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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Proposal for a Council Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas
- Statements

Delegations will find attached statements by the Member States.

On closure areas in the area of the Western Mediterranean MAP (France and Spain)

The STECF scientific advice recommends for 2021 the adoption of a significant and urgent effort reduction combined with additional measures. Scientific advice also highlights that the management measures already in place in the Western Mediterranean area are insufficient to ensure the recovery of stocks to MSY levels by 1 January 2025, the legal deadline enshrined in Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea (MAP). With the decline of recruitment in several stocks, the risk of collapse has never been higher and the socio-economic impacts of a collapse would be dramatic.

Member States concerned commit to continue with the efficient implementation of measures contained in the closure areas already adopted pursuant to Article 11 of the MAP, and to follow the foreseen calendar, to ensure the best protection of juveniles, in accordance with the most recent STECF advice.

The MAP foresees that the reduction in fishing mortality, necessary to achieve MSY by 1 January 2025, shall be achieved by means of two tools- reduction of fishing effort and closure areas. Article 11(3) of this regulation requires Member States to establish by 17 July 2021 new closure areas to reduce the catches of juveniles and spawners of all stocks subject to the MAP, based on the best available scientific advice.

The Member States concerned recognise that such scientific advice relates to the existence of concentrations of fish below the minimum conservation reference size and the existence of nursery and spawning grounds of demersal stocks covered by the MAP.

Moreover, the Member States concerned commit to ensure, through such additional closures, a significant reduction of catches of juveniles and spawners, following article 11 and the best available scientific advice.

On a regular basis, MS concerned commit to transmit to the Commission the scientific assessment of the implementation of the closure areas, notably taking into account a target between 15-25% reduction of juvenile and spawners by-catch.

When adopting additional closures, Member States will take into account the recommendations of STECF advice and prevent as much as possible the displacement of effort around closure areas, facilitate the implementation of permanent closure areas and endeavour to protect the coastal areas and continental shelf and upper slope where nurseries and important habitats are located for the stocks under the MAP.

The Member States concerned commit to submit all available data on additional closures to STECF by mid-February 2021 to enable the assessment of the impact of these closures on the concerned stocks.

On the recreational fisheries in the area of the Western Mediterranean MAP (France and Spain)

Where scientific advice indicates that recreational fishing is having a significant impact on the fishing mortality of the stocks under Article 1(2) of the MAP, Article 8(3) of the MAP requires Member States to take, in 2021, all necessary and proportionate measures for the monitoring and collection of data for a reliable estimation of the actual recreational catch levels.

The Member States concerned commit to submit all available data on recreational fisheries to STECF by mid-February 2021 to enable the assessment of the impact of these fisheries on the concerned stocks.

On gear selectivity in the area of the Western Mediterranean MAP (France and Spain)

The STECF scientific advice recommends for 2021 the need to adopt a significant and urgent effort reduction combined with additional measures such as, for example:

- The adoption of a 50mm square-mesh for deep-water fisheries;
- The adoption of a 40mm square-mesh when Norway lobster is the main target;
- The adoption of a 40mm T90 mesh to reduce the catches of small size hake and red mullet.

Moreover, further scientific effort will continue in order to identify other technical measures which could be implemented in the future.

In order to offer best protection to juveniles and allow the stocks listed in the MAP to recover, Member States recognise the urgency to improve the selectivity of the gear used to fish for these stocks.

Article 7.3.b of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea foresees that the fishing effort decrease may be supplemented with any relevant technical or other conservation measures adopted in accordance with Union law, in order to achieve the Fmsy by 1 January 2025.

Member States concerned commit to submit to the Commission, by 30 June 2021, all available information on the measures to put in place for gear selectivity in the area covered by the MAP under Article 13 of the Western Mediterranean MAP and under Article 19 of the Mediterranean Regulation.

On fishing effort in the context of the management of demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean Sea (Italy)

Italy commits to introduce for 2021 in its National Management Plan a 10% fishing effort reduction compared to the baseline from the western Mediterranean Multi-annual Plan, to be deducted from the maximum allowable fishing effort set for 2020 by Council Regulation (EU) 2019/2236 as follows:

Corsica Island, Ligurian Sea, Tyrrhenian Sea and Sardinia Island (GSAs 8-9-10-11)

Stock group	Overall length of vessels	IT
Red mullet in GSAs 9, 10 and 11; Hake in GSAs 9-10-11; Deep-water rose shrimp in GSAs 9-10-11; Norway lobster in GSAs 9 and 10.	< 12 m	2739
	≥ 12 m and < 18 m	41200
	≥ 18 m and < 24 m	27707
	≥ 24 m	3698

Stock group	Overall length of vessels	IT
Giant red shrimp in GSAs 9, 10 and 11.	< 12 m	453
	≥ 12 m and < 18 m	3342
	≥ 18 m and < 24 m	2691
	≥ 24 m	360