Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

COMPENDIUM OF GFCM DECISIONS

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Preface

The need for a compendium gathering all decisions adopted by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was expressed by the GFCM at its twenty-ninth session (FAO headquarters, February 2005). Subsequently, the GFCM Secretariat undertook an extensive review of all GFCM decisions and, with the guidance of the GFCM Compliance Committee, finalized this version of the GFCM Compendium which includes all decisions currently in force and adopted after 1976. The decisions in this document are classified, according to their scope, into the following categories:

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2. RESOLUTIONS

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Resolution GFCM/41/2017/3	on the reactivation of the Working Group on Fishing Technology
Resolution GFCM/41/2017/4	on a permanent working group on vulnerable marine ecosystems
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Resolution GFCM/41/2017/6	on the application of an International Maritime Organization number
Resolution GFCM/40/2016/1	on guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions
Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2	for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries
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Resolution GFCM/37/2013/2	on guidelines on the management of fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application
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3. OTHER DECISIONS

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Decision GFCM/30/2006/1	on guidelines on sustainable Atlantic bluefin tuna farming practices in the Mediterranean

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Recommendations on conservation and management measures

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/1 on a multiannual management plan for European eel in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objectives of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) concluded, at its twenty-third session (Italy, June 2022), that the stock of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) remains in a critical state and has reached its lowest recruitment levels ever recorded, despite the transitional measures set out in Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 on a multiannual management plan for European eel in the Mediterranean Sea;

TAKING NOTE that the SAC recommended strengthening existing transitional measures in 2022 while continuing work towards informing future long-term management measures for 2023;

ACKNOWLEDGING the conclusion of the GFCM Research Programme on European eel that recreational fishing of European eel often overlaps with illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1

1. Paragraph 3 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 shall be modified as follows:

“With due regard to the critical state of the European eel stock as reported by the SAC and to the consequent urgency in restoring the conservation state of this stock, CPCs agree that all activities capturing European eel shall be covered by this plan, namely targeted and incidental catch.”

2. Paragraph 19 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 shall be modified as follows:

“Having regard to the closure period, CPCs shall decide on one of the following options to be applied and shall report their decision to the GFCM Secretariat:

Option 1

Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish an annual fishing closure of six consecutive months, during which landings of European eel at all stages (glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel) shall be prohibited. In order to reduce fishing mortality effectively, the closure period shall be defined by the CPCs in their respective national management plans, together with the

measures defined in paragraph 18, taking into account the temporal migration patterns of European eel in the CPC concerned.

Option 2

Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish an annual fishing closure consisting of three consecutive months, from 1 January to 31 March, as well as three additional months to be chosen between 1 April and 30 November, during which landings of European eel at all stages (glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel) shall be prohibited. In order to reduce fishing mortality effectively, the closure period shall be defined by the CPCs in their respective national management plans, together with the measures defined in paragraph 18, taking into account the temporal migration patterns of European eel in the CPC concerned."

3. Paragraph 19 bis shall be added to Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 as follows:

"The Compliance Committee (CoC) shall, during its sixteenth session, assess the implementation of the measure referred to in paragraph 19. In the event that it is established that a CPC has failed to comply with its obligations referred to in paragraph 19, the CoC shall immediately require the CPC concerned to take the necessary measures in order to achieve the objectives of the present recommendation."

4. Paragraph 20 bis shall be added to Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 as follows:

"Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that recreational fishing of European eel at all stages (glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel) is prohibited in all habitats."

5. Paragraph 27 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 shall be modified as follows:

"Where IUU fishing is known to occur, available data, including estimates, shall also be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat no later than the forty-third session of the GFCM."

6. Paragraph 47 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 shall be deleted.

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/2 on a management plan for the sustainable exploitation of red coral in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

NOTING the conclusion of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), at its twenty-third session (Italy, June 2022), on the importance of improving the quality and completeness of data sent by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), especially regarding the average diameter of harvested red coral colonies and the percentage of undersized colonies;

FURTHER NOTING that the SAC advised extending the deadline to 2024 (currently 2023) for the entry into force of a permanent catch documentation scheme (CDS) and extending the research programme on red coral to 2023, including the use of remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) for scientific purposes;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4

1. Paragraph 47 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 on a management plan for the sustainable exploitation of red coral in the Mediterranean Sea shall be amended as follows:

"For a transitional period of four years (2020–2023), CPCs may participate in the pilot phase of the CDS, during which all of the above traceability measures shall be fully implemented."

2. Paragraph 50 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 shall be amended as follows:

"Upon the advice of the CoC, the GFCM shall adopt the permanent CDS for red coral at its forty-sixth session and CPCs shall begin implementing it on 1 January 2024."

3. Paragraph 51 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 shall be amended as follows:

"In addition to the provisions related to red coral contained in Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2, CPCs shall report the data listed below:

a) number of red coral fishing authorizations granted to fishers and to authorized vessels;

b) number of dives per authorized fisher and fishing trip;

c) number of authorized fishers on board for each fishing trip; and

d) diameter of each colony harvested or average of diameter by landing.

When available, this data should be provided at the bank, GFCM statistical grid and national levels. Such data shall be reported by 30 June of each year."

4. Paragraph 53 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 shall be amended as follows:

"The use of remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) shall be allowed through the end of the research programme referred to in paragraph 58 for scientific purposes only and within CPC authorized research programmes led by scientific institutions. Such authorizations shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by CPCs."

5. Paragraph 58 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 shall be amended as follows:

"In 2020, the GFCM shall launch the research programme on red coral endorsed by the SAC at its twenty-first session and referred to in Appendix 9 of its report. The research programme shall be completed in 2023. The research programme shall, in particular, evaluate the trigger for closure as established in paragraph 22."

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/3 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea (geographical subareas 1 to 3), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/4, GFCM/43/2019/2 and GFCM/41/2017/2

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of fisheries exploiting blackspot seabream, especially at the local level, and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING that transitional management measures (Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/2 on the management of blackspot seabream fisheries in the Alboran Sea (geographical subareas 1 to 3) for a two-year transition period) and adaptive management measures (Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/2 on a management plan for the sustainable exploitation of blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea

[geographical subareas 1 to 3], rolled over by Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/4) have been adopted to manage the stock of blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recurrently, including in 2022, considered that the stock of blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) is in overexploitation in the geographical subareas (GSAs) 1 to 3;

RECALLING that according to the latest SAC scientific advice in 2022, the blackspot seabream stock is overexploited, with low fishing mortality due to low biomass (F/F_{msy} = 0.78, SSB/SSB_{lim} = 0.91);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definition

General objectives

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable fishing activities in the Alboran Sea (geographical subareas [GSAs] 1 to 3) exploiting blackspot seabream by means of handlines and set and mixed longlines. On the basis of SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other types of fishing gear.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining the sustainability and relative stability of fisheries and dependent industries.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 1 to 3 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set forth by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Alboran Sea shall be developed in order to ensure that stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels while minimizing socioeconomic impacts and finalizing scientific advice by the SAC.

5. The multiannual management plan for the concerned fisheries shall also pursue a reduction in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in GSAs 1 to 3.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply to GSAs 1, 2 and 3.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation:

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

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "B_{pa}" means the precautionary reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, that ensures that the spawning stock biomass has less than a 5 percent probability of being below B_{lim}.

d) "Stock within safe biological limits" means a stock with a high probability of its estimated spawning biomass at the end of the previous year being higher than the limit biomass reference point (B_{lim}).

e) "Alboran Sea" means GSAs 1 to 3 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

f) "Vessel actively fishing"' means any vessel catching blackspot seabream and entitled by the CPC whose flag it flies to carry out specific fishing operations during a specified period in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

g) "Key stock" means marine organisms pertaining to the blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) species.

h) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

i) "Authorized ports" means ports or places close to the shore designated by CPCs according to paragraphs 40 and 41 of this recommendation.

PART II
Specific objectives and transitional measures

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim to contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and to the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) apply to recreational and commercial fisheries;

c) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at maximum sustainable yield (MSY) as soon as possible and at the latest by 31 December 2030;

d) prevent increases in fishing capacity in comparison to year 2018–2021 levels;

e) prevent increases in the number of lines (maximum 30 lines per vessel per day), hydraulic pullers on board (maximum 3 pullers on board) and number of hooks (maximum 1 000 hooks per person on board, maximum 2 600 hooks per vessel) and fix hook size (minimum L = 3.95 cm, minimum S = 1.65 cm);

f) protect nursery and spawning areas and essential fish habitats important for the key stock from 2024 onwards;

g) contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches below minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) and by ensuring that all catches are landed. Exemptions to the total landing of catches should be granted upon proper scientific justification for the high survivability of the unharmed specimen, which shall be released immediately into the sea in the area where it has been caught; and

h) provide for measures to adjust fishing capacity and catches to fishing mortality levels consistent with MSY with a view to ensuring economically viable fleets without overexploiting marine living resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-step approach whereby: i) during the transitional period 2023–2025, a provisional catch limit regime shall be applied; and ii) from 2026 onwards, yearly catch limits shall be adopted in order to reach F_{msy} and remain within safe biological

limits. The yearly catch limits shall be proposed by the SAC based on an evaluation of the state of the stocks using up-to-date scientific data.

11. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, a transitional fishing regime shall be established. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that national catch limits and a maximum number of hooks of minimum size, namely L ≥3.95 cm and S ≥1.65 cm, are established for blackspot seabream, aligned with annual reductions of 7 percent in hook number and of 7 percent in catch limits in order to produce reductions proportional to the fishing mortality stemming from each fleet. Such reductions should be made with respect to the catch limits of 2018–2021 and the number of hooks over the same period, with a maximum of 70 hooks by line, maximum 30 lines per day and 2 600 hooks per vessel. Based on this paragraph, the catch limits and number of hooks for 2023, 2024 and 2025, with the temporary allocation, are established in Annex 1. Each CPC may, in addition, establish individual allocations by fleet segment for catch limits and number of hooks.

12. During the transitional period, recreational fishing activities shall be limited to one fish per fisher per day with a MCRS of 40 cm and a strict prohibition shall be implemented during the closure period of commercial fisheries. In addition, each CPC shall make an effort to ensure the reporting of catches from recreational fisheries, when applicable. Based on SAC advice in 2025, management measures (including, if necessary, a full prohibition) shall be updated.

13. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, CPCs shall be fully committed to supporting and updating the blackspot seabream benchmark assessment and the management strategy evaluation provided for in paragraph 15, in line with Appendix 5/B of the report of the twenty-third session of the SAC. In 2025, the GFCM shall decide, based on the SAC advice and the latest available status of stocks, on the catch limits and other measures to be applied in 2026.

14. A Working Group on Blackspot Seabream (WGSBR) shall be established by the GFCM in 2023, within 30 calendar days following the twenty-fourth session of the SAC in 2023, in order to analyse and assess the benefits of spatio-temporal restrictions with a view to defining further appropriate restrictions to protect spawning and nursery areas for the key stock.

15. The SAC, at its twenty-fifth session in 2024, shall give a mandate to the WGSBR to update a blackspot seabream benchmark in 2024 and the Workshop on the assessment of management measures (WKMSE) to carry out a management strategy evaluation.

16. The catch limits and hook limits for the period 2023–2025 established by CPC as in paragraphs 11 and 12 shall be set without prejudice to the discussions to take place in the context of the working group referred to in paragraphs 14 and 15 of this recommendation.

PART III
Long-term management plan

17. A long-term management plan for the period 2026–2030 is established. Each year, on the basis of SAC advice and the advisory timing provided in paragraphs 35 and 36, the GFCM shall establish yearly catch limits.

18. Over the first three years, beginning with 2026, the variation between annual catch limits in comparison to the previous year shall not exceed 10 percent, while for the remaining years of the plan, it shall not exceed 20 percent. These limitations on the variation between annual catch limits shall not apply in the case that the stock is not within safe biological limits.

Safeguards

19. The operational objective of the multiannual management plan shall be to maintain fishing mortality for blackspot seabream stock within the agreed precautionary reference values for F_{msy}, with a view to achieving or maintaining F_{msy} levels in accordance with the objectives of this recommendation.

20. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of the blackspot seabream stock is below B_{pa}, the GFCM shall take remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stock to a level capable of producing MSY. In particular, catch limits shall be set at levels consistent with producing a fishing mortality lower than F_{msy} , taking into account the decrease in biomass.

21. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of blackspot seabream is below B_{lim}, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stock to a level capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the targeted fishery of the concerned stock and an adequate reduction in catch limits.

PART IV
Technical and conservation measures

Spatial and temporal closures

22. Over the transitional period from 2023 to 2025, CPCs shall apply specific temporal closures at the fleet level (even if not simultaneously for different type of fishing gear), with a view to protecting the key stock during spawning periods. Such closures shall cover the key areas of distribution of blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea and affect all vessels concerned by this recommendation for periods of no less than 30 continuous days per fleet segment. Such closures shall take place from December to March. Each CPC shall submit the closure period to the GFCM Secretariat and the list of vessels concerned.

23. The SAC shall evaluate in 2023 the impact of all types of fishing gear on the fishing mortality of blackspot seabream in order to decide if it is necessary to include other types of fishing gear in the closure area measure or any other management measure deemed necessary.

24. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 April 2023 and thereafter annually, the spatial restrictions, as defined in paragraph 22, that apply in the waters under their jurisdiction, with a view to protecting spawning and nursery areas for blackspot seabream stock.

Minimum conservation reference size

25. Through the end of 2023, as a transitional measure, it shall be prohibited to land specimens of blackspot seabream measuring a total length of less than 30 cm.

26. In 2023, the WGSBR shall analyse and assess the benefits of updating the MCRS in order to define further appropriate restrictions with a view to protecting juvenile fish of the key stock and allowing for an increase in the spawning biomass. On the basis of the results of this working group and the advice of the SAC, the GFCM will adopt at its forty-sixth session an MCRS for blackspot seabream.

PART V
Fleet management measures

27. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of fleets fishing blackspot seabream with handlines and set and mixed longlines in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, does not exceed, over the duration of this recommendation's mandate, the fleet capacity for the same fisheries averaged over the years 2018–2021. Based on this paragraph, the number of vessels and their characteristics are established in Annex 2.

28. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall adapt, with respect to fishing opportunities (catch limits and number of hooks), the overall fleet capacity of fleets operating with handlines, set and mixed longliners and fishing blackspot seabream in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers.

29. Vessels authorized under the scope of this recommendation to fish blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they fly.

30. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 1 August of the first year and by 31 March of each subsequent year, the list of the vessels flying their flag and fishing blackspot seabream during the current year or forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 3.

31. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish blackspot seabream and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

32. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are set up to record each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and to record vessels' catches and fishing effort via the logbook, as well as to monitor fishing vessels' activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

33. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

34. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis beginning from 2023, advice on the status of the key stock in the Alboran Sea, including specific objectives for catch and hook limits to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the key stock at levels that can produce MSY in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs 2 and 9.

35. Since a rapid provision of scientific advice is essential for the stock to recover, CPCs shall annually ensure that either all scientific fisheries (echo-survey) and/or commercial (catch and discard) data collected in year N are provided to the GFCM Secretariat by 1 April of year N+1 in order to perform a yearly updated stock assessment in May (year N+1). From 2025, on the basis of scientific advice and while taking into account socioeconomic effects on fleets and industry, the SAC annually will propose catch limits by single species to be adopted by the GFCM at its annual session (year N+1) and implemented from 1 January (year N+2).

36. Based on SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

37. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

38. Where, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide accurate advice on the stock status of the key stock and on its exploitation level, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. These measures shall be based on SAC advice in accordance with the precautionary approach and taking into consideration environmental and socioeconomic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

PART VII
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

39. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels actively fishing in the Alboran Sea declare all catches of the key stock. If possible, the obligation to electronically declare catches, as well as catches of non-target species exceeding 50 kg, shall apply, irrespective of the volume of the catch, to vessels above 12 m and vessels catching more than 10 000 kg per year regardless of their length from 1 January 2023. Meanwhile, for vessels below 12 m catching less than 10 000 kg per year, the Compliance Committee (CoC) shall assess the most appropriate system of catch reporting.

40. Each CPC shall designate landing points at which landings by vessels actively fishing for the key stock in the Alboran Sea shall take place.

41. For each designated port, the concerned CPC shall specify permitted landing.

42. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

43. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of the key stock fished in the Alboran Sea at any place other than the ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 41.

44. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 April 2023 and subsequently by 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points at which landings of key stock in the Alboran Sea may take place.

45. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

46. Part VII of this recommendation is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

PART VIII
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

47. Vessels operating with handlines and set and mixed longliners catching blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea shall be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities only if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities.

48. Starting from 30 April 2023, authorized vessels above 15 m length overall shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) or another geolocation system allowing control authorities to track their activity at all times during the fishing trips. At the latest by 1 January 2024, authorized vessels above 10 m length overall shall be equipped with a VMS or another geolocation system allowing control authorities to track their activity at all times during the fishing trips.

49. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall monitor the consumption of the catch limit set respectively in accordance with paragraphs 10 and 11, as well as Annex 1 until the end of the transitional period and thereafter in paragraph 17 as follows:

For individual CPC catch limits, beginning from the date when 80 percent of the quota has been exhausted, the CPC concerned shall communicate to the GFCM monthly reports on catch. Such report should be sent by the fifteenth day of the month for the previous month. When the catch limit has been reached, the CPC shall prohibit the catch of blackspot seabream, taking into account paragraph 18.

PART IX
National management plans

50. In order to ensure adequate conservation of blackspot seabream stock, CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Alboran Sea.

51. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, from 30 September 2023, of the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 30 April of the following year.

PART X
Final provisions

52. The present recommendation repeals Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/4, GFCM/43/2019/2 and GFCM/41/2017/2.

53. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation remains in force for eight years from the date of its adoption.

54. Measures in this recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by CPCs.

55. On the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM may revise this recommendation after four years.

Annex 1

Fishing opportunities (catch limits and number of hooks) for blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea (GSAs 1–3) over the transitional period 2023–2025

In line with paragraphs 10 and 11, the catch limits (average 2018–2021) and the number of hooks for 2022 are reported in the tables below:

	Catch limits (in tonnes)		
	2023	**2024**	**2025**
European Union	32	29.76	27.67
Morocco	140	130.2	121

	Number of hooks			
	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
European Union	213 200*	198 276	184 397	171 489
Morocco	845 000*	785 850	730 840	679 682

*calculated for 2022 as the number of vessels in the GFCM database multiplied by 2 600 hooks per vessel.

Annex 2

Fishing capacity for fleets capturing blackspot seabream in the Alboran Sea (GSAs 1–3) as target and bycaught species are shown in the table below:

	Number of vessels	
	Hooks, lines and longliners	**Hooks, lines and multipurpose vessels of less than 12 m**
European Union	82	0
Morocco	75	250

Annex 3

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM data collection reference framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraphs 31 and 32 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by the relevant CPC);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- port of registration (full name of the port);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- VMS (indicate yes/no);
- vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW;
- name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s);
- main target species;
- main gear used for blackspot seabream and DCRF fleet segment allocation; and
- time period authorized for fishing with longlines or any other gear likely to fish blackspot seabream (if any such authorization).

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/12 and GFCM/42/2018/5

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that States "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING that owing to the importance of this area, different recommendations have been adopted for the Strait of Sicily since 2015:

- Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom trawling fisheries of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily, pending the development and adoption of a multiannual management plan, that includes a common minimum

conservation reference size (MCRS) of 20 mm carapace length (CL) for deep-water rose shrimp and 20 cm total length for European hake;

- Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4 establishing a multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), that applies to vessels operating with bottom trawls over 10 m in total length bringing in a catch of these species that represents at least 25 percent of the total catch in live weight or value;
- Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16);
- Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 on a multiannual management plan for bottom trawl fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/39/2015/2 and GFCM/40/2016/4;
- Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6 on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16) that introduces a general framework for the management of deep-water shrimps in the area and was rolled over by Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/7; and
- Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 on a multiannual management plan for bottom trawl fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16) rolled over by Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/12;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) acknowledged, at its twenty-third session in 2022, the status of the most important commercial demersal stocks, namely European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily, which have been in overexploitation in recent years;

CONSIDERING that the management measures adopted since 2015 have been an important first step towards a unified management of fisheries resources and have contributed to establishing an internationally binding framework that started moving the demersal stock towards sustainable exploitation levels and combatted illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

NOTING, however, that in biological terms, the management plan set forth in Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 has not achieved its MSY goal due to a lack of annually established fishing effort or catch limitations set on the basis of scientific advice and the capacity of the fleets being out of balance with the demersal stocks;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following Recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fishing activities in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16) exploiting key demersal stocks of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp by means of bottom trawlers. On the basis of SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other types of fishing gear and other stocks.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining the sustainability and relative stability of fisheries and dependent

industries. The plan should take account of the mixed nature of the fisheries and the nature of stock dynamics.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in geographical subareas (GSAs) 12 to 16 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set forth by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Strait of Sicily shall be developed in order to ensure that the stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels while minimizing socioeconomic impacts and finalizing scientific advice by the SAC.

5. The multiannual management plan for the fisheries shall also pursue a reduction in IUU fishing activities in GSAs 12 to 16.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply to GSAs 12 to 16.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation:

a) "F_{msy}" means the value of the estimated fishing mortality that, with a given fishing pattern and under current average environmental conditions, gives the long-term maximum sustainable yield, or "F_{msy} proxy".

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "Stock within safe biological limits" means a stock with a high probability of its estimated spawning biomass at the end of the previous year being higher than the limit biomass reference point (B_{lim});

d) "B_{pa}" means the precautionary reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass that ensures that the spawning stock biomass has less than a 5 percent probability of being below B_{lim}.

e) "Strait of Sicily" means GSAs 12 to 16 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

f) "Vessel actively fishing" means any vessel fishing with demersal trawls in the Strait of Sicily on the key stocks and entitled by the CPC whose flag it flies to carry out specific fishing operations during a specified period in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

g) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present in the Strait of Sicily and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing or hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transhipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring or landing fish and fishery products.

h) "Key stocks" means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined:

- European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), and
- deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*).

i) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7;

j) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transhipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Specific objectives and transitional measures

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim to contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and to the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at the MSY as soon as possible and at the latest by 31 December 2030;

c) prevent increases in fishing capacity and in fishing effort in relation to the year 2021;

d) protect nursery and spawning areas and essential fish habitats important for the key stocks in the Strait of Sicily;

e) contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches and by ensuring that all catches are landed; and

f) provide for measures to adjust the fishing capacity and catches to levels of fishing mortalities consistent with the MSY, with a view to ensuring economically viable fleets without overexploiting marine living resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-step approach whereby: i) over the first three years, effort and catch limits and spatio-temporal measures shall be applied; and ii) from 2026, on the basis of new scientific data, the SAC shall evaluate the state of the stocks and, on the basis of the harvest control rules (HCRs), propose further measures and advisable yearly effort and catch limits per species, in line with the provisions in Parts II, III, IV, V and VI of this recommendation, that would contribute to reaching F_{msy} or F_{msy} proxy and staying within safe biological limits.

PART III
Transitional measures

11. Fishing effort regime:

a) For the period 2023–2025, a fishing effort regime shall apply to all vessels fishing with bottom trawls for European hake according to the fleet segment definition in Annex 1.

b) The fishing effort limits by CPCs during the transitional period shall be established in accordance with Annex 1 on the basis of the fishing effort deployed by vessels flying the flag of those CPCs in 2021 as notified in the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) database.

c) If the SAC advice in 2024 does not confirm the continuity of a constructive evolution of fishing mortality towards a restoration of the size of the European hake stock, the fishing effort limits may be reviewed by the GFCM.

12. Catch limits for deep-water rose shrimp:

a) For the period 2023–2025, a catch limit for deep-water rose shrimp for each CPCs shall be established based on the catches reported in 2021 with an annual reduction of 3 percent per year as defined in Annex 1.

b) In case the SAC advice established in 2024 does not confirm the continuity of a constructive evolution of fishing mortality towards a restoration of deep-water rose shrimp stock, the catch limits may be reviewed by the GFCM.

13. In 2024 and 2025, the SAC shall assess the impacts of demersal longlines, gillnets and trammel nets targeting the spawning stock of European hake in the Strait of Sicily. It shall also assess the need to include the fleets using these types of gear in the multiannual management plan and to adopt specific spatial measures to protect the spawning stock of European hake in the Strait of Sicily.

14. In 2024 and 2025, the SAC shall assess the possibility of integrating the stocks of red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), striped mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*) and Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*) into the fishing effort regime referred to in paragraph 11. On the basis of the SAC advice, the GFCM may establish a fishing effort regime applicable to fishing gear targeting these stocks and/or catch limits for these stocks.

15. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, CPCs shall be fully committed to supporting and completing the scientific assessments of the key species and the species referred to in paragraph 14 and the assessment of the management strategy provided for in paragraphs 17 to19, as well as the identification of spatial and temporal measures provided for in paragraphs 23 and 24 and of new restricted fishing areas in the southern Strait of Sicily provided for in paragraph 30.

16. By way of derogation from paragraphs 11 and 12, CPCs intending to start targeting key stocks shall submit a management plan for key stocks and a development plan during the period between the entry into force of this recommendation and the adoption of permanent management measures by the GFCM. The SAC shall review the development plan and formulate appropriate advice if it is not in line with the general and specific objectives set out in this recommendation. Pending possible amendments in line with the SAC advice, the GFCM shall make a decision on the adoption of such development plan.

17. The SAC, at its twenty-fifth session in 2024, shall give a mandate to the Workshop on the assessment of management measures (WKMSE) to carry out a management strategy evaluation in order to define the most appropriate HCRs for the key stocks to be implemented according to paragraphs 18 and 19, including socioeconomic aspects.

PART IV
Long-term management plan

18. A long-term management plan for the period 2026–2030 is established. Each year, on the basis of updated SAC advice, the GFCM shall establish yearly effort or catch limits for the key stocks. Such limits shall be based on HCRs in line with paragraphs 17 and 19, which shall be proposed by the WKMSE and endorsed by the SAC for 2025.

19. The HCRs shall ensure, for the key stocks, a low probability of spawning stock biomass falling below B_{lim} (5 percent probability).

Safeguards

20. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{pa}, the GFCM shall take remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, fishing effort and/or catch limits shall be set at levels consistent with producing a fishing mortality lower than F_{msy}, taking into account the decrease in biomass.

21. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{lim}, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the fishery targeting the concerned stocks and an adequate reduction in fishing effort or catch limits.

PART V
Technical measures

Spatial and temporal closures

22. Over the transitional period, the SAC shall: i) assess whether a ban on fishing within established and new fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) could be applied to longlines and gillnets; and ii) increase the understanding of the reproductive peaks, recruitment and spawning periods of relevant species to determine appropriate spatio-temporal measures through an analysis of fishery-independent and dependent information as well as of the scientific literature. Such measures could be implemented within the long-term management plan.

23. Over the transitional period, as a pilot measure, bottom longlines, gillnets and trammel nets targeting European hake spawning aggregations shall stop fishing for 30 consecutive days between the months of March and April. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 June 2023, and annually thereafter, these temporal restrictions.

24. Any fishing activity with bottom trawlers, irrespective of the vessels' length overall shall not be allowed between the coast and the 200 m depth isobath in GSA 14 (Gulf of Gabès). This closure shall apply every year from 1 July until 30 September.

Fisheries restricted areas

25. Fisheries restricted areas for the conservation and management of the key stocks shall be maintained where already established in the northern part or where newly established in the southern part of the Strait of Sicily.

26. The FRAs already adopted in Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 in the three areas of the Strait of Sicily as defined in Annex 2 of this recommendation shall be extended for the duration of this plan, as of 1 January 2023.

27. Any demersal fishing activity, including recreational fisheries, irrespective of the vessels' length overall, shall not be allowed in the FRAs referred to in paragraph 26.

28. In order to avoid accidental access to the FRAs referred to in paragraph 26, buffer areas extending 1 nautical mile beyond the FRAs shall be established as defined in Annex 2.

29. For any fishing activity with bottom trawls in the buffer areas established in paragraph 28, vessels shall ensure that their vessel monitoring system (VMS) is fully functional before entering the buffer zone. Those vessels not equipped with VMS transponders and aiming to fish in the buffer areas shall be equipped with another geolocation system allowing control authorities to track their activities.

30. In line with paragraph 25, the SAC shall examine the possibility of establishing new FRAs in the southern Strait of Sicily. In 2023, CPCs, with the support of the GFCM Secretariat, shall ensure the continuation of existing surveys-at-sea, as well as the monitoring of new areas (e.g. the shelf and slopes at the borders of the Malta plateau). Particular focus shall be given to the continuation of the scientific surveys in GSAs 12, 13 and 14 towards confirming European hake nursery areas in the Gulf of Hammamet and the Gulf of Tunis as potential temporary or permanent FRAs. In addition, CPCs shall continue efforts to map vulnerable marine ecosystems towards their protection from trawling in the Strait of Sicily. The CPCs concerned should submit necessary data for the evaluation of new FRAs in

the southern Strait of Sicily one month ahead of the 2024 meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Central Mediterranean at the latest and support the work for their evaluation.

Minimum conservation reference size

31. During the transitional period, the SAC shall identify, in the context of Resolution GFCM/44/2021/2 on the definition of a minimum conservation reference size for priority stocks in the Mediterranean Sea, appropriate minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS) for the key stocks lacking an MCRS to be then applied within the long-term management plan for all species covered.

32. Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5 establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea shall apply.

33. In line with Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 on a multiannual management plan for bottom trawl fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/39/2015/2 and GFCM/40/2016/4, the MCRS for deep-water rose shrimp shall be set 20 mm CL.

34. Specimens of key stocks smaller than the MCRS defined in paragraphs 32 and 33 shall not be caught, retained on board, transhipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale by professional or recreational fisheries. The same provision applies for the remaining key stocks in the long-term management plan, in line with the MCRS established in paragraph 31.

PART VI
Fleet management measures

35. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of the fleets operating with bottom trawls and actively fishing for the key stocks does not exceed, in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, over the duration of this recommendation, the fleet capacity for demersal fisheries in the year 2021.

36. Vessels authorized to fish the key stocks with bottom trawls in the Strait of Sicily shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying.

37. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 1 August in the first year and by 31 March of each subsequent year, the list of vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for the key stocks for the current year or forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 3.

38. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are set up to record each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and to record vessels' catches and fishing effort via the logbook, as well as to monitor fishing vessels' activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

39. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall maintain and keep updated a register of the above-mentioned fishing authorizations. Unless specifically provided for in the DCRF, CPCs shall communicate the following to the GFCM Secretariat:

a) the list of operating vessels for which such authorization has been issued for current or forthcoming year(s), no later than 31 March of each year; and

b) a report on fishing activities carried out by the vessels referred to in paragraph 36 in an aggregated format, including the following minimum information – number of exploitation days, exploitation area, catches and discards of European hake and of deep-water rose shrimp – no later than 31 August of each year, starting from August 2023.

40. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for the key species and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

41. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VII

Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

42. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis starting from 2023, advice on the status of all the key stocks in the Strait of Sicily, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the key stocks at levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 9.

43. Based on SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

44. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

45. Where, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide accurate advice on the stock status of the key stocks and on their exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. These measures shall be based on SAC advice in accordance with the precautionary approach and taking into consideration environmental and socioeconomic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

46. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, with the support of GFCM Secretariat, shall ensure the implementation of the pilot project to improve trawl gear selectivity, in particular in fisheries targeting deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily in 2023.

