Ref.:194/2017

Rome, 26 June 2017

To the Director General

João Aguiar Machado

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

European Commission

Dear Mr Machado,

As you are aware, the MEDAC has long been committed to carrying out the role that the Basic Regulation assigns to the Advisory Councils under the CFP to the best of its ability, providing opinions, suggestions and indications that are useful to the Institutions, on topical issues identified in the annual plans that are agreed on.

As the Advisory Council consists of stakeholders, the indications made are of a technical and managerial nature, based on scientific data provided at European and national level by the reference institutes and committees.

It is a well-known fact that the scientific research community provides its assessments and recommendations, which the relative institutions and policy-makers translate into management measures, pursuing the goal of environmental, social and economic sustainability in the sector.

In this framework, neither the MEDAC nor any other Advisory Councils have ever been able, neither have they ever wished, to provide innovative scientific bases that are different from those officially provided by the stock assessments previously carried out under EC Reg. N.199/2008 and today by the EMFF.

You can therefore imagine our amazement when we discovered that, at the recent COM PECH meeting, representatives of the European Commission declared that the proposals made by the MEDAC on the management of small pelagics in the Adriatic would not be considered as they lacked a scientific basis.

Without going into the details of our proposal, we would like to point out and underline that it is not our duty nor are we in a position to present scientific data that are different from those provided by the EC. Our proposals aim to achieve the goal of sustainability, indicating the ways and the timescale that would be manageable and acceptable to stakeholders, in the framework of a joint, shared approach that ensures compliance and with it the effectiveness of the measures.

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However, if the consideration of our proposals depends on having an original scientific basis that contradicts that of the EC, as this would be impossible, the expediency and sense behind the work we carry out would be invalidated.

It is the first time that this kind of observation has been addressed to the MEDAC by EC representatives in an institutional context, other opinions of our Advisory Council have been well received by Member States and by the EC, without complaints of the lack of scientific bases, as is the case with all the other ACs.

Certain of your understanding, Director General, we write to you for a clarification of this matter, if you deem it necessary we can arrange for a specific meeting, in order to clear any confusion and to allow us carry out our commitments fully, continuing to provide our contribution to the implementation of the CFP.

We renew the expression of our highest esteem and welcome the opportunity to greet you with the utmost cordiality.

The Chair
Giampaolo Buonfiglio

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