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MEDAC Advice
Referring to

DG MARE Ref. Ares(2021)4143172 – 24/06/2021 reply letter to MEDAC discussion paper "Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in Mediterranean fisheries management. Some food for thoughts"

The COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL COM (2021) 279 final "Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2022"

The Proposal of measures submitted to the SAC meeting (June 2021) towards the 44th GFCM Plenary session (November 2021)

The MEDAC emphasizes that the thoughts expressed in the discussion paper "Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in Mediterranean fisheries management. Some food for thoughts" (Ref. 115/2021, 26 May) are consistent with the MSY objectives embedded in CFP: although the art. 2 of CFP reports the objective to restore and maintains the populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield, the *consideranda 8* recommends that "*management decisions relating to maximum sustainable yield in mixed fisheries should consider the difficulty of fishing all stocks in a mixed fishery at maximum sustainable yield at the same time* […]". Therefore, it seems that the CFP can accommodate concepts derived from MSY and adapted to mixed fisheries, as those proposed in the cited discussion paper.

Furthermore, considering that the effects of management measures taken in 2019 and 2020 will possibly be evident only in next year's data (as monitoring indicators currently available cover the period to 2018), whatever the approach in managing mixed fisheries is adopted, managers should deeply also evaluate the socio-economic implications of future management actions.
For instance, MEDAC encourages that future actions, such as:

- the additional effort reductions to reach MSY for all species target of the EU MAP in the Western Mediterranean by January 2025, especially considering the aspects related to MSY in mixed fishery,

- the implementation of the GFCM measures in the Adriatic Sea both for demersal species and the forthcoming transitional period and MAP for small pelagic species,

should be carefully evaluate the trade-offs between ecological risks and benefits and socio-economic impacts and impairments.

Disclaimer - This opinion 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

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As a final remark on the reply letter to MEDAC, - the establishment of the “Torre Guaceto” MPA is remarkably an interesting and positive experience regarding co-management of small-scale fisheries (Russi, 2020). However, such experience was achieved by a strong involvement of fishers in order to control the fishing effort, surveillance of activities in the MPA and adoption of more selective fishing gears, but without reference to MSY which necessarily would require an evaluation of stock size and yield under different fishing pressures.
Overall, the MEDAC proposal of a FMSY objective adapted to a mixed fishery considering other ecological aspects, including the prey-predator relationship, is referred to a wider context, such as the fishing opportunities for 2022 and the EU proposal of measures towards the 44th GFCM session reported above

References

Russi, D. (2020). Governance strategies for a successful marine protected area–The case of Torre Guaceto. Marine Policy, 115, 103849.

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