PART VIII

Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

47. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for the registration of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, for the recording of the vessel's catch and fishing effort in the logbook and for the monitoring of the vessel's fishing activities and landings by means of surveys and sampling of catches and fishing effort, carried out in accordance with the rules laid down by each CPC.

48. Each CPC shall designate landing points at which landings by vessels actively fishing for the key stocks in the Strait of Sicily shall take place.

49. For each designated port, the concerned CPC shall specify permitted landing and transhipping times and places.

50. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

51. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of key stocks fished in the Strait of Sicily at any place other than ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 48.

52. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 April 2023 and subsequently on 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points at which landings of key stocks in the Strait of Sicily may take place.

53. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

54. Part VII of this recommendation is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

PART IX
Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) programme

55. Vessels operating with otter trawls, bottom longlines, gillnets and trammel nets exploiting key stocks in the Strait of Sicily shall be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities only if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities.

56. Authorized vessels shall be equipped with a VMS in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7.

57. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall monitor the consumption of the effort and catch limits, as follows: beginning from the date when 80 percent of the quota has been exhausted, the CPC concerned shall communicate to the GFCM monthly reports on effort and catch. Such a report should be sent by the fifteenth day of the month for the previous month. When the effort or catch limit has been reached, the CPC shall prohibit any further fishing effort on or catches of key stocks.

PART X
Permanent inspection scheme

58. The permanent inspection scheme established for demersal stocks by Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 is amended and extended with Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/15 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), amending Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 and repealing Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/6, to cover this recommendation.

PART XI
National management plans

59. In order to ensure adequate conservation of the key stocks, CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Strait of Sicily.

60. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, from 30 September 2023, of the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, the CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 30 April of the following year.

PART XII
Final provisions

61. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation shall remain in force for eight years from the date of its adoption.

62. Measures in this recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

63. On the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM may revise this recommendation.

64. This recommendation repeals and replaces Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/12 and GFCM/42/2018/5.

Annex 1

Fishing opportunities by fleet segment for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16) over the transitional period 2023–2025.

In line with paragraphs 11 to 13, effort and catch limits are reported for each CPC with an active fleet fishing for the key stocks.

	Gear	**Fleet segment**	**European Union 2023–2025**	**Tunisia 2023–2025**
Effort regime for European hake (fishing days)	Otter trawlers	T-07	90	0
		T-08	188	0
		T-10	19 704	0
		T-11	3 870	25 994
		T-12	3	23 443

	European Union 2023	**European Union 2024**	**European Union 2025**	**Tunisia 2023**	**Tunisia 2024**	**Tunisia 2025**
Catch limit (tonnes) for deep-water rose shrimp	2 154	2 090	2 026	3 993	3 874	3 757

Annex 2

Geographical coordinates of fisheries restricted areas in the northern Strait of Sicily

Fisheries restricted area 1: East of Adventure Bank

Fisheries restricted area	
Latitude	**Longitude**
37° 23,850’ N	12° 30,072’ E
37° 23,884’ N	12° 48,282’ E
37° 11,567’ N	12° 48,305’ E
37° 11,532’ N	12° 30,095’ E

Buffer area	
Latitude	**Longitude**
37° 24,849’N	12° 28,814’ E
37° 24,888’N	12° 49,536’ E
37° 10,567’N	12° 49,559’ E
37° 10,528’N	12° 28,845’ E

Fisheries restricted area 2: West of Gela Basin

Fisheries restricted area	
Latitude	**Longitude**
37° 12,040’N	13° 17,925’E
37° 12,047’ N	13° 36,170’E
36° 59,725’ N	13° 36,175’E
36° 59,717’ N	13° 17,930’E

Buffer area	
Latitude	**Longitude**
37° 13,041’N	13° 16,672’E
37° 13,049’N	13° 37,422’E
36° 58,723’N	13° 37,424’E
36° 58,715’N	13° 16,682’E

Fisheries restricted area 3: East of Malta Bank

Fisheries restricted area	
Latitude	**Longitude**
36° 12,621’N	15° 13,338’E
36° 12,621’N	15° 26,062’E
35° 59,344’N	15° 26,062’E
35° 59,344’N	15° 13,338’E

Buffer area	
Latitude	**Longitude**
36° 13,624’N	15° 12,102’E
36° 13,624’N	15° 27,298’E
35° 58,342’N	15° 27,294’E
35° 58,342’N	15° 12,106’E

Annex 3

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraph 37 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number (code assigned by the CPCs)
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate yes/no)
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear used for European hake and deep-water rose shrimp and DCRF fleet segment allocation
- Time period authorized for fishing with bottom trawl or any other gear likely to fish European hake and/or deep-water rose shrimp (if any of such authorization)

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 (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/7 and GFCM/43/2019/6

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental levels, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING that owing to the importance of this area, different recommendations have been adopted for the Strait of Sicily, including Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6 on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16), rolled over by Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/7, that introduced a general framework for the management of deep-water red shrimps in the area.

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) acknowledged, at its twenty-third session, the status of the overexploitation in recent years of both giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp;

CONSIDERING that the management measures adopted since 2019 for deep-water red shrimp fisheries in the Strait of Sicily have been an important first step towards a unified management of fisheries resources and have contributed to establishing an internationally binding framework that started moving the deep-water red shrimp stocks towards sustainable exploitation levels and combatted illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

NOTING, however, that in biological terms, the plan set forth in Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6 on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16) has not achieved its MSY goal due to a lack of annually established catch limitations set on the basis of scientific advice and the fleets being out of balance with the deep-water red shrimp stocks;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following Recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal trawl fishing activities in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas [GSAs] 12 to 16) exploiting deep-water red shrimp stocks by means of demersal trawlers. On the basis of SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other types of fishing gear and other stocks.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining the sustainability and relative stability of fisheries and dependent industries.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 12 to 16 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set forth by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Strait of Sicily shall be developed in order to ensure that the stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels while minimizing socioeconomic impacts and finalizing scientific advice by the SAC.

5. The multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned shall also pursue a reduction in IUU fishing activities in GSAs 12 to 16.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply in GSAs 12 to 16.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation:

   a) "F_{msy}' " means the value of the estimated fishing mortality that, with a given fishing pattern and under current average environmental conditions, gives the long-term maximum yield, or "F_{msy} proxy".

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "Stock within safe biological limits" means a stock with a high probability of its estimated spawning biomass at the end of the previous year being higher than the limit biomass reference point (B_{lim}).

d) "B_{pa}" means the precautionary reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, that ensures that the spawning stock biomass has less than a 5 percent probability of being below B_{lim}.

e) "Strait of Sicily" means GSAs 12 to 16 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

f) "Vessel actively fishing" means any vessel fishing with demersal trawls on the key stocks and entitled by the CPC whose flag it flies to carry out specific fishing operations during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions. Fishing vessels non included in the list of authorized vessels are allowed to catch, retain on board, land and offer for sale limited quantities of key stocks that cannot exceed 15 percent of the total catch at any time of a fishing trip.

g) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within the Strait of Sicily and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing or hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring or landing fish and fishery products.

h) "Key stocks" or "deep-water red shrimps" means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined:

- giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*); and
- blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*).

i) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

j) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, at which landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Specific objectives and transitional measures

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim to contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and to the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at the MSY as soon as possible and at the latest by 31 December 2030;

c) prevent increases in fishing capacity and fishing effort in relation to year 2019;

d) protect nursery and spawning areas and essential fish habitats important for the key stocks in the Strait of Sicily;

e) contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches and by ensuring that all catches are landed; and

f) provide for measures to adjust the fishing capacity and catches to fishing mortalities levels consistent with the MSY, with a view to ensuring economically viable fleets without overexploiting marine living resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-step approach whereby: i) over the first three years, catch limits and spatio-temporal measures shall be applied; and ii) from 2026, on the basis of new scientific data, the SAC shall evaluate the state of the stocks and, on the basis of the harvest control rules (HCRs), propose further measures and advisable yearly catch limits per species in line with the provisions in Parts II, III, IV, V and VI of this recommendation, that would contribute to reaching F_{msy} or F_{msy} proxy and staying within safe biological limits.

11. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, a transitional fishing regime shall be established, during which at least all existing efficient measures should be implemented while scientific support is gathered, along with information towards the identification of long-term adaptive management measures based on future annual advice on the evolution of the state of resources and fisheries. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that a catch limit is established for the key stocks, aligned with annual reductions of 3 percent in 2023, 3 percent in 2024 and 3 percent in 2025. Such reductions should be in respect to reported catches in 2021. Based on this paragraph, the catch limits for 2023, 2024 and 2025, as well as the temporary allocations, are established in Annex1.

12. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, CPCs shall be fully committed to completing the scientific assessments of the key stocks and the management strategy evaluation provided for in paragraphs 14 to 16, as well as the identification of spatio-temporal measures provided for in paragraphs 19 and 20.

13. By way of derogation from paragraph 11, CPCs intending to start targeting deep-water red shrimps shall submit a management plan for deep-water red shrimps and a development plan during the period between the entry into force of this recommendation and the adoption of permanent management measures by the GFCM. The SAC shall review the development plan and formulate appropriate advice if it is not in line with the general and specific objectives set out in this recommendation. Pending possible amendments in line with SAC advice, the GFCM shall make a decision on the adoption of such a development plan.

14. The SAC, at its twenty-fifth session in 2024, shall give a mandate to the Workshop on the assessment of management measures to carry out a management strategy evaluation in order to define the most appropriate HCRs for the key stocks to be implemented according to paragraphs 15 and 16, including socioeconomic aspects.

PART III
Long-term management plan

15. A long-term management plan for the period 2026–2030 is established. Each year, on the basis of updated SAC advice, the GFCM shall establish yearly single-species catch limits for deep-water red shrimps. Such limits shall be based on HCRs in line with paragraph 16, which shall be proposed by the Workshop on the assessment of management measures and endorsed by the SAC in 2024 or 2025.

16. The HCRs shall ensure, for the deep-water red shrimp stocks, a low probability of spawning stock biomass falling below B_{lim} (5 percent probability).

Safeguards

17. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{pa}, the GFCM shall take remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to

levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, catch limits shall be set at levels consistent with producing a fishing mortality lower than F_{msy}, taking into account the decrease in biomass.

18. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{lim}, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the fishery targeting the concerned stocks and an adequate reduction in fishing effort or catch limits.

PART IV
Technical measures

Spatial and temporal closures

19. Over the transitional period, the SAC shall: i) finalize the identification of the fishing footprint on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and ii) on the basis of updated results from the project on Mediterranean Sensitive Habitats (MEDISEH), finalize the identification of essential fish habitat areas for juveniles and spawners of deep-water red shrimps. Such work shall increase the understanding of the reproductive peaks and recruitment and spawning periods of relevant species. On this basis, in 2024 the SAC shall determine appropriate spatio-temporal measures through an analysis of fishery-independent and dependent information, as well as on scientific literature. Such measures could be implemented within the long-term plan.

20. Over the transitional period, as a pilot measure, bottom trawlers targeting deep-water red shrimp spawning aggregations shall stop fishing for 30 consecutive days between the months of March and September. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 June 2023, and annually thereafter, these temporal restrictions.

Minimum conservation reference size

21. During the transitional period, the SAC shall identify, in the context of Resolution GFCM/44/2021/2 on the definition of a minimum conservation reference size for priority stocks in the Mediterranean Sea, appropriate minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS) for the deep-water red shrimps lacking an MCRS, to be then applied in the long-term management plan for the two species covered.

22. In the long-term management plan, specimens of the key stocks smaller than the MCRS as defined in paragraph 21, shall not be caught, retained on board, transshipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale by professionals.

PART V
Fleet management measures

23. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of the fleets operating with demersal trawls and actively fishing for key stocks does not exceed, in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, over the duration of this recommendation, the fleet capacity for otter trawlers fishing deep-water red shrimps in the year 2019 as the fleet capacity was frozen at this level by Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6.

24. Vessels authorized to fish the key stocks with demersal trawls in the Strait of Sicily shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying.

25. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 1 August in the first year and by 31 March of each subsequent year, the list of the vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for the key stocks for the current year or forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 2.

26. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are set up to record each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and to record vessels' catches via the logbook, as well as to monitor fishing vessels' activities and landings via catch sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

27. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall maintain and keep updated a register of the above-mentioned fishing authorizations. Unless specifically provided for in the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework, CPCs shall communicate the following to the GFCM Secretariat:

a) the list of operating vessels for which such authorization has been issued for current or forthcoming year(s), not later than 31 March of each year; and

b) a report on fishing activities carried out by the vessels referred to in paragraph 24 in an aggregated format, including the following minimum information – number of exploitation days, exploitation area and catches and discards of deep-water red shrimps – no later than 31 August of each year, starting from August 2023.

28. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for the key species and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

29. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

30. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis starting from 2023, advice on the status of both deep-water shrimp stocks in the Strait of Sicily, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the key stocks at levels that can produce the MSY in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 9.

31. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

32. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

33. Where, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide accurate advice on the stock status of the key stocks and on their exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. These measures shall be based on SAC advice in accordance with the precautionary approach and taking into consideration environmental and socioeconomic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

34. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, with the support of the GFCM Secretariat, shall ensure the implementation of the pilot project to improve the selectivity of trawl nets fishing for deep-water red shrimps in the Strait of Sicily in 2023.

PART VII
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

35. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for the registration of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, for the recording the vessel's catch and fishing effort in the logbook and for the monitoring of the vessel's fishing activities and landings by means of surveys and sampling of catches and fishing effort, carried out in accordance with the rules laid down by each CPC.

36. Each CPC shall designate landing points at which landings by vessels actively fishing for the key stocks in the Strait of Sicily shall take place.

37. For each designated port, the concerned CPC shall specify permitted landing and transhipping times and places.

38. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

39. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of key stocks fished in the Strait of Sicily at any place other than ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 36.

40. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 April 2023 and subsequently on 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points at which landings of key stocks in the Strait of Sicily may take place.

41. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

42. Part VII of this recommendation is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

PART VIII
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

43. Vessels operating with otter trawls exploiting key stocks in the Strait of Sicily shall be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities only if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities.

44. Authorized vessels shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7.

45. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall monitor the consumption of the catch limits, as follows: beginning from the date when 80 percent of the quota has been exhausted, the CPC concerned shall communicate to the GFCM monthly reports on catch. Such a report should be sent by the fifteenth day of the month for the previous month. When the catch limit has been reached, the CPC shall prohibit any further catches of the key stocks.

PART IX
Permanent inspection scheme

46. The permanent inspection scheme established for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily by Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16) is amended and extended with Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/15 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), amending Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 and repealing Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/6, to also cover this recommendation.

PART X
National management plans

47. In order to ensure adequate conservation of deep-water red shrimp stocks, CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Strait of Sicily.

48. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, from 30 September 2023, of the management measures or management plans adopted at the national

level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, the CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 30 April of the following year.

PART XI
Final provisions

49. The multiannual management plan establish by this recommendation shall remain in force for eight years from the date of its adoption.

50. Measures in this recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

51. On the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM may revise this recommendation.

52. This recommendation repeals and replaces Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/7 and GFCM/43/2019/6.

Annex 1

Fishing opportunities for deep-water red shrimp fisheries in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16) over the transitional period 2023–2025.

In line with paragraphs 11 to 13, catch limits are reported for each CPC with an active fleet fishing for the key stocks.

	European Union 2023	**European Union 2024**	**European Union 2025**	**Tunisia 2023**	**Tunisia 2024**	**Tunisia 2025**
Catch limit (tonnes) for giant red shrimp	908	881	854	39	38	37
Catch limit (tonnes) for blue and red shrimp	104	101	98	126	122	119

Annex 2

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraph 25 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number (code assigned by the CPCs)
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate yes/no)
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear used for deep-water red shrimps and DCRF fleet segment allocation
- Time period authorized for fishing with bottom trawl or any other gear likely to fish deep-water red shrimps (if any of such authorization)

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 (geographical subareas 19 to 21), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/8 and GFCM/42/2018/4

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING that owing to the importance of this area, different recommendations have been adopted for the Ionian Sea, including Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/4 on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19, 20 and 21) rolled over by GFCM/44/2021/8, which introduced a general framework for the management of deep-water red shrimps in the area;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) acknowledged, at its twenty-third session, the status of both giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Ionian Sea, which have been in overexploitation in recent years;

CONSIDERING that the management measures adopted since 2018 have been an important first step towards a unified management of fisheries resources and have contributed to establishing an internationally binding framework that started moving the deep-water red shrimp stocks towards sustainable exploitation levels and combatted illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

NOTING, however, that in biological terms, the plan set forth in Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/4 has not achieved its MSY goal due to a lack of annually established catch limitations set on the basis of scientific advice and the fleets being out of balance with the deep-water red shrimp stocks;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal trawl fishing activities in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas [GSAs] 19 to 21) exploiting deep-water red shrimp stocks by means of demersal trawlers. On the basis of SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other types of fishing gear and other stocks.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining the sustainability and relative stability of fisheries and dependent industries.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 19 to 21 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set forth by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Ionian Sea shall be developed in order to ensure that the stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels while minimizing socioeconomic impacts and finalizing scientific advice by the SAC.

5. The multiannual management plan for the fisheries shall also pursue a reduction in IUU fishing activities in GSAs 19 to 21.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply to GSAs 19 to 21.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation:

a) "F_{msy}" means the value of the estimated fishing mortality that, with a given fishing pattern and under current average environmental conditions, gives the long-term maximum yield, or "F_{msy} proxy".

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "Stock within safe biological limits" means a stock with a high probability of its estimated spawning biomass at the end of the previous year being higher than the limit biomass reference point (B_{lim}).

d) "B_{pa}" means the precautionary reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, that ensures that the spawning stock biomass has less than a 5 percent probability of being below B_{lim}.

e) "Ionian Sea" means GSAs 19 to 21 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

f) "Vessel actively fishing" means any vessel fishing with demersal trawls on the key stocks and entitled by the CPC whose flag it flies to carry out specific fishing operations, during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions. Fishing vessels non included in the list of authorized vessels are allowed to catch, retain on board, land and offer for sale limited quantities of key stocks that cannot exceed 15 percent of the total catch at any time of a fishing trip.

g) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, duringwhich a vessel is present within the Ionian Sea and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing or hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring or landing fish and fishery products.

h) "Key stocks" or "deep-water red shrimps" means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined:

- giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*); and
- blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*).

i) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

j) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, at which landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Specific objectives and transitional measures

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim to contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and to the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at the MSY as soon as possible and at the latest by 31 December 2030;

c) in continuity with Recommendation GFCM/43/2018/4, prevent increases in fishing capacity and effort in relation to the levels exerted during 2019 for the exploitation of key species in the Ionian Sea;

d) protect nursery and spawning areas and essential fish habitats important for the key stocks in the Ionian Sea.

e) contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches and by ensuring that all catches are landed; and

f) provide for measures to adjust the fishing capacity and catches to levels of fishing mortalities consistent with the MSY, with a view to ensuring economically viable fleets without overexploiting marine living resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-step approach whereby: i) over the first three years, catch limits and spatio-temporal measures shall be applied; and ii) from 2026, on the basis of new scientific data, the SAC shall evaluate the state of the stocks and, on the basis of the harvest control rules (HCRs), propose further measures and advisable yearly catch limits per species in line with the provisions in Parts II, III, IV, V and VI of this recommendation, that would contribute to reaching F_{msy} or F_{msy} proxy and staying within safe biological limits.

11. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, a transitional fishing regime shall be established, during which at least all existing efficient measures should be implemented while scientific support is gathered, along with information towards the identification of long-term adaptive management measures based on annual future advice on the evolution of the state of resources and fisheries. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that a catch limit is established for the key stocks, aligned with annual reductions of 3 percent in 2023, 3 percent in 2024 and 3 percent in 2025. Such reductions should be with respect to reported catches in 2021. Based on this paragraph, the catch limits for 2023, 2024 and 2025, as well as the temporary allocations are established in Annex 1.

12. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, CPCs shall be fully committed to completing the scientific assessments of the key stocks, and the management strategy evaluation provided for in paragraphs 14 to 16, as well as the identification of spatio-temporal measures provided for in paragraphs19 and 20.

13. By way of derogation from paragraph 11, CPCs intending to start targeting deep-water red shrimps shall submit a management plan for deep-water red shrimps and a development plan during the period between the entry into force of this recommendation and the adoption of permanent management measures by the GFCM. The SAC shall review the development plan and formulate appropriate advice if it is not in line with the general and specific objectives set out in this recommendation. Pending possible amendments in line with SAC advice, the GFCM shall make a decision on the adoption of such a development plan.

14. The SAC, at its twenty-fifth session in 2024, shall give a mandate to the Workshop on the assessment of management measures to carry out a management strategy evaluation in order to define the most appropriate HCRs for the key stocks to be implemented according to paragraphs 15 and 16, including socioeconomic aspects.

PART III
Long-term management plan

15. A long-term management plan for the period 2026–2030 is established. Each year, on the basis of updated SAC advice, the GFCM shall establish yearly single-species catch limits for deep-water red shrimps. Such limits shall be based on HCRs in line with paragraph 16, which shall be proposed by the Workshop on the assessment of management measures and endorsed by the SAC in 2024 or 2025.

16. The HCRs shall ensure for the deep-water red shrimp stocks a low probability of spawning stock biomass falling below B_{lim} (5 percent probability).

Safeguards

17. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{pa}, the GFCM shall take remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, catch limits shall be set at levels consistent with producing a fishing mortality lower than F_{msy}, taking into account the decrease in biomass.

18. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{lim}, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the fishery targeting the concerned stocks and an adequate reduction in fishing effort or catch limits.

PART IV
Technical measures

Spatial and temporal closures

19. Over the transitional period, the SAC shall: i) finalize the identification of the fishing footprint on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and ii) on the basis of updated results from the project on Mediterranean Sensitive Habitats (MEDISEH), finalize the identification of essential fish habitat areas for juveniles and spawners of the deep-water red shrimps. Such work shall increase the understanding of the reproductive peaks and the recruitment and spawning periods of relevant species. On this basis, in 2024 the SAC shall determine appropriate spatio-temporal measures through an analysis of fishery-independent and dependent information, as well as of scientific literature. Such measures could be implemented within the long-term plan.

20. Over the transitional period, as a pilot measure, bottom trawlers targeting deep-water red shrimp spawning aggregations shall stop fishing for 30 consecutive days between the months of March and September. CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 June 2023, and annually thereafter, these temporal restrictions.

Minimum conservation reference size

21. During the transitional period, the SAC shall identify, in the context of Resolution GFCM/44/2021/2 on the definition of a minimum conservation reference size for priority stocks in the Mediterranean Sea, appropriate minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS) for the deep-water red shrimps lacking an MCRS to be then applied within the long-term management plan for the two species covered.

22. In the long-term management plan, specimens of the key stocks smaller than the MCRS as defined in paragraph 21 shall not be caught, retained on board, transshipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale by professionals.

PART V
Fleet management measures

23. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of the fleets operating with demersal trawls actively fishing for key stocks does not exceed, in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, over the duration of this recommendation, the fleet capacity for otter trawlers fishing deep-water red shrimps in the year 2019, in continuity with Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/4 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19, 20 and 21).

24. Vessels authorized to fish the key stocks with demersal trawls in the Ionian Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying.

25. CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 1 August in the first year and by 31 March of each subsequent year, the list of the vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for the key stocks for the current year or forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 2.

26. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are set up to record each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and to record vessels' catches and fishing effort via the logbook, as well as to monitor fishing vessels' activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

27. CPCs shall maintain and keep updated a register of the above-mentioned fishing authorizations. Unless specifically provided for in the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework, CPCs shall communicate the following to the GFCM Secretariat:

a) the list of operating vessels for which such authorization has been issued for current or forthcoming year(s), no later than 31 March of each year; and

b) a report on fishing activities carried out by the vessels referred to in paragraph 24, in an aggregated format, including the following minimum information – number of exploitation days, exploitation area and catches and discards of deep-water red shrimps – no later than 31 August of each year, starting from August 2023.

28. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for the key species and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

29. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

30. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis starting from 2023, advice on the status of both deep-water red shrimp stocks in the Ionian Sea, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the key stocks at levels that can produce the MSY in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 9.

31. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

32. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

33. Where, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide accurate advice on the stock status of the key stocks and on their exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. These measures shall be based on SAC advice in accordance with the precautionary approach and taking into consideration environmental and socioeconomic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

34. CPCs, with the support of GFCM Secretariat, shall ensure the implementation of the pilot project to improve the selectivity of trawl nets fishing for deep-water red shrimps in the Ionian Sea in 2023.

PART VII
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

35. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for the registration of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, for the recording of the vessel's catch and fishing effort in the logbook and for the monitoring of the vessel's fishing activities and landings, by means of surveys and sampling of catches and fishing effort, carried out in accordance with the rules laid down by each CPC.

36. Each CPC shall designate landing points at which landings by vessels actively fishing for the key stocks in the Ionian Sea shall take place.

37. For each designated port, the concerned CPC shall specify permitted landing and transhipping times and places.

38. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

39. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of key stocks fished in the Ionian Sea at any place other than ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 36.

40. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 April 2023 and subsequently on 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points at which landings of key stocks in the Ionian Sea may take place.

41. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

42. Part VII of this recommendation is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

PART VIII
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

43. Vessels operating with otter trawls exploiting key stocks in the Ionian Sea shall be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities only if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities.

44. Authorized vessels shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7.

45. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall monitor the consumption of the catch limits, as follows: beginning from the date when 80 percent of the quota has been exhausted, the CPC concerned shall communicate to the GFCM monthly reports on catch. Such a report should be sent by the fifteenth day of the month for the previous month. When the catch limit has been reached, the CPC shall prohibit any further catches of the key stocks.

PART IX
Permanent inspection scheme

46. An international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Ionian Sea is established with Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/16 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19 to 21) to cover this recommendation.

PART X
National management plans

47. In order to ensure adequate conservation of deep-water red shrimp stocks, CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Ionian Sea.

48. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, from 30 September 2023, of the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, the CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 30 April of the following year.

PART XI
Final provisions

49. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation remains in force for eight years from the date of its adoption.

50. Measures in this recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

51. On the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM may revise this recommendation.

52. This recommendation repeals and replaces Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/8 and GFCM/42/2018/4.

Annex 1

Fishing opportunities for deep-water red shrimp fisheries in the Ionian Sea (GSAs 19 to 21) over the transitional period 2023–2025. In line with paragraphs 10 and 11, catch limits are reported for each CPC with an active fleet fishing for the key stocks.

	European Union 2023	**European Union 2024**	**European Union 2025**	**Tunisia 2023**	**Tunisia 2024**	**Tunisia 2025**
Catch limit (tonnes) for giant red shrimp	393	381	370	5.8	5.6	5.5
Catch limit (tonnes) for blue and red shrimp	265	257	250	5.8	5.6	5.5

Annex 2

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraph 25 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number (code assigned by the CPCs)
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate yes/no)
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear used for deep-water red shrimps and DCRF fleet segment allocation
- Time period authorized for fishing with bottom trawl or any other gear likely to fish deep-water red shrimps (if any of such authorization)

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/7 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas 24 to 27), repealing Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea endorsed with Resolution GFCM/44/2021/12, and particularly its Target 1 "Fisheries and ecosystems: healthy seas and productive fisheries";

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING that owing to the importance of fisheries in this area, Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas 24, 25, 26 and 27), as amended by

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/6, introduced a general framework for the management of deep-water red shrimps in the Levant Sea;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) endorsed, at its twenty-third session, technical elements for deep-water red shrimp fisheries in the Levant Sea, including the possibility of a long-term multiannual management plan designed in a stepwise manner over eight years, starting with a three-year transitional period over which a restricted set of measures would be implemented while scientific evidence is gathered towards the identification of long-term adaptive management measures – including catch limits, minimum conservation reference sizes, spatial or spatio-temporal measures to protect juveniles and/or spawners and technical measures on selectivity;

CONSIDERING that the management measures adopted in 2018 have been an important first step towards a unified management of fisheries resources and have contributed to establishing an internationally binding framework that started moving the deep-water red shrimp stocks towards sustainable exploitation levels and combatted illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

NOTING, however, that the multiannual management plan established by Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 has not yet achieved its operational objective of maintaining the fishing mortality within agreed precautionary reference points with a view to achieving or maintaining fishing mortality at MSY levels owing to issues related to data, and that hence the management measures need to be reinforced;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal trawl fishing activities in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas [GSAs] 24 to 27) exploiting deep-water red shrimp stocks by means of demersal trawlers. On the basis of SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other types of fishing gear and other stocks.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining the sustainability and relative stability of fisheries and dependent industries.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 24 to 27 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Levant Sea shall be developed in order to ensure that the stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels while minimizing socioeconomic impacts and finalizing scientific advice by the SAC.

5. The multiannual management plan for the fisheries shall also pursue a reduction in IUU fishing activities in GSAs 24 to 27.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply in GSAs 24 to 27.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation:

a) "F_{msy}" means the value of the estimated fishing mortality that, with a given fishing pattern and under current average environmental conditions, gives the long-term maximum yield, or "F_{msy} proxy".

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "Stock within safe biological limits" means a stock with a high probability of its estimated spawning biomass at the end of the previous year being higher than the limit biomass reference point (B_{lim}).

d) "B_{pa}" means the precautionary reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, that ensures that the spawning stock biomass has less than a 5 percent probability of being below B_{lim}.

e) "Levant Sea" means GSAs 24 to 27 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

f) "Vessel actively fishing" means any vessel fishing with demersal trawls on the key stocks and entitled by the CPC whose flag it flies to carry out specific fishing operations, during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions. Fishing vessels non included in the list of authorized vessels are allowed to catch, retain on board, land and offer for sale limited quantities of key stocks that cannot exceed 15 percent of the total catch at any time of a fishing trip.

g) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within the Levant Sea and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing or hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring or landing fish and fishery products.

h) "Key stocks" or "deep-water red shrimps" means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined:

- giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*); and
- blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*).

i) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

j) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transhipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, at which landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Specific objectives and transitional measures

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim to contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and to the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at the MSY as soon as possible and at the latest by 31 December 2030;

c) in continuity with Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3, in relation to the exploitation of key stocks in the Levant Sea, prevent increases in fishing capacity and effort from the levels exerted over the years 2014–2017 or over another period of three consecutive years, such as 2015–2018, provided that for such period the levels exerted do not go beyond 50 percent with respect to the 2014–2017 reference period;

d) protect nursery and spawning areas and essential fish habitats important for the key stocks in the Levant Sea;

e) contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches and by ensuring that all catches are landed; and

f) provide for measures to adjust the fishing capacity and catches to levels of fishing mortalities consistent with the MSY, with a view to ensuring economically viable fleets without overexploiting marine living resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-step approach whereby: i) over the first three years, catch limits and spatio-temporal measures shall be applied; and ii) from 2026, on the basis of new scientific data, the SAC shall evaluate the state of the stocks and, on the basis of the harvest control rules (HCRs), propose further measures and advisable yearly catch limits per species in line with the provisions in Parts II, III, IV, V and VI of this recommendation, that would contribute to reaching F_{msy} or F_{msy} proxy and staying within safe biological limits.

