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Delegations will find attached document COM(2025) 509 final.

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EUROPEAN
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Brussels, 22.9.2025
COM(2025) 509 final

2025/0285 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

**fixing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks
applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for 2026**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

• Reasons for and objectives of the proposal

All fishing opportunities regulations must limit the harvesting of fish stocks to levels consistent with the overall objectives of the common fisheries policy (CFP). Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy (the ‘CFP Basic Regulation’)¹ provides for the setting of catch and fishing effort limits to ensure that marine biological resources are exploited under sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions. In line with those objectives, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 establishing a multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean².

The purpose of this proposal for a Council regulation is to fix fishing opportunities for certain stocks and groups of stocks in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

For the western Mediterranean, this proposal sets fishing opportunities for demersal stocks in line with the multiannual plan. Fishing opportunities are expressed in terms of maximum allowable fishing effort for all stocks. In addition, maximum catch limits are set for deep-water shrimp and hake caught by using specific types of fishing gear. It is proposed to allocate these limits to the Member States of the western Mediterranean (Spain, France and Italy).

Further, it is proposed to fix fishing opportunities under agreements reached within the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), a regional fisheries management organisation responsible for the conservation and management of living marine resources in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. The European Union is a member of the GFCM, as are Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Romania and Slovenia. Measures adopted by the GFCM are binding on its members.

Finally, it is proposed to fix an autonomous quota for Black Sea sprat to avoid a further increase in fishing mortality from current levels.

• Consistency with existing policy provisions in the policy area

The proposed measures are consistent with the objectives and rules of the CFP.

• Consistency with other Union policies

The proposed measures are consistent with other EU policies, in particular in the field of the environment.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>

² Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 (OJ L 172, 26.6.2019, p. 1), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1022/oj>.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

- **Legal basis**

The legal basis of this proposal is Article 43(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

- **Subsidiarity (for non-exclusive competence)**

The proposal falls under the EU's exclusive competence, as referred to in Article 3(1)(d) TFEU. The subsidiarity principle therefore does not apply.

- **Proportionality**

The proposal allocates fishing opportunities to Member States in accordance with the objectives of the CFP Basic Regulation, the multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean and the outcomes of the annual meeting of the GFCM. Under Articles 16(6) and (7) and Article 17 of the CFP Basic Regulation, it is up to the Member States to decide how the available fishing opportunities are to be distributed among fishing vessels flying their flag based on certain criteria. This gives the Member States considerable discretion to distribute the fishing opportunities in line with their social and economic models.

- **Choice of the instrument**

A regulation is considered the most appropriate instrument because it makes it possible to set requirements that apply directly to the Member States and economic operators concerned. This will help ensure that they are implemented in a timely and harmonised way, leading to greater legal certainty.

3. RESULTS OF EX-POST EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- **Ex-post evaluations/fitness checks of existing legislation**

Not applicable.

- **Stakeholder consultations**

Interested parties were consulted by means of the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 6 June 2025 entitled – ‘*Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2026*’ (COM(2025) 296 final)³.

- **Collection and use of expertise**

The assessment of the state of stocks in the Mediterranean and Black Seas is based on the most recent work by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries.

- **Impact assessment**

The scope of fishing opportunities regulations is set by Article 43(3) TFEU.

As regards the fishing opportunities established by the GFCM in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, this proposal proposes to implement internationally agreed measures. Any elements

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0296>

relevant to the assessment of possible impacts of the fishing opportunities are dealt with in the preparation and conduct phase of international negotiations in the framework of which the Union's fishing opportunities are agreed with third parties.

The proposal reflects not only short-term concerns, but also a longer-term approach whereby fishing effort is gradually adjusted to long-term sustainable levels.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

Not applicable.

- **Fundamental rights**

The proposal respects fundamental rights and in particular those recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

The proposal has no budgetary implications.

5. OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Implementation plans and monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**

Monitoring and compliance will be ensured in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009⁴.

