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MEDAC CONTRIBUTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAP OF DEMERSAL SPECIES IN THE WEST MED

(Reg. (EU) 2019/1022 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014)

According to the DG MARE representative's request received just after the MEDAC meeting held online at the beginning of July, the MEDAC collected updated information directly or indirectly related to the main difficulties faced by stakeholders and MS in the first year of the MAP implementation. In addition, the request asked for data to be transmitted to all STECF experts, by August 15th, and any relevant information related to the following list:

- socio-economic data (by vessel: age, gender, number of crew, average annual margin, market price by species and by area etc.);
- data on landings and discards;
- length distribution and age composition of catches;
- estimate of recreational fisheries landings in your port/area;
- estimate of incidental catches (by species, by area etc.).

During the MEDAC Focus Group (FG) on the West Med MAP held at the beginning of July, the following main issues in the implementation of the Reg. (EU) 2019/1022 already raised up:

- in the Art.11, the incoherence between the par. 1 and par. 2 is an obstacle to the measure implementation and to the evaluation of its effects on the managed stocks. In fact, 3 months of closure within 6 nm/100m isobath (par.1) are clearly referred to the protection of the coastal demersal species included in the scope of the MAP, while the derogation justified by particular geographical constraints (par. 2) can be allowed when the reduction of 20% of juvenile hake is provided. The incoherence in the derogation is due to the completely different objectives in respect to the measure because the areas of hake juvenile's concentration are located over 100m depth, therefore not covered by the scope of the Art.11.1.
- some concerns have been referred to the reduction of 20% of hake juveniles because it is a condition never applied before (Art.11.2).
- the socio-economic impact of the MAP could cause the permanent closure of fishing activities of many vessels; therefore, the effort reduction can already overcome the foreseen 10% after the first year of implementation.
- the MAP should be agreed at the GFCM level, because the effect of management measures can be completely deleted by the fishing activities carried out by third countries.

Moreover, the FG highlighted the relevance of the following aspects to be taken into consideration in the MAP evaluation and in the forthcoming decisions about the fishing effort quotas in 2021:

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- the timing of the MAP implementation is very tight, then the scientific experts will be not able to assess the effect of the MAP's application.
- the ecological aspects, such as pollution, climate change, nutrients, and the related influence on the stock's fluctuations should be considered.
- the collected and processed data should be updated and reliable.
- the COVID-19 impact on the fishery sector and the temporary (and even permanent) closure of the fishing activities due to the unexpected crisis should be considered also in terms of effort reduction already carried out in 2020.
- the socio-economic impact of the measures should be assessed.

The above-mentioned aspects should be considered by the EC as the basis for greater flexibility applied in the MAP implementation.

Concerning the MEDAC contribution related to the data transmission to STECF, the MEDAC members cooperated by providing the following data sources and projects results.

FRANCE

CNPMEM provided the link to the GEPAC MED project:
- brochure:
FR http://www.amop.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEPAC-MED-Synthe%CC%80se-FR.pdf
EN http://www.amop.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEPAC-MED-Synthe%CC%80se-EN.pdf
Full report FR: http://www.amop.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEPAC-MED-Rapport.pdf

Short notes on the project
GEPAC MED project 2017 - *Gestion et Pérennisation de l'Activité des Chalutiers de Méditerranée* (Management and Sustainability of the Mediterranean Trawler Activity).
- overview of the main socio-economic parameters of the trawlers fleet in 2017 in the Gulf of Lions and evidence of **fishing vessels reduction** in the last years **(from 2001 to 2017): from 131 to 59, then 45% reduction.**

- assuming a constant return related to each output**, the loss in turnover terms is proportional to the reduction in number of days at sea**: the variable costs decrease, while fixed costs remain. The average wage decreases equally, and the share system contract reflects the reduction in fishing days.

- **Estimated direct and indirect employment related to the trawlers fleet of the Gulf of Lions**:

59 fishing vessels => 240-260 fishers => 171-195 indirect employees (FTE= Full Time Equivalent) at the fishing harbor => 264-303 employees on the local economy

- **The scenarios related to the different percentages of fishing days reduction** have been evaluated thought the comparison between the following indicators both on the fishing vessels and on the supply chain: **turnover, gross value added, salaries + payroll taxes, gross operating surplus,**

estimated average payment according to the share system. The **threshold between a balanced financial situation and risky financial situation is approximately 177 days (instead of the yearly average of 199, therefore a 11% reduction). The sustainability is strictly related to the fuel price.**

- depending on the season, a day at sea may be more or less profitable: in order to optimize the trawlers days at sea, as monthly returns both in terms of volumes and value, **the best months to stop the daily activity are March and June. While during August and September the stop should be avoided**.

- **the effort reduction related to the permanent cessation of fishing activity** by some of the fishing vessels has been also estimated, because the consequence could be a stable fishing activity for the rest of the fleet still active (not need of fishing days reduction). **The consequences of fishing days reduction and the permanent cessation have been compared**: the fishing days reduction is more efficient in a social perspective because the fishers employment is saved, nevertheless the impact of a reduction in buying power is assessed, and the economic situation of fishing vessels could be balanced but risky. Otherwise, the permanent cessation of the fishing activities is an irreversible management choice in terms of fishing vessels and fisher's employment loss. In the latter option the first fishing vessels to be stopped should be those already in a critical economic situation.

Moreover, the CRPMEM PACA added the reference to the national program for data collection (SIH - Système d'information Halieutique) because it is proposing yearly synthesis across the different regions of the French Med (https://sih.ifremer.fr/Publications/Fiches-regionales). However, those data should be already available to the EC.