11. In 2023, 2024 and 2025 a transitional fishing regime shall be established, during which at least all existing efficient measures should be implemented while scientific support is gathered, along with information towards the identification of long-term adaptive management measures based on annual future advice on the evolution of the state of resources and fisheries. . Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that a catch limit is established for the key stocks, aligned with annual reductions of 3 percent in 2023, 3 percent in 2024 and 3 percent in 2025. Such reductions should be with respect to reported catches in 2021. Based on this paragraph, the catch limits for 2023, 2024 and 2025, as well as the temporary allocations, are established in Annex 1.

12. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, CPCs shall be fully committed to completing the scientific assessments of the key stocks and the management strategy evaluation provided for in paragraphs 16 to 19 and the identification of spatio-temporal measures provided for in paragraphs 22 and 23.

13. The catch limits by CPC for the period 2023–2025 in paragraphs 10 to 12 shall be set without prejudice to the discussions to take place in the context of the working group referred to under paragraph 15.

14. A working group shall be established by the GFCM in 2025, within 30 calendar days of the conclusion of the twenty-sixth SAC session, in order to establish a fair and equitable allocation key for Levant Sea key stocks, taking into consideration the efforts made by CPCs to manage deep-water red shrimp fisheries and the levels of historical catches, and apply in some cases stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation, also based on socioeconomic considerations.

15. By way of derogation from paragraph 14, CPCs intending to start targeting deep-water red shrimps shall submit a management plan for deep-water red shrimp fisheries and a development plan during the period between the entry into force of this recommendation and the adoption of permanent management measures by the GFCM. The SAC shall review the development plan and formulate appropriate advice if it is not in line with the general and specific objectives set out in this recommendation. Pending possible amendments in line with SAC advice, the GFCM shall make a decision on the adoption of such a development plan.

16. The SAC, at its twenty-fifth session in 2024, shall give a mandate to the Workshop on the assessment of management measures to carry out a management strategy evaluation in order to define the most appropriate HCRs for the key stocks to be implemented according to paragraphs 17 and 18, including socioeconomic aspects.

PART III
Long-term management plan

17. A long-term management plan for the period 2026–2030 is established. Each year, on the basis of updated SAC advice, the GFCM shall establish annual single-species catch limits for deep-water red shrimps. Such limits shall be based on HCRs, in line with paragraph 18, which shall be proposed by the WKMSE and endorsed by the SAC in 2024 or 2025.

18. The HCRs shall ensure for the deep-water red shrimp stocks a low probability of spawning stock biomass falling below B_{lim} (5 percent probability).

19. Catch limits allocations to CPCs shall be based on the outcomes of the working group referred to under paragraph 14.

Safeguards

20. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{pa}, the GFCM shall take remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, catch limits shall be set at levels consistent with producing a fishing mortality lower than F_{msy}, taking into account the decrease in biomass.

21. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{lim}, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the fishery targeting the concerned stocks and an adequate reduction in fishing effort or catch limits.

PART IV
Technical measures

Spatial and temporal closures

22. Over the transitional period, the SAC shall: i) finalize the identification of the fishing grounds, hence the origin of catches and the fishing footprint on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and ii) on the basis of updated results from the project on Mediterranean Sensitive Habitats (MEDISEH), finalize the identification of essential fish habitat areas for juveniles and spawners of the deep-water red shrimps. Such work shall increase the understanding of the reproductive peaks and the recruitment and spawning periods of relevant species. On this basis, in 2024 the SAC shall determine appropriate spatio-temporal measures through an analysis of fishery-independent and dependent information, as well as of scientific literature. Such measures could be implemented within the long-term plan.

23. Over the transitional period, as a pilot measure, bottom trawlers targeting deep-water red shrimp spawning aggregations should stop fishing for 30 consecutive days between the months of March and December. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 June 2023, and annually thereafter, these temporal restrictions.

Minimum conservation reference size

24. During the transitional period, the SAC shall identify appropriate minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS) for the deep-water red shrimps lacking an MCRS in the context of Resolution GFCM/44/2021/2 on the definition of a minimum conservation reference size for priority stocks in the Mediterranean Sea, to be then applied in the long-term plan for the two species covered.

25. In the long-term plan, specimens of key stocks smaller than the MCRS as defined in paragraph 24 shall not be caught, retained on board, transshipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale by professionals.

PART V
Fleet management measures

26. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity or fishing effort of the fleets operating with demersal trawls actively fishing for key stocks does not exceed, in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, over the duration of this recommendation, the number of vessels or fishing effort for otter trawlers fishing deep-water red shrimps during the years 2014–2017 or over another period of three consecutive years, such as 2015–2018, provided that for such period the levels exerted do not go beyond 50 percent with respect to the 2014–2017 reference period.

27. Vessels authorized to fish the key stocks with demersal trawls in the Levant Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying.

28. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 1 August in the first year and by 31 March of each subsequent year, the list of the vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for the key stocks for the current year or forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 2.

29. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are set up to record each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and to record vessels' catches via the logbook, as well as to monitor fishing vessels' activities and landings via catch sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

30. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall maintain and keep updated a register of the above-mentioned fishing authorizations. Unless specifically provided for in the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework, the CPCs shall communicate the following to the GFCM Secretariat:

a) the list of operating vessels for which such authorization has been issued for current or forthcoming year(s), not later than 31 March of each year; and

b) a report on fishing activities carried out by the vessels referred to in paragraph 27, in an aggregated format, including the following minimum information – number of exploitation days, exploitation area and catches and discards of deep-water red shrimps – no later than 31 August of each year, starting from August 2023.

31. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for the key species and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

32. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

33. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis starting from 2023, advice on the status of both deep-water red shrimp stocks in the Levant Sea including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the key stocks at levels that can produce the MSY in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 9.

34. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

35. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

36. Where, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide accurate advice on the stock status of the key stocks and on their exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. These measures shall be based on SAC advice in accordance with the precautionary approach and taking into consideration environmental and socioeconomic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

37. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, with the support of GFCM Secretariat, shall ensure the implementation of the pilot project to improve the selectivity of trawl nets fishing for deep-water red shrimps in the Levant Sea in 2023.

PART VII
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities

38. Each CPC shall ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for the registration of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, in order to record the vessel's catch and fishing effort in the logbook and to monitor the vessel's fishing activities and landings, by means of catch and effort sampling surveys, carried out in accordance with the rules laid down by each CPC.

39. Each CPC shall designate landing points at which landings by vessels actively fishing for the key stocks in the Levant Sea shall take place.

40. For each designated port, the concerned CPC shall specify permitted landing and transshipping times and places.

41. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

42. It shall be prohibited to land or tranship from fishing vessels any quantity of key stocks fished in the Levant Sea at any place other than ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 39.

43. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 30 April 2023 and subsequently on 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points at which landings of key stocks in the Levant Sea may take place.

44. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

45. Part VII of this recommendation is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

PART VIII
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

46. Vessels operating with otter trawls exploiting key stocks in the Levant Sea shall be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities only if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities.

47. Starting from 30 April 2023, the authorized vessels above 12 m length overall shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system. A CPC may grant to its authorized vessels of less than 15 m

length overall flying its flag a derogation from the requirement to be fitted with a vessel monitoring system if they operate exclusively within the territorial seas of the CPC or/and never spend more than 24 hours at sea from the time of departure to the return to port. CPCs shall report these derogations, as well as the other control means deployed to monitor concerned fishing vessels, to the GFCM Secretariat without delay.

48. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall monitor the consumption of the catch limits, as follows: beginning from the date when 80 percent of the quota has been exhausted, the CPC concerned shall communicate to GFCM monthly reports on catch. Such a report should be sent by the fifteenth day of the month for the previous month. When the catch limit has been reached, the CPC shall prohibit any further catches of the key stocks.

PART IX
National management plans

49. In order to ensure adequate conservation of deep-water red shrimp stocks, CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Levant Sea.

50. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, from 30 September 2023, of the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, the CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 30 April of the following year.

PART X
Final provisions

51. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation remains in force for eight years from the date of its adoption.

52. Measures in this recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

53. On the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM may revise this recommendation.

54. This recommendation repeals and replaces Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas 24, 25, 26 and 27), as amended by Recommendation GFCM 44/2021/6.

Annex 1

Fishing opportunities for the Levant Sea (GSAs 24 to 27) deep-water red shrimp fisheries for the transitional period 2023–2025. In line with paragraphs 11 to 13, catch limits are reported for each CPC with an active fleet fishing for the key stocks.

Catch limit per species (in tonnes)	European Union 2023	European Union 2024	European Union 2025	Türkiye 2023	Türkiye 2024	Türkiye 2025	Egypt 2023	Egypt 2024	Egypt 2025
Giant red shrimp	60	58	56	261	253	246	439	426	413
Blue and red shrimp	16	15	15	123	119	116	135	131	127

Annex 2

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraph 28 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number (code assigned by the CPCs)
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate yes/no)
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear used for deep-water red shrimps and DCRF fleet segment allocation
- Time period authorized for fishing with bottom trawl or any other gear likely to fish deep-water red shrimps (if any of such authorization)

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/8 on the implementation of a fishing effort regime for key demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18) in 2023, stemming from Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING the most recent scientific advice, endorsed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-third session, showing an enduring overexploitation of most Adriatic key demersal stocks;

RECALLING that in January 2022 the first effort allocation, based on SAC advice, was established with Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/1 on the establishment of a fishing effort regime for key demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18), which entailed the first effort allocation of a five-year fishing effort regime established for the period 2022–2026 towards the achievement of the objectives set in paragraph 9 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18);

RECALLING that such allocations shall be expressed in fishing days per contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) and effort group for the fleet segments and types of fishing gear;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall ensure that, for each CPC, increases or decreases towards effort allocation are in line with the formula in Annex 4 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 and with total effort in the area in the reference year by the effort groups listed in Annex 3, as reported starting from 2021;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The annual reduction in fishing mortality needed to achieve the maximum sustainable yield (F_{msy}) target in 2026 for all the key stocks shall be a progressive linear reduction until the maximum sustainable yield. In line with this progression, the overall reduction in fishing effort for 2023 shall globally be of 5.2 percent for otter trawl (OTB) gear and 3 percent for beam trawl (TBB) gear.

2. The fishing effort allocations for 2023, established in line with paragraph 1 of this recommendation and paragraph 12 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 and based on the latest scientific advice, are listed by CPC and effort group code in the annex of this recommendation. Effort allocations for 2023 shall cover the entire period from 1 January to 31 December and the fishing effort days exerted over the months preceding the legal entry into force of this recommendation shall be accounted for, by effort group, against the effort consumption of 2023.

3. A CPC may amend its fishing effort allocations by transferring fishing days across fishing effort groups of the same geographical area and/or fishing gear, provided that the CPC applies a national conversion factor which is supported by the best available scientific advice. In 2023, the SAC shall

provide conversion factors. The exchanged fishing days and conversion factor shall be made available immediately, and no later than after 10 working days, to the GFCM Secretariat and other concerned CPCs.

4. Fishing day allocations by vessel length, as established in paragraph 2 and in annex of this recommendation, shall not prejudge future segmentation.

Annex

Transitional fishing effort allocation to concerned contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, expressed in fishing days and effort group code, for the period of 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

					Fishing days 2023		
Fishing gear type	**Geographical subarea**	**Stocks concerned**	**Vessel length overalls**	**Effort group code**	**European Union**	**Albania**	**Montenegro[1]**
Otter trawls (OTB)	17–18	Red mullet; European hake; deep-water rose shrimp; norway lobster	< 12 m	OTB 12 <	13 372	0	
			≥ 12 m and < 24 m	OTB 12–24	97 124	16 015	
			≥ 24 m	OTB 24	8 561	5 711	
Beam trawls (TBB)	17	Common sole	< 12 m	TBB 12 <	194	0	0
			≥ 12 m and < 24 m	TBB 12–24	3 635	0	0
			≥ 24 m	TBB > 24	3 614	0	0

[1] Montenegro shall not exceed the effort limit of 3 000 fishing days (with OTB gear) per year, in accordance with paragraph 13 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5.

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/9 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29), amending Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures"*;*

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture provide a concrete set of actions for Black Sea riparian countries to implement, particularly with regard to existing management measures that will be complemented and expanded in order to progressively achieve exploitation at maximum sustainable yield;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea endorsed with Resolution GFCM/44/2021/12, particularly its Target 1 "Fisheries and ecosystems: healthy seas and productive fisheries";

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29), as amended by Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of fisheries exploiting turbot and the need to ensure their sustainability;

ACKNOWLEDGING that due to force majeure in 2022, the tenth meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) was postponed to 2023, meaning that up-to-date scientific advice is expected in 2023;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures of the turbot multiannual management plan need to be extended to 2023, notably the total allowable catch (TAC) and the quotas allocated to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), with a view to avoiding interruptions of fishing activities;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3

1. Paragraph 1 a) shall be amended and replaced as follows:

For the years 2020–2023, an annual TAC shall be set to 857 tonnes for CPCs, with the following allocation:

CPCs	Annual quotas 2020–2023 (in tonnes)	Percentage
European Union	150	17.5
Türkiye	497	58.0
Ukraine	160	18.7
Georgia	20	2.3
Others	30	3.5
Total	857	100.0

2. Paragraph 4 shall be amended and replaced as follows:

In the context of the multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries, the WGBS shall provide, at its tenth meeting in 2023, scientific advice including the necessary elements for setting biological reference points and for the revision of TAC and quotas, to be adopted by the GFCM at its forty-sixth session in 2023.

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/10 on a regional research programme for rapa whelk fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29), amending Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/9

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources in the area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, in particular the technical outputs of the expert meetings (Panel 1) in its annex, recommends cooperation with the GFCM towards the promotion of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, which includes the collection of information on fisheries-related issues, such as relevant socioeconomic data, discards, incidental catch of vulnerable species, invasive species and other aspects of marine ecosystems;

RECALLING that the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture calls upon Black Sea riparian countries to enhance multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of resources, particularly with regard to data collection, scientific evaluation and the implementation of an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework in the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that the measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available and on the work of the BlackSea4Fish project in supporting the advice delivered by the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS), taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea endorsed with Resolution GFCM/44/2021/12, and particularly its Target 1 “Fisheries and ecosystems: healthy seas and productive fisheries”;

CONSIDERING the socioeconomic importance of rapa whelk fisheries in the Black Sea and the need to ensure their long-term economic sustainability;

RECALLING that Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/9 established a regional research programme for rapa whelk fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

ACKNOWLEDGING that due to force majeure in 2022, the tenth meeting of the WGBS was postponed to 2023, meaning that up-to-date scientific advice based on the outcomes of the regional research programme is expected in 2023;

CONSIDERING that the regional research programme needs to be extended to 2023, with a view to improving scientific, technical and socioeconomic knowledge of these fisheries and supporting the GFCM in proposing and adopting new appropriate management and control measures, including monitoring of fishing activities and catches;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/9

Paragraph 9 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/9 shall be amended and replaced as follows:

The WGBS, at its annual meeting in 2023, shall assess the outcome of the regional research programme established by this recommendation, taking into consideration the national efforts made by CPCs to manage rapa whelk fisheries. The WGBS shall report back to the GFCM, at its forty-sixth session in 2023, and if deemed necessary, present proposals for the adaptation of the measures set by this recommendation and for complementary management and control measures.