- **Detailed explanation of the specific provisions of the proposal**

The proposal proposes to fix fishing opportunities for 2026 for certain stocks or groups of stocks in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, as set out in more detail below:

A. Implementation of the western Mediterranean multiannual management plan

Under the multiannual plan for demersal fisheries in the western Mediterranean, the Council is to set the maximum allowable fishing effort, by Member State, for trawlers fishing demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean, for each fishing effort group, and for the stock groups in Annex I to the plan.

In addition, the plan sets out targets and measures for the long-term management of stocks covered by it. From 2025 onwards, the multiannual management plan is in its long term phase where MSY ranges apply, according to Articles 4 and 6. Therefore, the fishing opportunities for 2026 will follow the ranges provided by STECF and that will be used for the evaluation of the management options.

Moreover, Article 7(5) of the multiannual plan provides for the possibility that the fishing regime for trawlers may be supplemented with maximum allowable fishing effort for other fishing gear than trawls on the basis of scientific advice and in order to achieve the value of

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC) No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006 (OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1224/oj>.

the estimated fishing mortality that, with a given fishing pattern and under current average environmental conditions, gives and maintains the long-term maximum yield (F_{msy}).

In 2024, scientific advice from both the STECF and the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee recommended that, in order to attain MSY for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean, swift action ought to be undertaken and real reductions in fishing mortality be adopted. The stocks of hake and one stock of Norway lobster were so overexploited that STECF estimated them at a level below B_{lim}, that is the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass and provided for in the best available scientific advice, in particular by STECF, or a similar independent scientific body recognised at Union or international level, below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

The STECF (STECF-24-10 and PLEN-24-03) advised, as in previous years, that a holistic approach, combining effort measures for trawlers, longliners and catch limits for deep-water shrimps and for hake caught with gillnets and trammel-nets, was necessary to reduce urgently fishing mortality, in particular for hake, Norway lobster and deep-water shrimp stocks. This approach was implemented by Council Regulations (EU) 2022/110⁵, (EU) 2023/195⁶, (EU) 2024/259⁷ and (EU) 2025/219⁸ fixing the fishing opportunities in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 respectively, and the Commission proposes to continue implementing such an approach in 2026, notwithstanding the expiry of the transitional regime established by Article 7(3) of the multiannual plan. This is because Article 7(1)(e) of the CFP Basic Regulation generally provides that “[m]easures for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources may include (...) measures on the fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities”, which therefore include catch limits.

A number of fishing opportunities are marked ‘pm’ (pro memoria) in this proposal because the scientific advice from the STECF was not yet available when the proposal was adopted. Once the most recent STECF advice becomes available, this proposal will be updated by means of a Commission services’ non-paper.

Furthermore, in order to promote the use of selective gears and to establish efficient closure areas to protect juveniles and spawners, this proposal maintains the compensation mechanism first established in 2022, while defining the specific details once the most recent STECF advice becomes available.

B. GFCM measures applicable in the Mediterranean Sea

- maximum fleet capacity and a freeze of fish aggregating devices (FADs) per vessel, as well as maximum catch limits for common dolphinfish in the entire Mediterranean Sea under the 2023 GFCM multiannual management plan (GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) 1 to 27);

⁵ Council Regulation (EU) 2022/110 of 27 January 2022 fixing for 2022 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas (OJ L 21, 31.1.2022, p. 165), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/110/oj>.

⁶ Council Regulation (EU) 2023/195 of 30 January 2023 fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/110 as regards the fishing opportunities for 2022 applicable in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas (OJ L 28, 31.1.2023, p. 220), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/195/oj>.

⁷ Council Regulation (EU) 2024/259 of 10 January 2024 fixing for 2024 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas (OJ L, 2024/259, 11.1.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/259/oj>).

⁸ Council Regulation (EU) 2025/219 of 30 January 2025 fixing for 2025 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas OJ L, 2025/219, 4.2.2025, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/219/oj>

At the annual meeting in November 2022, the GFCM adopted a recommendation to set the catch limits for common-dolphinfish for 2026. As in 2025, the Commission proposes to continue the implementation of the fleet capacity ceiling for FADs targeting the common dolphinfish stock. This capacity ceiling is based on the capacity reported to the GFCM in 2019.