ITALY

ACI contributed to the collection of relevant information by sending the "Yearly Report on resources status and production structures in the Italian Seas, 2019".

A comprehensive overview of the fishing activities and the main biological indicators in GSAs 9-10-11 is provided in the report, including the following information:
Biologic analysis (MEDITS data from 1994 to 2016 and Campbiol (from 2009 to 2016)
- Indicators about main commercial species: spatial distribution, abundance indices, length structure, demographic distribution with discard rate, sex ratio, reproductive period, Maturity at length, recruitment areas and intensity, adults-recruits relationship, stock assessment methods
- Community indices: biomass and diversity index, results of the abundance biomass comparisons
Socio-economic results (survey in 2016)
- macro-economic framework at national level
- main trends of the fishing sector: fishing capacity and activity, catches and related incomes and prices, employees and labour costs, economic performance of the fishing fleet.
In the conclusions the results for each GSA are reported and summarized.

FEDERPESCA provided the GFCM data of the fleet register as useful information in evaluating the potential effectiveness of the effort reduction applied only to the EU fleets in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the report on the Development of the fishing sector in Italy released in 2019 and drafted by FEDERPESCA includes data of 2016. The overview of the socio-economic aspects of the fishing sector in Italy is mainly referred to official data and then most probably already available to EC.

SPAIN

UNACOMAR, in cooperation with the scientific expert, provided the most updated technical reports on the following information:

	Updated to	Data and information on	Language
Annual Fishery Status for Catalan Fisheries	September 2019	Survey on demersal species (abundance and biomass), setting the socio-economic study, Recreational fishery data	Catalan
Annual Fishery Status for Catalan Fisheries (annexes)			Catalan
Recreational data of the activity in the Catalan coast	2019	Survey on recreational fishery activity, fishing effort per area/gear/season, catches per area/gear/season, socio-economic impact per area/gear	Catalan
Implementation of Article 11.2 and mean objectives of ICM-CSIC and ICATMAR science	2019	GSAs 1,5,6 , size of hake first maturity and related areas where 20% reduction of juvenile catches can be achieved, Management measures alternative to the reduction of catches of hake juveniles by 20%	English
Scenarios of implementation of Article 11.2	2019	GSA 6, fishing days (from 2006 to 2019), FRA already in force, management scenarios based on different selectivity applied to hake catches of bottom trawlers, management scenarios of different spatio-temporal closures	Spanish
Fishery capacity and technical scenarios for its limitation in Palamós harbour	2019-2020	TipoArt Project testing technical innovations aimed to reduce the trawlers impact and NANSAS0120 including experimental trials to evaluate the traps selectivity in the blue and red shrimp fishery (*Aristeus antennatus*)	Spanish
Fishery capacity in Catalan fleet	2020	Current situation of engines power of Catalan fishing fleet (HP, CV, GT)	Catalan
Scenarios for the 30 % reduction in fishery effort		GSA6, Simulations on reducing fishing effort on the bottom trawler fleet according to the multi-annual plan ((UE) 2019/1022), simulation of stock recovery (Fmsy) on the demersal species prioritized by the multiannual plan	English

		assuming that fleets would not disappear due to effort reduction	
Literature review in Selectivity	Released in 2020	Report of IMPLEMED results on "improving the selectivity of trawls gears in the Mediterranean Sea to advance the sustainable exploitation pattern of trawl fisheries": T90, Sqare and Diamond Mesh Codends, Sorting Grids	English
Regulation review in Selectivity	Released in 2020	Review of the legislative (national and international) provisions regulating technical aspects of trawl nets in the Mediterranean.	English
Socio-Economic study of Vilanova I la Geltrú harbour	2020	Pilot study on socio-economic aspects in Vilanova I la Geltrù harbour. Study on social aspects of the workers, main data on the fishing activity in terms of fishing day, geographical distribution and economic data (debts and costs, shared payments to workers)	Catalan
Landings and fish prices in Catalan auctions (comparative between years 2018 and 2019)	2019	Data on catches and prices, and number of fishing vessels from 2002 to 2019, comparison between main fishing fleet indicators and prices between 2018-2019	Catalan

Furthermore, the "Technical report on survey DESAL1219" on selectivity improvement through the fishing gear modification in the bottom trawlers in the Alboran Sea has been sent by UNACOMAR. The survey has been carried out at the end of 2019 by the IEO (Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia) and it has been financed by the Organization of fishers of Almeria (Organizaciòn de productores pesqueros de Almeria).

RECREATIONAL FISHERY

By IFSUA "Analysis of recreational fishery in Catalunya (2019)"

The document has been recently released by ICATMAR agency of the Catalan Autonomous Government and provides an overview of the catches referred to the recreational fishery in the northwestern Mediterranean. The study is written in Catalan and provides a detailed description of the sector.

The recreational fishers are about 50000 people (including both with license and an estimated number of recreational fishers without license). ICATMAR sent more than 40000 online questionnaires and collected about 13000 answers. Moreover, 400 field surveys have been carried out including the different gears: this is considered a significant sample size and improve the reliability of the study results.

The catches of the recreational fishery sector in 2019 have been 1366 t, about the 5% of the professional fishery sector.
In the study the socioeconomic impact is estimated (direct and indirect expenses of recreational fishers) in relation to the catches. The total reaches 89 million of euros, about the 86,8% of the professional fishing sector.
The data referred to 2020 will be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis because the fishing activities have been completely stopped during some months.

All documents can be downloaded by clicking on the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ByzAUPaarMP524bxdQotC0bbW6Y5o1RC?usp=sharing

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