MEDAC - Registered Office Via XX Settembre, 20 - c/o MIPAAF - 00187 Rome (Italy) - Tax identification number 97534810581 - Association registered with the Prefecture of Rome as a legal entity n.1224/2017

Ref.:143/2020

Rome, 18 June 2020

Charlina Vitcheva
Director-General
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission

Dear Director General,

During the MEDAC WG1 meeting held on 3rd and 4th June, while discussing the latest legislative developments, some issues emerged in relation to the initiatives being taken by the European Union to tackle the consequences of COVID-19 in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. In particular, these issues concerned Regulation (EU) 2020/460 and Reg (EU) 2020/560, adopted specifically in order to meet the cash-flow needs of fishery and aquaculture enterprises in the face of a health emergency. Given that there was not enough time during the WG1 meetings to raise all the matters we feel it is necessary to present to the Commission for the purpose of ensuring the effective application of the same regulations, we have taken the liberty of writing them down, in order to make it possible to achieve the aims that have been established:

1) Regulation 2020/460

Recital 8) states that *"In order to ensure that Member States have sufficient financial means to make the investments needed without delay, it is appropriate for the Commission not to issue recovery orders for amounts recoverable from Member States for the annual accounts submitted in 2020. Member States should use the amounts not recovered to accelerate investments related to the COVID-19 outbreak and eligible under Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (2) and the Fund-specific rules."*

This consideration is taken up again in the body of the Regulation under article 2, point 5), where, amending article 139 paragraph 7 of Regulation 1303/2013, it is envisaged that the European Commission shall not issue recovery orders for the amounts recoverable from Member States "for the accounts submitted in 2020". We ask you to confirm that this refers to the accounts submitted by the competent national authorities by 15th February this year and relating to financial period from 1st July 2018 – 30th June 2019.

2) Regulation 2020/560,

With reference to article 1, point 8, which amends parts of article 66 regarding the production and marketing plans of Producer Organisations, we ask:

a) for confirmation that, as the economic context has changed due to COVID19, it is possible to allow for changes and/or additions to the plans presented last November for the year 2020: many activities planned at the time are no longer feasible as a direct result of the health emergency;

info@med-ac.eu
+39 06.46.65.21.12 T
+39 06.60.51.32.59 F

med-ac.eu
Via XX Settembre, 20
00187 Roma (Italy)

Co-funded by the European Union

b) whether it is possible to allow MSs to let POs that had not submitted a Plan for 2020 present new production and marketing plans according to the procedures set out in article 2 of Regulation (EU) 1418/2013;
c) whether it is possible to include the costs relative to sanitising workplaces and the purchase of personal protective equipment should any Plans be amended or supplemented;
d) whether it is possible to include, in any amended or supplemented Plans, the costs relative to the purchase/leasing/rent of structures/equipment/machinery for the purpose of tackling COVID-19 and its consequences. Specific reference is made to the eligibility of expenditures for the purchase/leasing/rent of premises (on the basis of the depreciation charge for the period in which the project takes place) in order to have more space available and therefore allow for the required distancing; refrigerated storage capacity should there be any further lockdowns which make it necessary to store fisheries products; conveyor belts on board and/or on land in transformation/storage/sales structures to facilitate distancing, etc.
e) whether the actions within the 2020 production and marketing plans, as amended/supplemented to tackle the consequences of the COVID19 emergency, thus taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the changes to article 66 of the EMFF, can be completed by 31st December 2021 and paid for by 30th June 2022 in order to make it possible to ensure that these actions are carried out in the most effective way possible;
e) whether the Commission Recommendation of 3rd March 2014 on the establishment and implementation of the Production and Marketing Plans pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, can consequently be deemed to have been supplemented by the cases detailed above.

We thank you in advance for your kind attention to this letter, the aim of which is solely that of promoting the best possible implementation of the new regulations amending the EMFF.

Kind regards,

Gian Ludovico Ceccaroni
Coordinator WG1

info@med-ac.eu
+39 06.46.65.21.12 T
+39 06.60.51.32.59 F

med-ac.eu
Via XX Settembre, 20
00187 Roma (Italy)

Co-funded by the European Union