- maximum levels of catches for anchovy and sardine and measures for small pelagic stocks under the 2021 GFCM multiannual management plan (GSAs 17 and 18):

At its upcoming annual meeting in November 2025, the GFCM is due to adopt a new recommendation to set the catch limits for small pelagics for 2026. As in 2025, the Commission proposes to continue the implementation of the fleet capacity ceiling for purse seiners and pelagic trawlers targeting small pelagic stocks. This capacity ceiling is based on the capacity reported to the GFCM in 2014.

– measures for demersal stocks under the 2019 GFCM multiannual management plan for demersal species in the Adriatic Sea (GSAs 17 and 18):

At its upcoming annual meeting in November 2025, the GFCM is due to adopt a new recommendation to establish for 2026 the fishing effort for otter-trawlers (OTB) and for beam-trawlers (TBB) that would contribute to reach MSY in 2026. The proposed maximum fleet capacity is in line with the capacity reported to GFCM for either 2025 or the average 2015-2017.

– maximum catch limits for deep-water rose shrimp, and maximum allowable fishing effort and fleet capacity for hake in the Strait of Sicily under the 2022 GFCM multiannual management plan (GSAs 12 to 16);

At its upcoming annual meeting in November 2025, the GFCM is due to adopt a new recommendation to establish for 2026 the maximum catch limits for deep-water rose shrimp, and maximum allowable fishing effort and fleet capacity for hake in the Strait of Sicily.

– maximum fleet capacity and catch limits for giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16), the Ionian Sea (GSAs 19 to 21) and the Levant Sea (GSAs 24 to 27) under the relevant GFCM multiannual management plans;

At its upcoming annual meeting in November 2025, the GFCM is due to adopt a new recommendations to establish for 2026 the maximum catch limits for deep-water shrimps in the Strait of Sicily, Ionian and Levant. As in 2025, the Commission proposes to continue the implementation of the fleet capacity ceilings for the fleets targeting deep-water shrimps under the respective GFCM multiannual plans.

– measures for blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea under the GFCM multiannual management plan (GSAs 1-3)

The proposal includes a series of placeholders, for stocks where the GFCM transitional measures are expiring at the end of 2025 or for the establishment of yearly catch and effort limits under the permanent phase of the management plans and for which the GFCM should adopt new measures at its upcoming annual meeting

Once the upcoming annual meeting of the GFCM takes place, the proposal will be updated by means of a Commission services' non-paper.

C. GFCM measures applicable in the Black Sea

1. an autonomous quota for sprat, based on scientific advice;

2. the TAC and quota allocation for turbot under the 2017 GFCM multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries, implementing Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3 (GSA 29), as amended by Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/8.

Measures functionally linked to the fishing opportunities (e.g. spawning closures), are part of this proposal, because without such closure periods (such as for turbot in the Black Sea), the fishing opportunities could not be established at the same levels. The extent of the closure periods may vary, depending on the state of the stock as assessed in the scientific advice.

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

fixing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for 2026

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The Council is to adopt measures on the fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities, including certain conditions functionally linked to those fishing opportunities, as appropriate. Article 16(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 provides that fishing opportunities are to be allocated to Member States in such a way as to ensure the relative stability of fishing activities of each Member State for each fish stock or fishery. Article 16(4) of that Regulation provides that fishing opportunities are to be fixed in accordance with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy set out in Article 2(2) of that Regulation.
- (2) Therefore, in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, the fishing opportunities should be set on the basis of available scientific advice, taking into account biological and socioeconomic aspects whilst ensuring fair treatment between fishing sectors, as well as the opinions expressed during consultations with stakeholders.
- (3) At its 47th annual meeting in 2024, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) adopted Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/1 which establishes long-term management measures for European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) as foreseen by Recommendation GFCM/46/2023/16 on a long-term management plan for European eel (GFCM geographical subareas (“GFCM GSAs”) 1 to 27). Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/1 maintains, for 2026, the six-month closure period for commercial fisheries and a ban on recreational fisheries. Furthermore, that Recommendation limits the commercial fishing activities for glass eels to a period of two months and allows such fishing only under certain conditions. Those measures are to apply to all marine waters of the Mediterranean Sea and to freshwaters, as well as to brackish waters, including estuaries, coastal lagoons and transitional waters, in accordance with that Recommendation. Those measures should be implemented in Union law.
- (4) At its 47th annual meeting in 2024, the GFCM also adopted Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/2 which establishes long-term measures for the sustainable exploitation of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) as foreseen by Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 on a management plan for the sustainable exploitation of red coral in the Mediterranean Sea (GFCM GSAs 1 to 27). Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/2

maintains for 2026 the freezing of fishing effort expressed as a maximum number of fishing authorisations and harvest limits for red coral. Those measures should be implemented in Union law.

- (5) At its 46th annual meeting in 2023, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/46/2023/14 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) in the Mediterranean Sea (GFCM GSAs 1 to 27). That Recommendation introduced, consistent with the precautionary approach and for the transitional period of 2024 to 2026, a fleet capacity ceiling, a freeze on the capacity of fish aggregating devices (FADs) per vessel and a catch limit. For recreational fisheries, that Recommendation further provides that a daily bag limit is to be observed. Those measures were implemented in Union law since 2024 by means of Council Regulation (EU) 2024/259² and Council Regulation (EU) 2025/219³. Those measures should continue to be implemented in Union law for 2026.
- (6) Regulation (EU) 2019/1022⁴ of the European Parliament and of the Council established a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea (GFCM GSAs 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). That plan sets out targets and measures for the long-term conservation and sustainable exploitation of stocks covered by it. This includes measures to reach and maintain the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for target stocks, ensuring that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the MSY.
- (7) In accordance with Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022, fishing opportunities for stocks listed in Article 1(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 should be set within the range of fishing mortality values resulting in MSY (ranges of F_{MSY}), or at a lower level, and in accordance with the safeguards provided for in that Regulation. The ranges of F_{MSY} are set out in the relevant STECF advice. Where no adequate scientific information is available, fishing opportunities for stocks referred to in Article 1(2) and Article 1(3) of that Regulation should be fixed in accordance with the precautionary approach to fisheries management, in accordance with Article 4(6) of that Regulation.
- (8) Moreover, fishing opportunities are to be expressed, on the one hand, as a maximum allowable fishing effort for trawlers and longliners, set in accordance with the fishing effort regime laid down in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022, and, on the other hand, as maximum catch limits for blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*) and giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*) in deep waters, all set in accordance with scientific advice and Article 16(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.
- (9) [PLACEHOLDER WestMed STECF advice effort for trawlers, longliners and catch limits for deep-water shrimps]

² Council Regulation (EU) 2024/259 of 10 January 2024 fixing for 2024 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, OJ L, 2024/259, 11.1.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/259/oj>.

³ Council Regulation (EU) 2025/219 of 30 January 2025 fixing for 2025 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, OJ L, 2025/219, 4.2.2025, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/219/oj>.

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014, OJ L 172, 26.6.2019, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1022/oj>.

- (10) In order to promote the use of selectivity of fishing gear and to establish efficient closure areas to protect juveniles and spawners, Council Regulation (EU) 2022/110⁵ established a compensation mechanism in relation to the effort regime for trawlers. [PLACEHOLDER STECF advice].
- (11) In accordance with Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022, where scientific advice shows that the spawning stock biomass of any of the stocks referred to in Article 1(2) of that Regulation is below the precautionary biomass reference point (B_{PA}), or is below the limit biomass reference point (B_{LIM}), remedial measures are to be taken to ensure the rapid return of the stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY.
- (12) At its 44th annual meeting in 2021, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/20 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GFCM GSAs 17 and 18), which introduced from 2022 to 2029 a maximum level of catches and a related fleet capacity ceiling for purse seiners and pelagic trawlers targeting small pelagics. Those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law.
- (13) [PLACEHOLDER GFCM 48 Adriatic Sea small pelagic].
- (14) At its 43rd annual meeting in 2019, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (GFCM GSAs 17 and 18), which introduced a fishing effort regime and a fleet capacity ceiling for certain demersal stocks, as well as an obligation to reach Fmsy for the key stocks in 2026. Therefore, those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law.
- (15) [PLACEHOLDER GFCM 48 Adriatic Sea demersal].
- (16) Taking into account the particularities of the Slovenian fleet and its marginal impact on the stocks of small pelagic and demersal stocks, and in accordance with paragraph 13 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5, it is appropriate to preserve existing fishing patterns and to ensure access by the Slovenian fleet to a minimum effort allocation for demersal stocks.
- (17) At its 45th annual meeting in 2022, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (GFCM GSAs 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/12 and GFCM/42/2018/5. Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 introduced an effort regime for European hake and catch limits for deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), as well as a fishing capacity freeze. Those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law.
- (18) [PLACEHOLDER GFCM 48 – 1 year prolongation of the transitional phase of the MAP].
- (19) At its 45th annual meeting in 2022, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/5 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp stocks in the Strait of Sicily (GFCM GSAs 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/7 and GFCM/43/2019/6. Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/5 introduced a catch limit and

⁵ Council Regulation (EU) 2022/110 of 27 January 2022 fixing for 2022 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, OJ L 21, 31.1.2022, p. 165, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/110/oj>.

a fishing capacity freeze. Those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law.

- (20) [PLACEHOLDER GFCM 48 –1 year prolongation of the transitional phase of the MAP].
- (21) At its 45th annual meeting in 2022, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/6 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp stocks in the Ionian Sea (GFCM GSAs 19 to 21), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/8 and GFCM/42/2018/4. Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/6 introduced a catch limit and a fishing capacity freeze. Those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law.
- (22) [PLACEHOLDER GFCM 48 – 1 year prolongation of the transitional phase of the MAP].
- (23) At its 45th annual meeting in 2022, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/7 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp stocks in the Levant Sea (GFCM GSAs 24 to 27), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/6 and GFCM/42/2018/3. Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/7 introduced a catch limit and a fishing capacity freeze. Those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law.
- (24) [PLACEHOLDER GFCM 48 –measures for blackspot seabream].
- (25) Based on the scientific advice provided by the GFCM Working Group for the Black Sea, the current quota for sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) should be maintained to ensure the sustainability of sprat stocks in the Black Sea (GFCM GSA 29). It is therefore appropriate to continue setting an autonomous quota for this stock.
- (26) At its 47th annual meeting in 2024, the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/8 amending Recommendations GFCM/43/2019/3 and GFCM/41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) fisheries in the Black Sea (GFCM GSA 29). Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/8 introduced an updated regional total allowable catch (TAC) and a quota allocation scheme for turbot. In accordance with Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4, the two-month closure period and the limitation of fishing days to 180 per year are functionally linked to the fishing opportunities. Those measures that relate to 2026 should be implemented in Union law, as, without those measures, the TAC would have to be set at another level.
- (27) The use of fishing opportunities available to Union fishing vessels set out in this Regulation is subject to Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009⁶, and in particular to Articles 33 and 34 thereof concerning the recording of catches and fishing efforts and the notification of data on the exhaustion of fishing opportunities. It is therefore necessary to specify the codes to be used by Member States when sending data relating to landings of stocks subject to this Regulation to the Commission.

⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC) No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006, OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1224/oj>.

- (28) In order to avoid the interruption of fishing activities and to ensure the livelihood of Union fishers, this Regulation should apply from 1 January 2026. For reasons of urgency, this Regulation should enter into force on the day following that of its publication,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

TITLE I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

Scope

1. This Regulation applies to Union fishing vessels operating in the Mediterranean and Black Seas and exploiting the following fish stocks:
 - (a) European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) and common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) in the Mediterranean Sea;
 - (b) blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*), European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*) and red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*) in the western Mediterranean Sea;
 - (c) anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) in the Adriatic Sea;
 - (d) European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), common sole (*Solea solea*), deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) and red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*) in the Adriatic Sea;
 - (e) European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in the Strait of Sicily;
 - (f) giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*) and blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*) in the Strait of Sicily, in the Ionian Sea and in the Levant Sea;
 - (g) blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) in the Alboran Sea;
 - (h) sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) and turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) in the Black Sea.
2. This Regulation also applies to other Union fishing activities, including recreational fisheries, where they are expressly referred to in the relevant provisions.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Regulation, the definitions laid down in Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 apply. In addition, the following definitions apply:

- (a) ‘international waters’ means waters falling outside the sovereignty or jurisdiction of any State;

- (b) ‘recreational fisheries’ means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living aquatic resources for recreation, tourism or sport;
- (c) ‘total allowable catch’ (TAC) means:
 - (i) in fisheries subject to the exemption of the landing obligation referred to in Article 15(4) to (7) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, the quantity of fish that can be landed from each stock each year;
 - (ii) in all other fisheries, the quantity of fish that can be caught from each stock over the period of a year
- (d) ‘quota’ means a proportion of the TAC allocated to the Union or a Member State;
- (e) ‘Union autonomous quota’ means a catch limit autonomously allocated to Union fishing vessels in the absence of an agreed TAC;
- (f) ‘analytical quota’ means a Union autonomous quota for which an analytical assessment is available;
- (g) ‘analytical assessment’ means a quantitative evaluation of trends in a given stock, based on data about the stock’s biology and exploitation, which scientific review has indicated to be of sufficient quality to provide scientific advice on options for future catches;
- (h) ‘fish aggregating device’ (FAD) means any anchored equipment floating on the sea surface with the objective of attracting fish.

Article 3 **Fishing zones**

For the purposes of this Regulation, the following fishing zone definitions apply:

- (a) ‘GFCM geographical subareas’ mean the areas specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷;
- (b) ‘Mediterranean Sea’ means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 1 to 27 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;
- (c) ‘western Mediterranean Sea’ means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;
- (d) ‘Adriatic Sea’ means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 17 and 18 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;
- (e) ‘Strait of Sicily’ means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;
- (f) ‘Ionian Sea’ means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 19, 20 and 21 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;
- (g) ‘Levant Sea’ means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 24, 25, 26 and 27 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2023/2124 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 October 2023 on certain provisions for fishing in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Agreement area (recast) (OJ L, 2023/2124, 12.10.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2124/oj>).

- (h) 'Alboran Sea' means the waters in GFCM geographical subareas 1, 2 and 3 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124;
- (i) 'Black Sea' means the waters in GFCM geographical subarea 29 specified in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2023/2124.

TITLE II

FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNION FISHING VESSELS

CHAPTER I

Mediterranean Sea

Article 4 **European eel**

1. This Article applies to the GFCM geographical subareas 1 to 27, to brackish waters and to freshwaters. Brackish waters include estuaries, coastal lagoons and transitional waters.
2. It shall be prohibited to engage in commercial fishing activities for European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) of an overall length of more than 12 cm, either as a targeted species or as incidental by-catch, for a period of at least six months in 2026. To that effect, each Member State concerned shall determine one or more closure periods subject to the following:
 - (a) where appropriate, the closure period or periods may differ within one Member State from one fishing area to another in order to take account of the geographical and temporal migration pattern of European eel at its different life stages;
 - (b) the closure period or periods shall last either at least six consecutive months, or a total of six months in accordance with the conditions set out in paragraph 3;
 - (c) the closure period or periods shall be consistent with the conservation objectives set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007⁸, with national management plans in place and with the temporal migration patterns of European eel at the respective life stage in the Member State concerned.
3. The closure period referred shall be from 1 January to 31 March 2026, and an additional closure period of three months shall be established by each Member State concerned to take place between 1 April and 30 November 2026.
4. Commercial fishing activities for European eel of an overall length of less than 12 cm shall be authorized annually for a period of two months, and those fishing activities shall be monitored by an agreed scientific institution which shall supervise data collection and analysis.

⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 of 18 September 2007 establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel, OJ L 248, 22.9.2007, p. 17, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2007/1100/oj>.

5. The maximum number of fishing authorizations and the maximum number of passive gears authorized to target European eel of an overall length of less than 12 cm for commercial purposes shall not exceed the respective levels set out in Annex I.
6. Recreational fisheries of European eel at all life stages shall be prohibited.
7. Each Member State concerned shall inform the Commission of:
 - (a) the closure period or closure periods that it has determined in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 by 1 March 2026;
 - (b) the national measures relating to the closure period or closure periods that it has determined in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3, within two weeks after their adoption;
 - (c) the period authorised to fish for European eel of an overall length of less than 12 cm in accordance with paragraph 4, by 1 March 2026.

Article 5 **Red coral**

This Article applies to all activities by Union fishing vessels harvesting red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) in the Mediterranean Sea.

For targeted fisheries, the maximum number of fishing authorisations and the maximum quantities of red coral stocks harvested by Union fishing vessels and Union harvesting activities shall not exceed the levels set out in Annex II.

Article 6 **Common dolphinfish**

1. This Article applies to all commercial pelagic fishing activities by Union fishing vessels targeting common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) by using FADs in the Mediterranean Sea.

It also applies to recreational fisheries of common dolphinfish in the Mediterranean Sea.

2. The maximum fleet capacity, expressed in number of vessels, kW and gross tonnage (GT), of Union fishing vessels authorised to fish for common dolphinfish is set out in Annex III, point (a).

3. The maximum number of FADs per vessel authorised to fish for common dolphinfish is set out in Annex III, point (b).

4. The maximum level of catches of common dolphinfish shall not exceed the levels set out in Annex III, point (c).

For recreational fisheries, the maximum number of catches shall be 10 kg or five fish of any size per person per day.

CHAPTER II

Western Mediterranean Sea

Article 7

Demersal stocks

1. This Article applies to all fishing activities by Union fishing vessels and other Union fishing activities catching demersal stocks referred to in Article 1(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 in the western Mediterranean Sea.
2. The maximum allowable fishing effort for trawlers and longliners is set out in Annex IV, point 1. Member States shall manage the maximum allowable fishing effort in accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 and Articles 26 to 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.
3. The maximum catch limits for deep-water shrimps in the Alboran Sea, Balearic Islands, Northern Spain and Gulf of Lion are set out in Annex IV, point 2(a).
4. The maximum catch limits for deep-waters shrimps in Corsica Island, Ligurian Sea, Tyrrhenian Sea and Sardinia Island are set out in Annex IV, point 2(b).
5. The allocation of fishing opportunities among Member States as set out in Annex IV shall be without prejudice to:
 - (a) exchanges made pursuant to Article 16(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
 - (b) deductions and reallocations made pursuant to Article 37 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009;
 - (c) additional landings allowed under Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 or under Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
 - (d) quantities withheld in accordance with Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 or transferred under Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
 - (e) deductions made pursuant to Articles 105, 106 and 107 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.

Article 8
Compensation mechanism

[PLACEHOLDER]

Article 9
Remedial measures

[PLACEHOLDER]

Article 10
Data recording and transmission

1. Member States shall record and transmit the fishing effort data to the Commission in accordance with Articles 33 and 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 and Articles 146c, 146d and 146e of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 404/2011¹⁰.
2. When Member States submit to the Commission data relating to fishing effort pursuant to Articles 33 and 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, they shall use the fishing effort group codes set out in Annex IV.

CHAPTER III

Adriatic Sea

Article 11
Small pelagic stocks

1. This Article applies to all fishing activities by Union fishing vessels catching sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) and anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) in the Adriatic Sea.
2. The maximum level of catches of sardine and anchovy shall not exceed the levels set out in Annex V, point 1(a).
3. The maximum fleet capacity, expressed in kW, GT and number, of Union fishing vessels authorised to fish small pelagic stocks is set out in Annex V, point 1(b).
4. Articles 3 and 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply where a Member State uses the year-to-year flexibility provided for in Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

¹⁰ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 404/2011 of 8 April 2011 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy (OJ L 112 30.4.2011, p. 1), ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2011/404/oj.

Article 12
Demersal stocks

1. This Article applies to all fishing activities by Union fishing vessels catching European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), common sole (*Solea solea*), deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) and red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*) in the Adriatic Sea.
2. The maximum allowable fishing effort for those demersal stocks and the maximum fleet capacity within the scope of this Article is set out in Annex V, points 2(a) and 2(b) respectively.
3. Member States shall manage the maximum allowable effort in accordance with Articles 26 to 35 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.

Article 13
Data transmission

When, for the fisheries governed by Articles 11 and 12, Member States submit to the Commission data relating to landings and fishing effort pursuant to Articles 33 and 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, they shall use the stock codes and fishing effort group codes set out in Annex V.

