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MEDAC OPINION ON THE MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN IN THE STRAIT OF SICILY

The Executive Committee members adopted the opinion proposed by the Focus Group on the Strait of Sicily that met on 20th of April in Split to discuss management measures to be identified within the framework to be implemented in the multiannual plan following up from GFCM Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2. In drafting the advice, the Focus Group has taken into account the following elements:

- GFCM Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom trawling fisheries of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily pending the development and adoption of a multiannual management plan;
- The outcomes from FAO Regional Project MedSudMed projects which identified management scenarios from consultation with the sector, NGO and administrators from Italy, Malta, Libya and Tunisia;
- The outcomes from the SAC Subregional Committees for the Central Mediterranean (SRC-CM) which tested and analysed the different management scenarios proposed within MedSudMed;
- The Report of the 18th Session of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) outlining the Technical advice on the management of the demersal fishery in the Strait of Sicily.

The MEDAC agreed unanimously on the need to establish three Fisheries Restricted Areas in the Northern sector of the Strait of Sicily, as identified by GFCM/SAC, as the most immediate and appropriate measure to improve the management of deep-water rose shrimp and hake in GSA 15-16.
In line with the GFCM/SAC technical advice on the management of the demersal fishery in the Strait of Sicily, the three FRAs proposed should be included in a management plan aimed at regulating bottom trawling of hake and deep-water rose shrimp also incorporating the objective of protecting the biodiversity and decreasing bycatch (especially of incidental catches of vulnerable species) and increase profitability of fisheries.
The MEDAC also highlighted the importance of the list of authorized vessels as a management measure to ensure fleet management as well as surveillance and control of the fleets operating in the area for demersal fisheries.

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