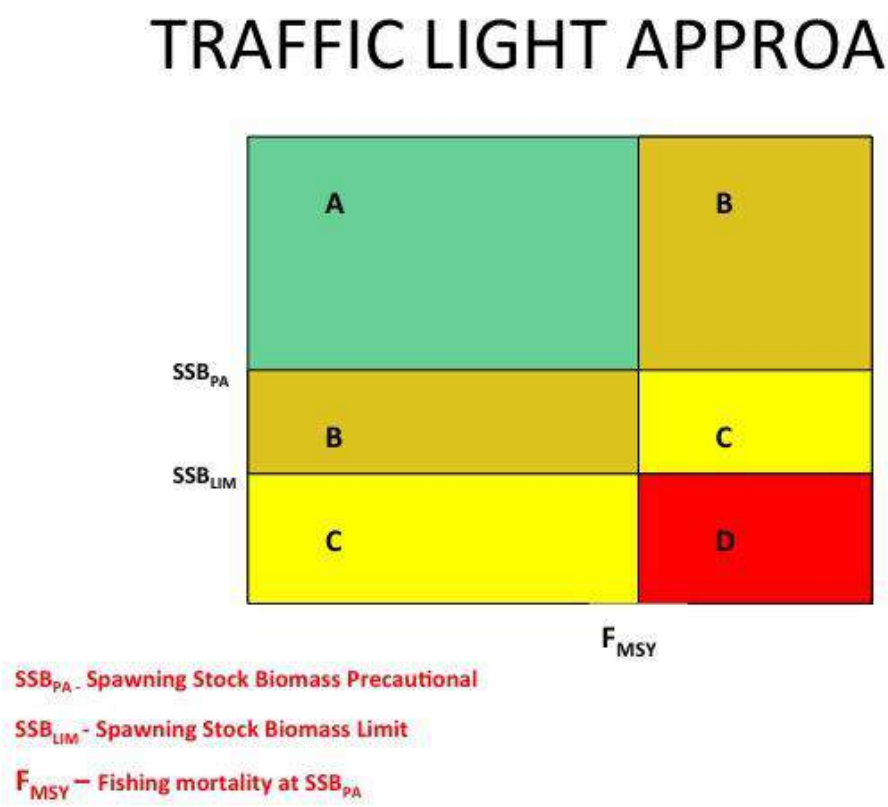
GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM-GSA 17 (Northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in GSA 18 (Southern Adriatic Sea)

GFCM/38/2014/1 amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM GSA 17

GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18)

Additional measures (different for sardines and anchovies):

The additional measures to be implemented will be differentiated on the basis of the current level of the SSB and F_{MSY}, using a " Traffic lights "approach:



Actions:

Depending on the aforementioned parameters, obtained from scientific research the following measures could be taken.

ZONES ACCORDING TO THE TRAFFIC LIGHT APPROACH	PROPOSAL
A – GREEN ZONE	Max 180 fishing days per year, max 20 fishing days per month, to be applied on all fleet segments.
B – ORANGE ZONE	Max 180 fishing days per year, max 20 fishing days per month, to be applied on all fleet segments. + Introduction of spatial-temporal closures, not to be applied on fishing vessels <12m LoA[1] in GSA 17 and on fishing vessels <15m LoA in the area of Trieste Bay, i.e. Gulf of Trieste, Western coast of Istria, down to Lim Channel: • East Adriatic: 30% of closure of national territorial waters for at least six months. • West Adriatic: 50% of closure of national territorial waters for at least four months.
C – YELLOW ZONE	Max 180 fishing days per year, max 20 fishing days per month, to be applied on all fleet segments. + Introduction of spatial-temporal closures, not to be applied on fishing vessels <12m LoA in GSA 17 and on fishing vessels <15m LoA in the area of Trieste Bay, i.e. Gulf of Trieste, Western coast of Istria, down to Lim Channel: • East Adriatic: 30% of closure of national territorial waters for at least six months. • West Adriatic: 50% of closure of national territorial waters for at least four months;

1 Lenght over All

	+ According to GFCM Recommendation, introduction of an additional temporal closure of minimum 15 continuous fishing days in the spawning period of the target species for all fleet; + Max 144 fishing days/year for target species.
D – RED ZONE	Emergency measures adopted by the European Commission under Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013

The MEDAC also suggests:

- A minimum 3-year plan duration or more, to allow fishing enterprises to plan their investments on the basis of a reasonable timeframe;
- The measures contained in this plan should be applied as soon as possible, at the latest by 1/1/2018;
- All vessels actively fishing in GSA 17 for anchovies and/or sardines should have on board an effective electronic system to control and monitor their position and their fishing activity. In particular, electronic logbook is mandatory for all vessels;
- Landing obligation fully implemented;
- To confirm in the Long Term Management Plan *de minimis* exemption from the landing obligation as defined in Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 1392/2014 of 20 October 2014 establishing a discard plan for certain small pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea, i.e.in the northern Adriatic Sea, up to 5 % of the total annual catches of species subject to minimum sizes in the small pelagic mid-water trawl and purse seines fisheries for anchovy, sardine, mackerel and horse mackerel.
- Fishing authorization mandatory for all vessels actively fishing sardines and anchovies in GSA 17;
- Before the adoption of the management plan (Considering Art. 2 of the Reg. 1380/2013) the MEDAC finds important to obtain evaluation of impacts of the possible management measures on food availability and socio-economic aspects on the fishing enterprises;
- In order to reduce the time gap between data collection and the measures to be implemented according to the traffic light approach, in addition to traditional methods,

more time-responding systems, such as echo surveys;

- According to the document – "*Technical properties of purse seines targeting small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea"* (Alessandro Lucchetti – CNR ISMAR Ancona) presented on March 11th 2015 MEDAC meeting (Rome IT), we recommend to include the derogation for the article 13 of the Reg. (CE) 1967/2006 concerning the size of the purse seiners (max. height and length and depth of the deployment) into the multiannual management plan for small pelagics in the Northern Adriatic Sea.