CHAPTER IV

Strait of Sicily

Article 14
European hake and deep-water rose shrimp

1. This Article applies to all activities by Union fishing vessels and other Union fishing activities catching European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in the Strait of Sicily.
2. The maximum fleet capacity, expressed in number of vessels, kW and GT, of bottom trawl vessels authorised to fish for demersal stocks within the scope of this Article is set out in Annex VI, point 1(a).
3. The maximum allowable fishing effort for European hake (in number of fishing days), for bottom otter-trawl vessels (OTB) targeting European hake is set out in Annex VI, point 1(b).
4. The maximum level of catches of deep-water rose shrimp shall not exceed the levels set out in Annex VI, point 1(c).
5. Member States shall manage the maximum allowable fishing effort in accordance with Articles 26 to 35 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.

Article 15
Deep-water shrimps

1. This Article applies to all fishing activities by Union fishing vessels and other Union fishing activities catching giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*) and blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*) in the Strait of Sicily.

2. The maximum fleet capacity, expressed in number of vessels, kW and GT, of bottom trawl vessels authorised to fish the demersal stocks within the scope of this Article is set out in Annex VI, point 2(a).
3. The maximum level of catches of deep-water shrimps shall not exceed the levels set out in Annex VI, points 2(b) and (c).

Article 16

Data transmission

When Member States submit to the Commission data relating to landings of quantities of stocks caught pursuant to Articles 33 and 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, they shall use the stock codes set out in Annex VI.

CHAPTER V

Ionian Sea and Levant Sea

Article 17

Deep-water shrimps

1. This Article applies to all fishing activities by Union fishing vessels and other Union fishing activities catching giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*) and blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*) in the Ionian Sea and in the Levant Sea.
2. The maximum fleet capacity, expressed in number of vessels, kW and GT, of bottom trawl vessels authorised to fish for deep water shrimp stock referred to in this Article is set out in Annex VII, points 1(a) and 2(a).
3. The maximum level of catches of deep-water shrimps referred to in this Article shall not exceed the respective levels set out in Annex VII, points 1(b), 1(c), 2(b) and 2(c).

CHAPTER VI

Alboran Sea

Article 18

Blackspot seabream

[PLACEHOLDER]

CHAPTER VII

Black Sea

Article 19

Sprat

1. This Article applies to all activities by Union fishing vessels and other Union fishing activities catching sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in the Black Sea.
2. The Union autonomous quota for sprat shall not exceed the levels set out in Annex IX.
3. Articles 3 and 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply where a Member State uses the year-to-year flexibility provided for in Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

Article 20

Turbot

1. This Article applies to all activities by Union fishing vessels and other Union fishing activities catching turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) in the Black Sea.
2. The TAC for turbot applicable in Union waters in the Black Sea, the allocation of such TAC among Member States and the conditions functionally linked thereto, where appropriate, are set out in Annex IX.
3. Articles 3 and 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 shall not apply where a Member State uses the year-to-year flexibility provided for in Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

Article 21

Management of fishing effort for turbot

Union fishing vessels authorised to fish for turbot within the scope of Article 20, irrespective of the vessels' length overall, shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year.

Article 22

Closure period for turbot

It shall be prohibited for Union fishing vessels to carry out any fishing activity, including transshipment, retaining on board, landing and first sale of turbot in Union waters in the Black Sea from 15 April to 15 June 2026.

Article 23

Special provisions on allocations of fishing opportunities in the Black Sea

The allocation of fishing opportunities among Member States as set out in Annex IX shall be without prejudice to:

- (a) exchanges made pursuant to Article 16(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
- (b) deductions and reallocations made pursuant to Article 37 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009;
- (c) deductions made pursuant to Articles 105 and 107 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.

Article 24

Data transmission

When Member States submit to the Commission data relating to landings of quantities of stocks of sprat and turbot caught in Union waters in the Black Sea pursuant to Articles 33 and 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, they shall use the stock codes set out in Annex IX of this Regulation.

TITLE III

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 25

Entry into force and application

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President