Ref. Ares(2017)3760922 - 26/07/2017

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,
MARE D3/PCO (2017)

Mr. Giampaolo Buonfiglio
Chairman
Mediterranean Advisory Council
Via Nazionale 243
Scala A interno 3
00184 Roma
ITALY

Subject: **Socio-economic situation of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean Sea**

Your ref.: your letter 191/2017

Dear Mr Buonfiglio,

Thank you for your letter of 22 June 2017, in which you raise the socio-economic situation of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean Sea and the need to safeguard employment levels and the profitability of the fleet as part of our objectives for the sustainable management of fisheries.

Let me assure to you that the work carried out by the MEDAC in this regard is particularly relevant for DG MARE and helps us to better assess our initiatives in the light of the CFP objectives, i.e. to ensure that that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits. It is particularly important to contribute to a fair standard of living of the fishermen in the Mediterranean with a high share of small scale coastal fisheries and a high dependency of the coastal areas on this activity through the sustainable management of fisheries resources. Our experience in other sea basins shows indeed that responsible and science based management brings about change not only in terms of healthy stocks but also in terms of profitability of the fleet, even, if for a transitional period some sacrifices may have to be made.

In view of the dire situation of fish stocks in the Mediterranean taking such responsible action is particular important. If no effective measures are taken and implemented in due time, the stock situation is likely to worsen even more and generate a more dramatic social impact.

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 229-91111
Office: J-99 5/014 – Telephone: direct line +32 229-96310

E-mail: Joao.AGUIAR-MACHADO@ec.europa.eu

In this context, I would like to stress that the Commission's Better Regulation rules require us to consider socio-economic and environmental impacts in the framework of impact assessments that have to be carried out for any new legislative proposal, including for multi-annual plans.

Such considerations have also been an inherent part of the impact assessment we conducted for the establishment of a multi annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks. This assessment is also the result of an intensive internal consultation process with other services, including DG EMPL and DG ENV.

I would also like to stress that DG MARE is in permanent contact with the European Social Partners, in particular in the context of the EU social dialogue committee for fisheries, which allows us to exchange views on the social dimension of the CFP and inform the social partners about policy developments. attentive to their social dimension.

Finally, when it comes to measures for offsetting any negative socio-economic impacts conservation measures may have I would like to draw your attention to the multiple possibilities that exist under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for the period 2014-2020, such as support for temporary cessation, diversification in the context of Community Led Local Development, promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue which for instance allow to acquire new professional skills. To make temporary cessation eligible under the multi-annual plan for small pelagics respective provisions would have to be inserted into the draft regulation.

Let me thank you again for your cooperation and constructive input. If you have any questions on this reply, you may contact Ms. Evangelia Georgitsi (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43) or Ms. Pascale Colson (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273).

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO

Electronically signed on 26/07/2017 14:55 (UTC+02) in accordance with article 4.2 (Validity of electronic documents) of Commission Decision 2004/563