



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE-D1/LB/ Ares (2021)

Subject: Your Ref.: 110/2021_MEDAC letter on safety at work for fishers in the Mediterranean

Dear Mr Buonfiglio,

Thank you for your letter and the opinion on the question of jurisdiction of waters in the Mediterranean Sea.

The Commission is aware of the incidents involving Italian fishing vessels and Libyan vessels in the Mediterranean. We have closely followed the recent incident, mentioned in your letter, involving the fishing vessel "Aliseo", as well as the previous incident involving the "Antartide" and "Medinea". The Commission attaches great importance to the safety of the EU operators on-board their vessels.

The Commission is aware that there are maritime zones claimed by Libya that are contested by other States. Matters appertaining to the determination of maritime zones is a competence that belongs to Member States. This competence includes not only the conclusion of international maritime boundary agreements but also cases such as the situation regarding the maritime zones of Libya. The Commission, however, fully supports the delimitation of maritime zones among all relevant States in accordance with international law.

As for the legal clarity and certainty for the operators of the vessels requesting a fishing license, the national authorities granting the fishing license need to provide information and warn individual operators about the unstable situation in the region and the risks arising from fishing in waters subject to overlapping claims in order to minimize the potential danger for those vessels.

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Through the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Commission works to ensure sustainable fisheries and a level playing field in terms of implementation of fisheries regulations in the Mediterranean international waters. To ensure a better state of the fish stocks in the Central Mediterranean, a number of GFCM decisions have been adopted in recent years with the aim of improving the health of the seas, the productivity of the fisheries and creating common rules for all operators. The Commission vigorously defends a zero tolerance policy on IUU, also in the Mediterranean.

Let me thank you for your commitment. Looking forward to our continued cooperation, I invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.Colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA