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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,
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MEDAC
MEDITERRANEAN
ADVISORY
COUNCIL
Prot. N° 1921/2016
del 08/06/2016

**MEDAC**
Mr Giampaolo Buonfiglio
Chairperson
Via Nazionale 243
I - 00184 Rome
Italy

**Subject: MEDAC Opinion on SWO-MED**

*Yr reference: 156/2016*

Dear Mr Buonfiglio,

Thank you for the MEDAC opinion on swordfish fisheries management in the Mediterranean. Below you may find our follow up to some of your proposals.

**MEDAC proposal for 3 months consecutive closure period at the start of the year**

The Commission highlighted this MEDAC's advice to Member States and suggested the possibility to modify the closure periods for Mediterranean swordfish in order to have a single closure period, between December and March. This corresponds to a 4 months closure period, consistent with the request from the SCRS to further reduce fishing mortality. Some Member States indicated that they would prefer a status quo, by maintaining the two existing closure periods. In addition, the Commission also raised the possibility, in line with MEDAC's proposal, to introduce a closure period for the Albacore fishery.

**MEDAC position to the introduction of a TAC**

The Commission notes that the reasoning for MEDAC's position is linked to the absence of a specific request for a TAC by SCRS during the last stock assessment conducted in 2014. It should however be noted that SCRS scientists provided an overview of the status of the stock but did not evaluate the value of introducing catch limits. However, the SCRS also requested a reduction of the fishing mortality and indicated that the stock is being overfished. Should this be confirmed during this year's stock assessment, the introduction of a catch limit would be one of the tools to be considered by the managers.

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I would like to thank you for your input and inform you that further discussions are scheduled to take place with Member States in the coming weeks. The Commission also intends to initiate exchanges with other relevant ICCAT Contracting Parties before finalising the proposal to be submitted by the European Union during the next ICCAT Annual meeting in November 2016.

Thank you again for your continuous interest and constructive input. If you have any questions on this reply, you may contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO