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MEDAC advice on Egyptian Fleet

The FG on Eastern Mediterranean and the FG on Strait of Sicily met online on February 23. The update on scientific information related to the upcoming management measures to be agreed at the GFCM level in the Strait of Sicily was provided to the participants. Furthermore, the knowledge on the social aspects of the current GFCM pilot studies and the progress on forthcoming MAPs in the area were explained to provide a comprehensive overview.

The MEDAC agreed on the following issues to be addressed in the forthcoming management measures to be implemented at the GFCM level:

- The participants urged to address the issues raised up by the MEDAC advice (http://www.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2020/03/66_medac_letter_egyptian_fleet.pdf) on the risk related to the ever-increasing activities of the Egyptian fishing fleet that continue to jeopardize all the efforts that the countries concerned (mainly Italy and Tunisia) made to adopt multi-annual management measures for the fisheries involved.

- Considering the continuous IUU activities observed by the MEDAC members carried out by the Egyptian fleet targeting deep water shrimps (DWS), the members highlighted the strategic role of GFCM and the need of strengthening of joint monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) in the Mediterranean basin. The IUU activities carried out by the Egyptian fleet cannot be controlled efficiently by the Egyptian coast guard only.

- No historical data series is available on these species describing the fishing activities targeting DWS. In particular, it is required that more accuracy in reporting data is enforced: catches must be referred to the GSA where they have been caught and not reported in other GSA. This is one of the main issues in the Eastern Mediterranean. The MEDAC urges an agreement on the minimum conservation reference size and the implementation of selective fishing gears.

- Concerning the FRAs (Fisheries restricted areas) and OECMs (Other effective areas-based Conservation Measures) to be implemented in the area, the MEDAC deems appropriate to take into account the already existing closed areas and the areas already planned to be dedicated to wind turbines or other activities limiting fishery in the near future.

Disclaimer - This advice reflects only the MEDAC's view and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information that it contains

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