



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D1

Dear Mr Marzoa Notlevsen,

I am writing in relation to the advice from MEDAC on the Commission's Communication on sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2026 ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission has taken good note of your advice and shares your views on the importance of taking the best available scientific advice, including both environmental and socio-economic data, into account for the adoption of fishing opportunities.

The Commission drafted its proposal for 2026 based on the best scientific advice, including both environmental and socio-economic data, and the legal requirements. ² The Commission welcomes the improvement of Mediterranean fisheries, reflecting fishers' efforts over the years. National efforts to balance fleet capacity and fishing opportunities have allowed to increase the socio-economic benefits of some fleet segments. However, the Commission is also aware that not all socioeconomic challenges have been resolved.

I count on MEDAC expertise and wide range of stakeholders to reflect on comprehensive strategies that are key to address the business model of the Mediterranean fleets, as well as to look into the assignments of fishing rights, employment schemes, generational renewal efforts, and also aid from European funding, etc., to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability.

Science tells us that for 2026 Norway lobster is the most vulnerable stock on both sides of the Western Mediterranean. Consequently, the fishing effort reduction for trawlers must be driven by this species in each effort management unit (EMU).

As an immediate step in the effort reduction implementation, the Commission explored all flexibilities provided by the current legal framework including the use of Fmsy ranges

⁽¹⁾ Reference: 175/2025; Ares(2025)5866546.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0509>

Mr Antonio Marzoa Notlevsen
MEDAC
presidente@med-ac.eu
c/o Ministero delle Politiche Agricole, Alimentari, Forestali e del Turismo
Via XX Settembre, 20
00187 Roma
ITALY

for healthy stocks. I know MEDAC advocated that a tailored³ management approach, informed by robust and detailed disaggregated datasets, can enhance precision in decision-making and the alignment of management with conservation, social and economic objectives. The Commission carefully evaluated the proposed approach for the Western Mediterranean multiannual management plan, following the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Geographical Statistical Areas (GSAs) approach.

In 2025, the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) indicated⁴ differences in the status of each stock group and considered, as a consequence, that the fishing mortality needs to be reduced differently between the stock groups and geographical areas. Considering that the most vulnerable stock in each EMU is not present in all GSAs, the Commission proposed to compensate, in the respective GSAs, fishing vessels not fishing the most vulnerable stock. The objective was to ensure a targeted and proportionate approach. In addition, the Commission proposed to continue the implementation of the compensation mechanism, building on this year's compensation mechanism while being further enhanced based on scientific advice.

In a nutshell, the aim was to enable conditions for fishers to sustain their 2024 fishing days levels, without undermining the positive developments under the plan. This was essential to balance economic performance with stocks sustainability.

The Commission also proposed several remedial measures, which are necessary to ensure the rapid return of the relevant stock to levels above those capable of producing MSY. The Commission proposed to continue the effort regime for longliners to address the fishing mortality of hake spawners and to include catch limits for deep-water shrimps.

The Commission could not support the Presidency compromise tabled at the end of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 11-12 December 2025. While the Commission is yet to fully analyse the political agreement reached, it considers that it is not in line with the multiannual management plan for the western Mediterranean and not applying the MSY objective. Moreover, the compromise disregards the best scientific advice. The final result undermines the implementation of the management plan.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation, starting with your meeting in Napoli early next year. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

[e-Signed]
Charlina VITCHEVA

³ [33_2025_medac_advice_disaggregated_data_tailored_management.pdf](#)

⁴ STECF 25-09 pages 14-19 ;
https://stecf.ec.europa.eu/document/download/5a91e273-626f-4468-858b-72a875da211d_en

c.c.:

Rosa Caggiano r.caggiano@med-ac.eu
segreteria@med-ac.eu; admin@med-ac.eu