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Ref.: 79/2020 Rome, 18 March 2020

MEDAC opinion on the contribution to the GFCM Working Group on Fishing technologies (WGFiT)

The MEDAC,

- Having received the DG MARE request to provide a contribution related to the forthcoming GFCM Working Group on Fishing Technologies
- With regard to the opinion of the WG1, met in Rome on 18 February 2020

Whereas

- Fishers are the first to embrace any improvements in the measures to protect resources, including the increase of fishing gears' selectivity;
  It is necessary to seek a compromise and equilibrium between selectivity and the economic sustainability of fisheries and to fully assess the socio-economic impact of the management measures, according to the CFP provisions (Reg. EU 1380/2013);
- The Union regulations in force already foreseen and implemented measures aimed to the improvement of the fishing gears selectivity;
- The fishing gears examined by the MINOUW project should be still wider tested and agreed with stakeholders (also by taking into account the results of GALION and IMPLEMED projects);
- The achievement of a level playing field in GFCM area, between EU and extra-EU countries, is a shared and crucial objective;
- Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to undermine fishing management, the livelihoods of legitimate fishers and environment,

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1) Supports the spatio-temporal closures shared and agreed with stakeholders, as a first step towards the adoption of measures to reduce the impact of fishing effort[1], until[2] technological

[1] "*The implementation of trawling ban in critical zones (FRA) and periods (temporary closures) aimed at delaying the first catch size of species for which the current minimum mesh size is not appropriate would improve their exploitation patterns*" and "*Closure of some areas with a high density of juvenile hake, combined with effort reductions, would achieve effects comparable to those expected with higher effort reductions*". Source: The state of

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innovations to improve selectivity[3] are checked and standardised at regional level, GFCM contracting parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs);

2) Agrees on the improvement of gears selectivity and on the implementation of studies for the development of new fishing technologies[4], in order to improve fisheries to the benefit of workers, enterprises and marine environment and resources;

3) Highlights the need for the assessment of results on natural resources and socioeconomic impact[5] carried out by the previous management decisions before the adoption of new selectivity and effort reduction measures with the same objectives: the sustainable fishing activities by the EU countries[6] and the recovery of depleted fish stocks;

4) Emphasizes the importance of enforcement and compliance with Recommendations by all the contracting parties of the GFCM, by reinforcing the activity of the Compliance Committee of GFCM in order to identify cases of non-compliance and the appropriate measures to deter and stop non-compliance;

5) The adoption of any further new gear or fishing technology aimed at increasing selectivity, should be supported by Contracting Parties' financial funds.

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the stocks and the role of the FRAs in management fisheries of the Strait of Sicily – F. Fiorentino Oral Communication of MANTIS results, February 2020.

[2] EAA states that also when the technological innovations to improve selectivity are checked and standardized, the benefit of spatio-temporal closures in some areas should be evaluated, shared and agreed with stakeholders.
[3] MEDREACT privileges spatio-temporal management instead the technological innovations for selectivity improvement.
[4] MEDREACT highlights the lessons of the Galion project: with existing robust technology (shifting from 40C to 50L mesh size) the rate of escapement of small fish becomes incompatible with economic constraints of fleets (too many fish lost for sale) and the difficulties in the control activities are too expensive.
[5] Ref.: 191/2017 - 22 June 2017 MEDAC OPINION ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
[6] FAI CISL, WWF require the assessment of socio-economic impact of management measures before their adoption.

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