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/11 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for fisheries restricted areas in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5, which specifically calls for conserving at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM aiming to minimize the impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement aiming "to establish fisheries restricted areas for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including, but not limited to, nursery and spawning areas [...]";

RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and, in particular, its paragraph 38 on the development of "fisheries restricted and marine protected areas ensuring an effective protection of at least 10 percent of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14.5 and Aichi Biodiversity Target 11";

CONSIDERING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking into account the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

EMPHASIZING the need to improve the collection of scientific data regarding sensitive habitats, essential fish habitats and all sources of mortality for key species, including but not limited to data from fisheries within the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea fisheries, in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that identifies "new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhances their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats";

CONSIDERING the objectives under Resolution GFCM/41/2017/5 on a network of essential fish habitats in the GFCM area of application, Resolution GFCM/43/2019/1 on the mapping of measures applicable to fisheries restricted areas in the GFCM area of application and Resolution GFCM/43/2019/3 on the implementation of a vessel monitoring system and an electronic logbook in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the designation and evolution of each fisheries restricted area (FRA) must be science-based and prepared with all stakeholders involved, including fishers, scientists, local administrations and environmental non-governmental organizations;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and the Compliance Committee (CoC) expressed in 2019, 2021 and 2022 on the establishment of minimum standards for conservation, monitoring and control in FRAs;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, scope and definitions

General objective

1. This recommendation establishes minimum standards for FRAs designated by means of GFCM decisions, in order to increase the coherence of the network of FRAs, harmonize the management measures applied across regional subbasins, better level the playing field among fishers and help to improve the conservation status of stocks and ecosystems.

Scope

2. This recommendation applies to all FRAs established by GFCM decisions. Fisheries restricted areas established after the entry into force of this recommendation shall comply with the provisions under this recommendation. Fisheries restricted areas established before the entry into force of this recommendation may be evaluated by the SAC and, if deemed necessary, revised according to the provisions of this recommendation.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Fisheries restricted area" or "FRA" means a geographically defined area in which some specific fishing activities are temporarily banned or restricted in order to improve the conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

b) "Essential fish habitat" means a habitat identified as essential to the ecological and biological requirements of critical life history stages of exploited fish species and that may require special protection to improve the status of the stocks and long-term sustainability;

c) "Fishing authorization" means entitlement other than a fishing licence that is issued by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to allow a fishing vessel to engage in fishing activities with specific fishing gear, during a specified period and in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions;

d) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities described in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

e) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing or hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring or landing fish and fishery products;

f) "Recreational fishing" or "recreational fisheries" means a non-commercial fishing activity exploiting marine living resources for recreation, tourism or sports.

PART II
Management measures

4. For the purpose of managing and protecting FRAs from the impacts of any activity jeopardizing the conservation of the features characterizing the particular habitats protected by FRAs, fishing activities in FRAs shall be monitored by CPCs in the waters under their jurisdiction and/or sovereignty by annually providing to the GFCM a list of authorized fishing vessels, along with associated effort and capacity and any further parameters listed as relevant by the SAC.

5. Based on SAC evaluation, the establishment of a new FRA should generally comprise two types of zones with specific management measures discussed with stakeholders:

Zone A – permanent closure

6. Any professional fishing activity concerned by the specific objectives the FRA shall be prohibited.

7. Any recreational fishing activity shall be prohibited.

8. Fishing vessels transiting the zone shall have an operational transponder on board for vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and/or automated identification systems with increased data transmission frequency, and all fishing gear shall be lashed and stowed during the entire duration of the transit. Professional fishing vessels, in accordance with the GFCM recommendation, shall follow a direct course at a constant speed of no less than 6 knots, except in the case of force majeure or adverse conditions. In such cases, the master shall immediately inform the fisheries monitoring centre of the vessel's flag state so that it can report the force majeure to the competent authorities of the CPC.

Zone B – temporary closure

9. Fishing activities shall be prohibited for at least two months each year. The two-month period shall be evaluated by SAC.

10. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to fish in this zone.

PART III
Data collection, monitoring and research

11. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that:

a) A scientific monitoring plan for each FRA is developed by the CPCs, following the GFCM protocol adopted at the twenty-third session of the SAC, which includes a FRA toolkit and integrated guidelines for the development of scientific monitoring plans. The monitoring plan should be validated by the SAC to provide an outline for the collection of information required to assess the effectiveness of the FRA towards the rebuilding of stocks and the protection of habitats and vulnerable marine ecosystems and towards enhancing the densities of organisms in term of biomass and abundance within the FRA. The results of the FRA monitoring plan should be regularly reported and discussed within the relevant subsidiary bodies of the SAC. The monitoring plan and its efficiency should be assessed regularly by the SAC.

b) Information on all vessels authorized to fish in zone B of the FRA is recorded by the CPCs (as listed in the annex) and made publicly available on the GFCM website.

c) Information on fishing activities, catch data of key species, incidental catches, release and discarding of the sensitive species listed in either Annex II or Annex III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), is recorded by the vessel owner in the

electronic logbook or in an equivalent document, in line with international standards and the data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations.

d) Such information is reported to the national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat within their annual national reporting to the SAC, in line with the manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework.

e) Any other additional measure to level the playing field between all vessels, such as or example 5 percent coverage of onboard observers or remote electronic monitoring, is taken to improve data collection in view of the scientific monitoring of key species.

12. As appropriate, the GFCM shall engage in capacity-building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on sensitive species, vulnerable marine ecosystems and essential fish habitats and to support the effective implementation of this recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other relevant international bodies.

PART IV
Control and reporting measures

13. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that all measures are undertaken towards full compliance with monitoring, control and surveillance as the most fundamental aspects to ensuring the effectiveness of the FRA with respect to its primary conservation objectives.

14. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the list of authorized vessels for the zone B of each FRA concerned no later than 30 April of each year, as well as the list of authorized vessels for the forthcoming year. For each vessel, the list shall contain the information detailed in the annex of this recommendation.

15. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for key species and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

16. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall send to the GFCM Secretariat, by 31 May of each year, a report on management measures taken in FRAs by CPCs. To facilitate a common approach across the GFCM area of application, this report shall be prepared in accordance with common guidelines developed by the GFCM Secretariat. The report shall be published on the GFCM website within two months after its reception, ensuring that personal data is protected in accordance with GFCM confidentiality policy and procedures.

17. The report shall contain the conservation, control and management measures, the list of authorized vessels and related information on authorizations in the FRA, as well as the results of the inspection schemes, including, at a minimum, the number of infractions detected and committed outside the areas of sovereignty of the CPC, the type of infraction and the sanctions applied. The report shall seek to identify activities (e.g. fishing, transiting) by FRA.

18. For the vessels and vessel owners with identified infringements, the relevant CPCs shall prepare and include in their reports an action plan to reinforce the monitoring of the vessels concerned by this FRA that fly their flags .

19. If necessary, a dedicated Working Group on Fisheries Restricted Areas shall be established to assess the CPCs' reports and their action plans. The working group shall prepare a report for the SAC and the CoC that will evaluate and advise the GFCM on the management and enforcement of measures taken by the CPCs.

20. In accordance with GFCM recommendations, fishing vessels authorized to fish in zone B shall be equipped with remote electronic monitoring using increased data transmission frequency as well as an electronic logbook in correct working order or an equivalent document, and fishing gear on

board or in use shall be duly identified, numbered and marked before the start of any fishing operation or navigation within the FRA.

21. To the extent possible, the frequency of data transmissions of vessel monitoring systems (VMS or automated identification systems) shall be of at least once every 30 minutes when a fishing vessel enters any zone of a FRA.

22. Each year, the CoC shall evaluate the implementation of the present recommendation and propose any remedial measures to improve compliance. Fishing in prohibited areas and periods shall be considered as a serious infringement (IUU fishing). The flag state shall ensure that the vessel that commits this serious infringement shall immediately cease its fishing activities and return to port for investigation.

PART V
Regionalization

23. As of 2023, the GFCM shall adopt specific recommendations based on SAC advice in order to implement the principles of this recommendation in each of the following subregions:

a) western Mediterranean Sea;

b) central Mediterranean Sea;

c) Adriatic Sea;

d) eastern Mediterranean Sea; and

e) Black Sea.

PART VI
Final provisions

24. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to protect each FRA and its two zones, A and B, from the impact of any activity that may jeopardize the conservation of the characteristic features of these particular habitats.

25. This recommendation shall be without prejudice to the adoption of stricter measures by CPCs for the vessels flying their flags.

26. The SAC and the CoC shall review the implementation of this recommendation on a yearly basis in order to issue recommendations where appropriate. Advice from the SAC shall take into account the specificities of commercial and recreational fisheries in each subregion listed in paragraph 23. Based on SAC advice, the minimum standards of management measures for FRAs shall be reviewed in 2031.

Annex

The list referred to in Part III shall contain, for each vessel and each FRA, the following information:

- name of vessel (in Latin characters);
- national registration number: the code representing the official vessel identifier as reported in the national fleet register (alphanumeric string);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- International Maritime Organization number or external marking number;
- registration authority: name of the authority that issued the registration of the vessel;
- name of the FRA;
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- type of vessel, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT);
- main gear used to fish in zone B of the FRA;
- species targeted;
- seasonal period authorized for fishing in the FRA: period authorized for fishing in the FRA (from DD/MM/YYYY to DD/MM/YYYY and gear concerned);
- number of fishing days that can be exerted by each vessel; and
- number of fishing days operated by the vessel in zone B of the FRA during the year.

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/12 on the establishment of a set of minimum rules for sustainable recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources in the GFCM area of application;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 (Fish Stocks Agreement);

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

NOTING the recommendations stemming from the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Recreational Fisheries, in particular the following statement: "Management organizations should provide the mechanisms and the means for monitoring compliance and for enforcing regulations, but, regardless of the governance system, recreational fishers should share the responsibility for compliance by informing themselves and their fellows, and by self-policing";

FURTHER NOTING the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;

RECALLING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Life below water";

NOTING the objectives of the GFCM 2030Strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta Ministerial MedFish4Ever Declaration requires the establishment of baseline rules to ensure an effective management of recreational fisheries and to ensure "adequate data collection and exchange on all types of fleets including small-scale and recreationalfisheries to reinforce scientific knowledge on fish stocks and ecosystems";

NOTING that the 2018 Malta Ministerial Declaration on a Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea recognizes the interactions and synergies between recreational fisheries, small-scale fisheries and other marine economies, encourages their good cooperation, and calls for strengthening knowledge on their interactions and improving the control and surveillance of all fishing activities to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECOGNIZING the high socioeconomic value of recreational fisheries in the GFCM area of application, as well as their impacts on the stocks they exploit;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best available scientific advice and take into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), at its twenty-third session (Rome, June 2022), stressed the need to continue monitoring recreational fishing and to identify solutions to mitigate the pressures of this activity;

FURTHER NOTING that the SAC endorsed a revised list of species and expressed support for a dedicated research programme on recreational fisheries;

ADOPTS in conformity with articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, scope and definitions

General objective

1. This recommendation establishes minimum rules to ensure an effective management, control and monitoring of recreational fishing activities in the Mediterranean Sea (geographical subareas [GSAs] 1–27).

Scope

2. This recommendation applies to all recreational fishing activities listed in this recommendation.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Recreational fishing activities" or "recreational fishing" or "recreational fisheries" means a non-commercial fishing activity exploiting marine living resources for recreation, tourism or sports;

b) "Angling" means fishing with rod and lines, pole or hand-held lines;

c) "Fishing licence" means an official document conferring on its holder the right, as determined by national legislation, to fish for one or more aquatic species, using certain fishing gear, during a specified season or all year, eventually with catch limitations and other obligations (e.g. catch reporting);

d) "Live weight" means the weight of a catch of marine biological resources measured immediately upon catch;

e) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

PART II
Specific objectives

4. This recommendation shall contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

5. In particular, the recommendation shall aim to:

a) contribute to managing the impact of recreational fisheries on marine living resources towards their sustainable exploitation, in particular through applying conservation, control and monitoring measures;

b) improve the scientific, technical and socioeconomic knowledge of recreational fisheries;

c) encourage the participation of recreational fishers in the governance of their activity; and

d) deter IUU fishing activities.

PART III
Conservation measures

Prohibitions

6. It shall be prohibited to:

a) engage in recreational fishing without a valid fishing licence or registration, in accordance with paragraph 10 and from its date of application;

b) sell or trade catches from recreational fishing activities;

c) retain any specimen pertaining to the species listed in Annex 1;

d) retain any specimen smaller than the minimum conservation reference sizes adopted by the GFCM;

e) fish in the areas listed in Annex 3;

f) fish underwater with a self-contained breathing apparatus;

g) fish underwater from sunset until dawn; and

h) use simultaneously hand-held spears or spear guns and a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (aqualung).

Practices and fishing gear allowed in recreational fisheries

7. The following practices and fishing gear shall be allowed:

a) rods, hand lines and trolling lines, utilized without an electromechanical aid or with an electromechanical aid that does not exceed a power limit of 800 W;

b) hand-held spears or spear guns;

c) fishing underwater to catch fish or collect crustaceans and molluscs;

d) fishing by foot to collect crustaceans and molluscs;

e) traps and pots, with a maximum of three traps and three pots per permit;

f) longlines, with a maximum number of hooks to be established in accordance with paragraph 32;

g) cast nets (or throw nets);

h) corks and line; and

i) using artificial light when fishing for cephalopods with rods, hand lines or hand-held spears.

8. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), on the basis of stock assessment and impact assessment, may limit the number of fishing gear and their accessories (e.g. number of longlines and hooks for each longline, number of traps and pots, lures) authorized per fisher and may define further specific regulation for passive gear.

9. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, on the basis of the most recent scientific advice, may adopt additional measures to regulate recreational fisheries, such as landing limits and spatial and temporal closures (e.g. on mapped spawning areas, spawning periods, spawning and juvenile aggregations).

PART IV
Control and monitoring measures

Licences

10. By 1 January 2025, CPCs shall put in place and maintain either a mandatory licensing scheme or a registry scheme covering all recreational fishers. This provision applies to recreational fishers on foot, only after a proper assessment has been completed by the GFCM.

11. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may, where relevant, further simplify the application procedure for the licences and registrations referred to in paragraph 10, including for tourists or time-limited licences.

12. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may limit the number of licences issued.

13. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may launch information campaigns and maintain up-to-date websites to inform the public and recreational fishers on the measures regulating recreational fisheries under this recommendation, as well as national legislation, by involving fishing federations, associations and sectorial shops.

14. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may provide the information referred to in paragraph 13 to recreational fishers when granting them a fishing licence or registration.

Catch declaration and reporting

15. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may establish a pilot project on catch declaration for recreational fisheries when catch declaration is applicable and on a voluntary basis. Where possible, CPCs may opt for ergonomic digital app-based catch declaration tools. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that recreational fishers participating in this pilot project declare the following elements, at least for the species listed in Annex 1 and Annex 4:

a) fishing licence or registration number;

b) species and estimated live weight per species and fishing trip; and

c) fishing zone.

Control and enforcement

16. For recreational fishing activity conducted from a vessel, CPCs shall establish and implement a system to control and monitor recreational fishing activities, complementing existing national control plans. Such a system shall be based on risk analysis, taking into account the frequency of recreational fishing activities and the threats they pose to marine living resources, in particular regarding the prohibitions listed in paragraph 6.

17. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish and implement an effective sanctioning system against any infringement to the rules set out in this recommendation. The sanctions and penalties applied shall be effective, proportionate and dissuasive and shall take into account the frequency of recreational fishing activities and the threats they pose to marine living resources, in particular regarding the prohibitions listed in paragraph 6.

18. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may implement measures on fin-clipping for certain species in order to prevent their illegal sale to fishmongers and restaurants.

PART V
Scientific information

Data collection

19. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall sample and survey the recreational fishing activities taking place on their territory and may use for harmonized sampling and surveying the relevant FAO *Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea*.

Pilot projects and research programme

20. In 2023, the Working Group on Recreational Fisheries shall prepare a concept note for a research programme on recreational fishing activities. The SAC shall review the concept note at its twenty-forth session in 2023 and provide advice to the GFCM. The forty-sixth session of the GFCM in 2023 shall review the concept note for adoption.

21. The GFCM Secretariat shall launch the research programme in 2024.

Data reporting

22. By 31 January 2024 and then each following year, CPCs shall report to the GFCM Secretariat the elements listed below:

a) the list of species whose capture is prohibited for recreational fishing under national and/or local legislation;

b) the fishing methods prohibited for recreational fishing under national and/or local legislation;

c) the areas specifically prohibited for recreational fishing under national and/or local legislation;

d) the list of species whose capture is regulated for recreational fishing under national and/or local legislation; and

e) any other measures regulating recreational fishing activities under national and/or local legislation.

Scientific assessment

23. By 2024, the SAC shall:

a) provide an overview of recreational fisheries in the GFCM area of application;

b) provide a socioeconomic assessment of recreational fisheries in the CPCs;

c) endeavour to assess the status of species caught by recreational fishing activities, including through its regular stocks assessment cycle; and

d) propose, if necessary, a priority list of species that may require further regulation.

24. Starting in 2024 and then each following year, the SAC shall review the list of species set out in Annex 1 and Annex 4 and formulate advice, on the revision of these lists in view of the GFCM session,.

25. Starting in 2024 and then each following year, the session of the GFCM shall consider the SAC advice referred to in paragraph 24 and amend the lists under Annex 1 and Annex 4 accordingly.

PART VI
Participation to governance and promotion of best practices

26. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall endeavour to involve federations and associations in the management of recreational fishing activities.

27. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall actively encourage federations, associations and individual recreational fishers to:

a) develop websites to inform their members and the public about compliance with local/national regulations, ecological issues and the impacts of their activity on resources and coastal and marine environment;

b) participate in sustainability efforts through regular training and dissemination of information; and

c) behave in an environmentally friendly way, including by:

- encouraging the recycling of fishing material;
- discouraging anchoring over sensitive habitats;
- encouraging the targeting and the destruction of non-indigenous species;
- promoting alternatives to materials that are potentially hazardous to the environment (lead sinkers, artificial fishing lines, bait containers and lures, barbed hooks, etc.);
- recovering ghost gear and disposing of it in accordance with national legislation;
- killing retained fish speedily and responsibly to avoid unnecessary suffering; and
- promoting best practices for catch and release ("no kill") fishing.

Catch and release

28. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may actively encourage federations, associations and individual recreational fishers to apply and promote catch and release practices.

29. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may mandate catch and release practices, in particular for relevant species or areas or during certain periods of the year or day.

PART VII
Implementation plan for developing contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties

30. By 31 March 2024 at the latest, developing CPCs may submit an implementation plan to the GFCM. Such a plan shall propose a timeline and supporting evidence justifying the progressive implementation of the applicable provisions set out in this recommendation.

31. In 2024, the SAC shall review such implementation plans and formulate appropriate advice. In 2024, pending possible amendments in line with SAC advice, the forty-sixth session of the GFCM shall review such implementation plans.

PART VIII
Regionalization

32. As of 2023, the GFCM shall adopt specific recommendations based on SAC advice in order to implement the principles of the present recommendation in each of the following subregions:

a) western Mediterranean;

b) central Mediterranean;

c) Adriatic Sea; and

d) eastern Mediterranean.

33. The SAC advice referred to in paragraph 24 shall take into account the specificities of the recreational fisheries in each subregion listed in paragraph 32.

PART IX
Final provisions

34. The minimum conservation reference sizes established by the CPCs for commercial fishing shall also apply to recreational fishing.

35. Where the SAC advises that certain recreational fishing activities have a substantial impact on stocks or that certain stocks targeted by recreational fisheries have collapsed or are at serious risk of collapsing, the GFCM may adopt appropriate measures.

36. The GFCM shall review this recommendation at its forty-ninth session at the latest or as deemed necessary by SAC advice.

37. The provisions contained in this recommendation shall apply without prejudice to stricter rules enforced by CPCs.

Annex 1

Prohibited species
Marine mammals (all species)
Marine birds (all species)
Marine reptiles (all species)
Species listed in Appendices I and II under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
Species listed in Appendices I and II under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
Species listed in Annex II under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention),
Marine species protected under CPC legislation
Marine species specifically prohibited for capture by recreational fishing under CPC legislation

Annex 2

Prohibited methods
Toxic, stupefying or corrosive substances
Explosives
Electric current
Methods prohibited under CPC legislation

Annex 3

Prohibited areas
Areas protected by means of and in accordance with GFCM decisions, in particular the sensitive habitats and fisheries restricted areas established to protect essential fish habitats and vulnerable marine ecosystems, in line with the recommendations in force
Areas specifically prohibited to recreational fishing under CPC legislation

Annex 4

List of priority species

GFCM subregions		**Western Mediterranean**	**Central Mediterranean**	**Adriatic Sea**	**Eastern Mediterranean**
Geographical subareas		1 to 11	12 to 16, 19 to 21	17 and 18	22 to 27
Scientific name	**FAO 3-alpha code**				
Boops boops	BOG	X	X	X	X
Coryphaena hippurus	DOL		X	X	X
Dentex Dentex	DEC	X	X		
Dicentrarchus labrax	BSS	X	X	X	
Diplodus annularis	ANN		X		
Diplodus sargus	SWA		X		X
Epinephelus marginatus	GPD	X			
Epinephelus spp.	GPX		X		X
Lagocephalus sceleratus	LFZ	X	X	X	X
Loligo spp.	SQC			X	
Mullus barbatus	MUT	X	X	X	X
Mullus surmuletus	MUR	X	X		X
Octopus vulgaris	OCC	X	X	X	X
Pagellus bogaraveo	SBR	X			
Pagellus erythrinus	PAC	X	X	X	X
Pterois miles	UHQ	X	X	X	X
Scomber japonicas	MAS	X			X
Scomber scombrus	MAC	X	X		
Sepia officinalis	CTC	X	X	X	
Seriola dumerili	AMB	X			
Siganus luridus	IGU				X
Siganus rivulatus	SRI				X
Sparus aurata	SBG	X		X	
Sphyraena sphyraena	YRS		X		
Todarodes sagittatus	SQE			X	

Todaropsis eblanae	TDQ			X	
Truchurus mediterraneus	GMM	X			
Trachurus trachurus	HOM	X	X		
Sharks and rays[1]		X	X	X	X
Seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals[2]		X	X	X	X

[1] Any species of sharks and rays caught during recreational fishing activities.

[2] Vulnerable species included in Annex II (endangered or threatened species) and Annex III (species whose exploitation is regulated) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention).

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/1 on the establishment of a fishing effort regime for key demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the most recent scientific advice endorsed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-second session (online, June 2021), which shows an enduring overexploitation of key demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea as well as low biomass levels, in particular for European hake and Norway lobster;

RECALLING that 2021 is the last year of the transitional fishing effort regime established under paragraph 11 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18);

RECALLING that, based on the SAC advice, the first fishing effort allocation of a five-year fishing effort regime (2022–2026) shall be established in January 2022 with a view to achieving the objectives set in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned recommendation;

RECALLING that such allocations shall be expressed in fishing days per contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) and in effort groups for the fleet segments and types of gear;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall ensure that, for each CPC, any increase or decrease in effort allocation is in line with the formula provided in Annex 4 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 and with total effort for the reference year in the area by effort group listed in Annex 3, as reported starting from 2021;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The annual reduction in fishing mortality (F) needed to achieve the maximum sustainable yield target (F_{MSY}) in 2026 for all key stocks shall be a progressive linear reduction towards maximum sustainable yield (MSY). In line with this, the overall reduction in fishing effort in 2022 shall be 7 percent for bottom otter trawls and 3 percent for beam trawls overall.

2. The fishing effort allocations for 2022, established in line with paragraph 1 of this recommendation and with paragraph 12 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 and based on the latest scientific advice, are listed by CPC and effort group code in the annex to this recommendation. Effort allocations for 2022 shall cover the entire period from 1 January to 31 December as well as the fishing effort exerted during the months preceding the entry into force of this recommendation and shall be accounted for by effort group against the effort consumption of 2022.

3. A CPC may amend its fishing effort allocations by transferring fishing days across fishing effort groups relating to the same geographical subarea and/or type of gear, provided that it applies a national conversion factor based on the best available scientific advice. The SAC shall provide conversion factors in 2022. The transferred fishing days and conversion factors shall be made available immediately, and not later than ten working days, to the GFCM Secretariat and other CPCs.

4. Fishing effort allocations (in number of days) by vessel length, as established in paragraph 2 and in the annex to this recommendation, shall be without prejudice to the future segmentation.

Annex

Transitional fishing effort allocations for relevant contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, expressed in fishing days and effort group code, from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

Gear type	Geographical subarea (GSA)	Stocks concerned	Overall length of vessels	Effort group code	Number of fishing days in 2022		
					European Union	**Albania**	**Montenegro[1]**
Otter trawls (OTB)	17–18	Red mullet; European hake; deep-water rose shrimp; and Norway lobster	< 12 m	OTB12<	**13 909**	**0**	
			≥ 12 m and < 24 m	OTB12-24	**103 341**	**16 297**	
			≥ 24 m	OTB>24	**9 107**	**5 812**	
Beam trawls (TBB)	17	Common sole	< 12 m	TBB12<	**200**	**0**	
			≥ 12 m and < 24 m	TBB12-24	**3 747**	**0**	
			≥ 24 m	TBB>24	**3 726**	**0**	

[1]Montenegro shall not exceed the effort limit of 3 000 fishing days per year, in accordance with paragraph 13 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/2 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subarea 17), amending Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/3

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement aiming to minimize the impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement aiming "to establish fisheries restricted areas for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including, but not limited to, nursery and spawning areas...";

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that identifies "new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhances their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats";

RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraph 38;

CONSIDERING that the Jabuka/Pomo Pit is identified as an ecologically or biologically significant marine area under the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.5 "By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice expressed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-second session (online, June 2021) on the positive contribution of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit fisheries restricted area (FRA) to the protection of the juveniles and biomass of demersal species;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, scope and definitions

General objective and scope

1. This recommendation establishes a FRA in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area, in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subarea 17), with a view to contributing to the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and important essential fish habitats for demersal stocks such as European hake and Norway lobster and for small pelagic stocks such as anchovy and sardine.

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, the FRA established under paragraph 1 shall be divided in Zone A, Zone B and Zone C and bounded by the lines joining the geographical coordinates defined in Annex 1.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Fisheries restricted area" or "FRA" means a geographically-defined area in which some specific fishing activities are temporarily banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of demersal stocks.

b) "Recreational fishing" means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living resources, including leisure, sport, underwater and charter fisheries.

c) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

d) "Fishing authorization" means entitlement other than fishing licence and issued by CPCs to engage in fishing activities with specific fishing gear, during a specified period and in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

e) "Authorized vessel" means fishing vessel in possession of a specific fishing authorization.

f) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

PART II
Management and monitoring of fishing capacity and fishing effort in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA

Zone A

4. Any professional fishing activity with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps shall be prohibited in Zone A. Fishing activity with purse seiners and pelagic trawlers targeting anchovy or sardine shall be prohibited in this zone.

5. Any recreational fishing activity shall be prohibited in Zone A.

Zone B

6. Fishing activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps shall be prohibited in Zone B, from 1 September to 31 October each year, starting from 2022. Fishing activity with purse seiners and pelagic trawlers targeting anchovy or sardine shall be prohibited in this zone.

7. Without prejudice to paragraph 6, professional activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps may be allowed in Zone B, provided that the vessel and/or its master is in possession of a specific authorization and that historical fishing activities in Zone B are demonstrated. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to fish in this zone.

8. Authorized fishing vessels shall not be entitled to fish for more than two fishing days per week.

9. Authorized fishing vessels using otter twin trawl gear shall not be entitled to fish for more than one fishing day per week.

Zone C

10. Fishing activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps as well as recreational fisheries shall be prohibited in Zone C, from 1 September to 31 October each year, starting from 2022. Fishing activity with purse seiners and pelagic trawlers targeting anchovy or sardine shall be prohibited in this zone

11. Without prejudice to paragraph 10, professional activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps may be allowed in Zone C, provided that the vessel or its master is in possession of a specific authorization and that historical fishing activities in Zone C are demonstrated. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to fish in this zone.

12. Authorized vessels fishing with bottom trawls shall be entitled to fish on Saturdays and Sundays only, from 05.00 hours till 22.00 hours.

13. Authorized vessels fishing with bottom-set nets, set longlines and traps shall be allowed to fish from Monday 05.00 hours till Thursday 22.00 hours.

PART III
Control measures

14. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 April 2022, the list of authorized vessels for 2022 and subsequently, not later than 30 April each year, the list of authorized vessels for the forthcoming year, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. For each vessel, the list shall contain the information detailed in Annex 2.

15. Authorized fishing vessels shall only land catch of demersal stocks at the CPCs' designated landing points. To this end, each CPC shall designate landing points in which the landings of demersal stocks from the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA are authorized. The list of such landing points shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat, by 30 April each year, through the DCRF online platform.

16. Fishing vessels authorized to fish in Zone B and/or Zone C shall be equipped with vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and/or automated identification systems (AIS) in correct working order, and the fishing gear on board or in use shall be duly identified, numbered and marked before starting any fishing operation or navigation in the FRA.

17. Fishing vessels equipped with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps without authorization shall be allowed to transit through the FRA only if they follow a direct course at a constant speed of not less than 7 knots and are equipped with VMS and/or AIS active on board.

PART IV
Final provisions

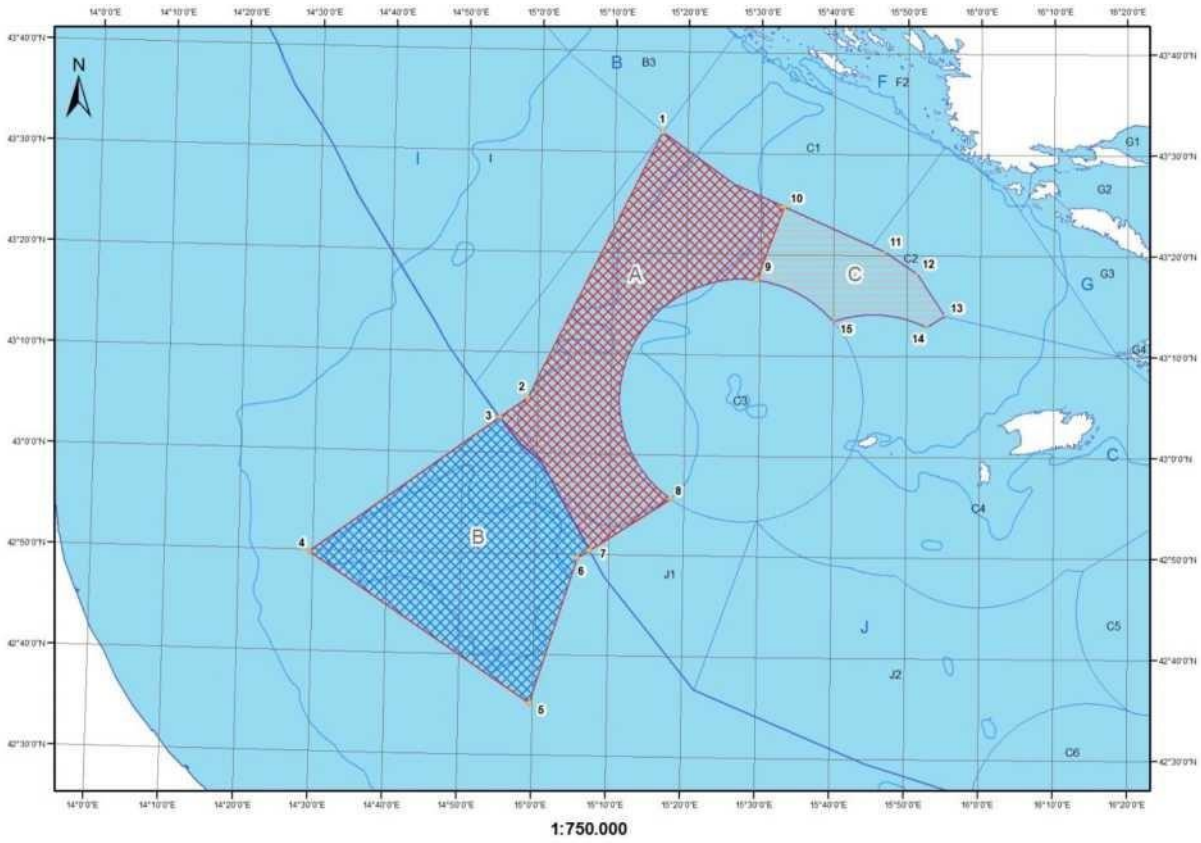
18. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to protect the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA from the impacts of any activity that may jeopardize the conservation of the characteristic features of these particular habitats.

