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MEDAC advice on the enforcement of the new GFCM MAPs in the Strait of Sicily (SoS) to protect the EU hake, deep water rose shrimps, Giant red shrimps and blue and red shrimps.

During the meeting of FG on Strait of Sicily held on 22 February 2023 in Barcelona, the scientific expert Fabio Fiorentino presented *“The status of demersal stocks in the SoS and some hints to improve their management”* ([LINK to the presentation](#)).

The following concepts and conclusive suggestions to improve fishery management in the SoS have been shared by MEDAC members as valuable ways to be taken into consideration for the improvement of the stock status based on the available scientific knowledge:

- 1) Balance fishing effort to the productive capacities of the resources taking into account climate change;
- 2) Protect areas where critical phases of the life cycles of fishery resources (recruitment and reproduction) and protected and/or species indicator of sensitive habitats are concentrated.

Areas of further improvement in the management of fish stocks

- 1) Improve gear selectivity by reducing the discarded fraction of catches;
- 2) Improve the fishing authorization regime that regulates access to fishing areas, according to the CFP and the GFCM Management Plans, allowing to overcome the outdated "free fishing in free sea" philosophy.
- 3) Hold fishers responsible for the productivity of their allocated fishing areas in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and in the framework of the Ecosystem Approach to Fishery Management.
- 4) Protect EU fish production from third country competition through traceability, ecolabelling, MSC and more strict import controls.

Marine Spatial Planning: Urgent issue to be addressed

A transversal approach should be adopted to investigate on the remaining fishing areas, considering the closure of zones due to offshore windmills, oil and gas extractions, biological Important areas (MPAs, FRAs, etc.) and the other blue economy impacts. A comprehensive view on all these activities in the area should be made available to enable a solid stakeholder consultation to consider Fishery Restricted Areas and other uses of the maritime space. [LINK to the presentation](#)