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MEDAC advice
on management measures concerning demersal species in the Strait of Sicily

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:

- According to the MEDAC scientific expert on the area, the scientific institutions should:

  - address one of the most controversial aspects of the MAP due to the indication of MSY achievement for both deep water shrimps and hake. This objective is not realistic because fishing mortalities and related fishing effort with the current trawl net selectivity corresponding to the MSY of the two species are characterized by different levels;
  - Improve the management of bottom trawling by further implementation of spatial based measures to protect Essential Fish Habitats (EFH), in terms of nursery and spawning area, and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) extending the Fishery Restricted Areas (FRAs) existing in the Strait of Sicily also off the African coasts;
  - assess the possibility of a differential selectivity of the trawl net used to catch deep water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris)* and hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) to maximize the catchability of the first one reducing the impact on the second one.

- The MEDAC supports the opinion of the MEDAC scientific expert, about the areas to be further improved:
  - The political willing of the CPCs to reach the MAP objectives, based on i) precautionary approach, ii) MSY, iii) ecosystem approach, should be verified considering the different socio-economic state of riparian countries involved.
  - The improvement of information sharing – Additional effort should be devoted to enhancing sharing of information and results among all stakeholders at national and regional level.
  - Socio-economic assessment – Urgency of assessment studies on socio-economic impacts and implications of management measures adopted so far.
  - Monitoring, control, and surveillance – Urgency of the continuation and implementation of the international joint inspections carried out in an experimental way between 2018 and 2019.

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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