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MEDAC Advice - Request for a Balanced Ecological Transition Under the European Green Deal

The members of the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC) after debated the topic in the last WG3 “Green Deal” meetings, emphasized the necessity of a balanced approach to the ecological transition mandated by the European Green Deal.

The European Green Deal presents a transformative vision for a sustainable future, aiming to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. While MEDAC supports this ambitious goal, the members stress that the transition must be implemented in a manner that harmonizes the three essential pillars of the CFP of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental.

The Mediterranean region's fishing communities and economy have deep cultural and social roots that span throughout generations. Mediterranean communities rely heavily on fishing not only as a means of livelihood but also as a way of life. Policies stemming from the European Green Deal must consider the social impact on these communities and workforce, ensuring that their traditions, knowledge, and social fabric are preserved. Social sustainability means providing support systems, educational opportunities, and alternative livelihoods to ensure that fishing communities remain resilient.

The fishing industry is a significant economic driver in the European Mediterranean, providing employment and economic stability to coastal areas. Economic sustainability requires policies that maintain the viability of the fishing sector. This includes access to financial resources, support for innovation in sustainable fishing practices, and the development of market opportunities for sustainably caught seafood. Ensuring that the economic dimension is addressed will help protect jobs, stimulate economic growth, and maintain the industry's competitiveness.

The health of the Mediterranean marine ecosystem is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the fishing sector. Environmental sustainability must be at the heart of the ecological transition, promoting practices that protect and restore marine biodiversity, reduce pollution, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. This involves implementing science-based management plans, fostering cooperation among Mediterranean countries, and encouraging the adoption of environmentally friendly fishing technologies.

However, MEDAC expressed concerns to the actual volatility of making business in the fishery sector, as demonstrated by the continuously raising of costs to perform fisheries, the lack of innovation, limited to selectivity, and the limited availability of funds, which have also to be looked for outside the framework of EMFAF, as suggested by DGMare. For the implementation of the Green

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Deal, socioeconomic assessments should be made and have to include the impact of gear modifications (done by experienced fishing technology experts who would evaluate in particular all costs related to gear modification).

In conclusion, the ecological transition envisaged by the European Green Deal presents both a challenge and an opportunity. MEDAC urges policymakers to adopt a holistic approach that balances social, economic, and environmental sustainability, so as to ensure a just and equitable transition that benefits not only the environment but also the people and economies that depend on it.