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.: 152/2020

Rome, 02 July 2020

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

Cc Pascal Savouret
Executive Director
European Fishery Control Agency

Dear Director General,

During the last MEDAC Working Group 1 meeting, which was held online on 3rd and 4th June, the results of the ICCAT stock assessment relative to Mediterranean Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) stocks were presented. On this occasion, and over the following days, some Spanish, French and Italian members of the Advisory Council reiterated their complaints regarding illegal fisheries carried out by some vessels from the Moroccan fleet, which employ driftnets to capture Mediterranean Swordfish in the Western Mediterranean.

Given that

- This IUU activity is not currently monitored in the Alboran Sea (Ref.43/2020 MEDAC);
- during the aforementioned MEDAC online meeting on 4th June, the representative of DG MARE invited the parties concerned to submit evidence to demonstrate their claims;
- the MEDAC and its members are not authorised to investigate these reports of IUU fishing further, compliance with regulations both in EU waters and beyond is, however, considered highly important so that all parties involved operate under the same conditions (*level playing field*);

Kindly find attached the documentation provided so far by the sector operators, the hope being that in the area in question, the Alboran sea, it may be possible for DG MARE to intensify controls in order to monitor and, if necessary, report any illegal fishery activities using driftnets.

The documentation includes: two videos, one of which relates to the vessel “Elmamoun-2” (detected at 36 ° 06.350 N and 002 ° 43.716W) and another whose coordinates are shown in the sequence of images), as well as a photo of the fishery products resulting from their activities in the fish market in Tangier. The photo attached highlights the problems related to how fish are stored and the minimum landing size.
We sincerely hope to be able to count on your support in combating illegal fishery activities, which risk making the measures applied so far to protect swordfish stock futile; please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Giampaolo Buonfiglio
Chair

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