19. This recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs for the vessels flying their flag.

20. This recommendation shall apply on a permanent basis. The SAC and the Compliance Committee shall review its implementation on a yearly basis in order to issue recommendations where appropriate.

Annex 1

Geographical coordinates of the fisheries restricted area in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit (Adriatic Sea)



Zone A		
Point	**Latitude**	**Longitude**
1	43°32,044' N	15°16,501' E
2	43°05,452' N	14°58,658' E
3	43°03,477' N	14°54,982' E
7	42°50,450' N	15°07,431' E
8	42°55,618' N	15°18,194' E
9	43°17,436' N	15°29,496' E
10	43°24,758' N	15°33,215' E

Zone B		
Point	**Latitude**	**Longitude**
3	43°03,477' N	14°54,982' E
4	42°49,811' N	14°29,550' E
5	42°35,205' N	14°59,611' E
6	42°49,668' N	15°05,802' E
7	42°50,450' N	15°07,431' E

Zone C		
Point	**Latitude**	**Longitude**
9	43°17,436' N	15°29,496' E
10	43°24,758' N	15°33,215' E
11	43°20,345' N	15°47,012' E
12	43°18,150' N	15°51,362' E
13	43°13,984' N	15°55,232' E
14	43°12,873' N	15°52,761' E
15	43°13,494' N	15°40,040' E

Annex 2

The list referred to in paragraph 14 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by CPCs);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- type of vessel, length overall and gross tonnage;
- name and address of owner(s) and operator(s);
- main gear used to fish in the FRA;
- seasonal period authorized for fishing in the FRA;
- number of fishing days that can be exerted by each vessel; and
- designated port.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/3 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Bari Canyon in the southern Adriatic Sea (geographical subarea 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available" and that "The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement aiming to minimize impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement aiming "to establish fisheries restricted areas for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including, but not limited to, nursery and spawning areas...";

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that identifies "new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhances their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats";

RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraph 38;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.5 "By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information";

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), at its twenty-second session (online, June 2021), welcomed the work done to complement the proposal for a fisheries restricted area (FRA) in the Bari Canyon towards better estimating social and economic costs and expected benefits from the potential implementation of the FRA;

CONSIDERING that the SAC deemed the proposal technically sound and proposed that the Bari Canyon be considered for the establishment of a new FRA in the Adriatic Sea;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, scope and definitions

General objective and scope

1. This recommendation establishes a FRA in the Bari Canyon area, in the southern Adriatic Sea (geographical subarea 18), with a view to contributing to the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and essential fish habitats.

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, the FRA established under paragraph 1 shall be divided in Zone A and Zone B and bounded by the lines joining the geographical coordinates defined in Annex 1.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Fisheries restricted area" or "FRA" means a geographically-defined area in which some specific fishing activities are temporarily banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of demersal stocks.

b) "Recreational fishing" means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living resources, including leisure, sport, underwater and charter fisheries.

c) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

d) "Fishing authorization" means entitlement other than fishing licence and issued by CPCs to engage in fishing activities with specific fishing gear, during a specified period and in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

e) "Authorized vessel" means fishing vessel in possession of a specific fishing authorization.

f) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

PART II
Management and monitoring of fishing capacity and fishing effort in the Bari Canyon FRA

Zone A

4. Any professional or recreational fishing activity shall be prohibited in Zone A.

Zone B

5. Fishing activities with towed nets, bottom set nets and recreational fishing shall be prohibited in Zone B (identified as "buffer zone").

6. Fishing activities with set longlines and traps may be allowed provided that the vessel and/or its master are in possession of a specific authorization and that historical fishing activities in the buffer zone are demonstrated. The CPCs shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to fish in Zone B.

PART III
Control measures

7. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 April 2022 of the first year of implementation, the list of authorized vessels for 2022 and subsequently, not later than 30 April each year, the list of authorized vessels for the forthcoming year, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. For each vessel, the list shall contain the information detailed in Annex 2.

8. Authorized fishing vessels shall only land catch of demersal stocks at the CPCs' designated landing points. To this end, each CPC shall designate landing points in which the landings of demersal stocks from the Bari Canyon FRA is authorized. The list of such landing points shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat, by 30 April each year starting from 2022, through the DCRF online platform.

9. Fishing vessels authorized to fish in Zone B shall be equipped with vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and/or automated identification systems (AIS) in correct working order, and the fishing gear on board or in use shall be duly identified, numbered and marked before starting any fishing operation or navigation in the FRA.

10. Fishing vessels equipped with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps without authorization shall be allowed to transit through the FRA only if they follow a direct course at a constant speed of not less than 7 knots and are equipped with VMS and/or AIS active on board.

PART IV
Final provisions

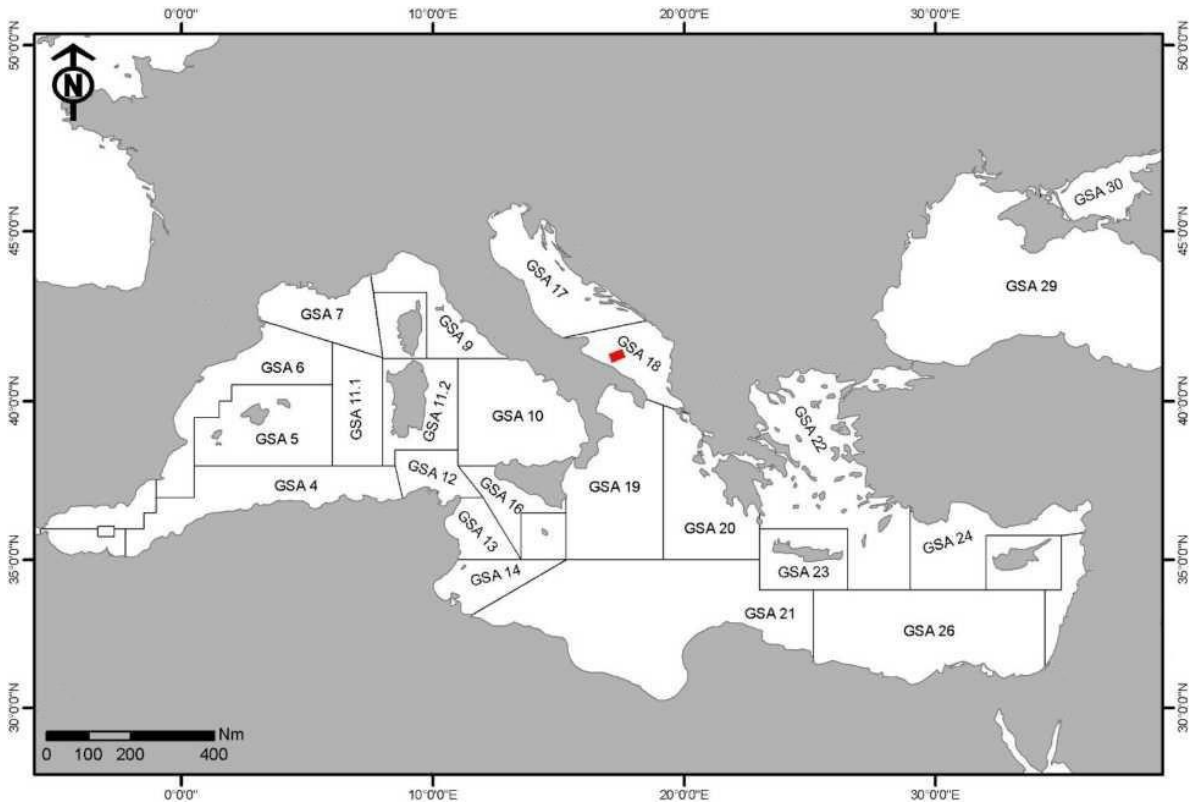
11. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to protect the Bari Canyon FRA from the impacts of any activity that may jeopardize the conservation of the characteristic features of its particular habitats.

12. This recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs for the vessels flying their flag.

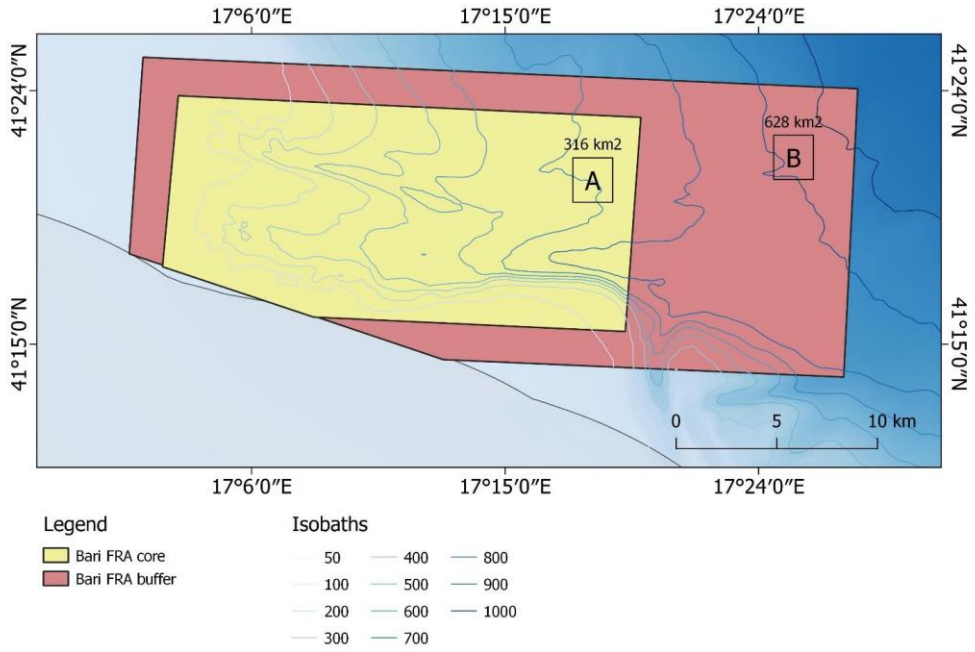
13. This recommendation shall apply until 31 December 2026. The SAC and the Compliance Committee shall review its implementation on a yearly basis. Based on the SAC advice, the management measures for the Bari Canyon FRA shall be reviewed in 2026.

Annex 1

Geographical coordinates of the fisheries restricted area in the Bari Canyon (geographical subarea 18)



Map of the Mediterranean Sea and location of the fisheries restricted area in the Bari Canyon (geographical subarea 18)



Detailed position of the fisheries restricted area in the Bari Canyon (geographical subarea 18)

Position of the core (Zone A) and buffer zones (Zone B) of the fisheries restricted area in the Bari Canyon (geographical subarea 18)

Zone A	
Latitude	**Longitude**
41° 23' 3" N	17° 19' 49" E
41° 15' 27" N	17° 19' 16" E
41° 15' 58" N	17° 8' 12" E
41° 17' 45" N	17° 2' 50" E
41 °23' 49" N	17° 3' 24" E

Zone B	
Latitude	**Longitude**
41° 24' 4" N	17° 27' 31" E
41° 13' 50" N	17° 27' 1" E
41° 14' 27" N	17° 12' 48" E
41° 18' 12" N	17° 1' 40" E
41° 25' 11" N	17° 2' 9" E

Annex 2

The list referred to in paragraph 7 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by CPCs);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- type of vessel, length overall and gross tonnage;
- name and address of owner(s) and operator(s);
- main gear used to fish in the FRA;
- seasonal period authorized for fishing in the FRA;
- number of fishing days that can be exerted by each vessel; and
- designated port.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/5 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lion (geographical subarea 7) to protect spawning aggregations and deep-sea sensitive habitats, repealing Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) indicating that certain demersal stocks, in particular European hake, are severely overexploited in the Gulf of Lion*;*

FURTHER CONSIDERING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that identifies "new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhances their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats";

VALUING the important social, economic and employment dimensions of the fishing activities carried out in the area and fishing fleets involved;

REAFFIRMING its commitment to further the selectivity of demersal fisheries as an important tool, according to scientific evidence, to improve the protection of juveniles and reduce discards;

CONSIDERING that spatial closures are a necessary balanced complement to improved gear selectivity, in particular to limit fishing effort in spawning aggregation areas and to protect both spawners and juveniles;

CONSIDERING the management measures established by certain contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) in the Gulf of Lion;

NOTING that the SAC advice to ban towed gear, fixed gear and longlines targeting demersal resources in an area on the continental shelf and slope of the eastern Gulf of Lion should be updated in light of recent scientific advances;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective and scope

General objective and scope

1. This recommendation establishes a fisheries restricted area (FRA) in the eastern Gulf of Lion, (geographical subarea 7) with a view to protecting spawning aggregations and deep-sea sensitive habitats.

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, the FRA established under paragraph 1 shall be divided in Zone A and Zone B and bounded by the lines joining the geographical coordinates defined in Annex 1.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Fisheries restricted area" or "FRA" means a geographically-defined area in which some specific fishing activities are temporarily banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of demersal stocks.

b) "Recreational fishing" means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living resources, including leisure, sport, underwater and charter fisheries.

c) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

d) "Fishing authorization" means entitlement other than fishing licence and issued by CPCs to engage in fishing activities with specific fishing gear, during a specified period and in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

e) "Authorized vessel" means fishing vessel in possession of a specific fishing authorization.

f) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

PART II

Management and monitoring of fishing capacity and fishing effort in the Gulf of Lion FRA

Zone A

4. With a view to contributing to the protection of VMEs and essential fish habitats for demersal stocks such as European hake, any professional fishing vessels targeting demersal stocks and using towed nets, bottom and mid-water longlines and bottom-set nets shall be prohibited in Zone A.

5. Any recreational fishing activity shall be prohibited in Zone A.

Zone B

6. Fishing activities targeting demersal stocks and using towed nets, bottom and mid-water longlines as well as bottom-set nets shall be prohibited in Zone B from 1 November to 30 April of each year.

7. Following an assessment by the SAC in 2023, the geographical coordinates of Zone A shall be updated considering socio-economic and environmental impacts and adopted at the following annual session of the GFCM.

8. The annual fishing effort (days at sea) exerted on demersal stocks by vessels authorized to fish in the FRA using towed nets, bottom and mid-water longlines and bottom-set nets shall not exceed the level of fishing effort exerted in the reference period (set to the year 2008).

9. The CPCs shall not authorize vessels to fish in the FRA if they were not authorized to do so during the reference period. The CPCs shall ensure that fishing vessels operating in the FRA respect their obligations in force in relation to the maximum time of daily fishing activity, the maximum number of days at sea and the legally compulsory timing to exit from and return to the registered port.

10. The CPCs shall not transfer effort between vessels authorized to fish in the FRA that are of differing gear.

PART III
Control measures

11. From the adoption of this recommendation onwards, the CPCs shall maintain a register of the vessels authorized to fish in the FRA.

12. Not later than 30 May 2022, the CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the list of vessels flying their flag authorized to fish in the FRA through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. For each vessel, the list shall contain the information detailed in Annex 2.

13. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 May 2022, the legal conditions, as in force on 31 December 2021, regarding the maximum duration of a fishing day.

14. The CPCs shall ensure that the fishing vessels operating in the FRA comply with the obligations under paragraphs 12 and 13.

PART IV
Final provisions

15. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to protect the Gulf of Lion FRA from the impacts of any other human activity jeopardizing the conservation of the features that characterize this particular habitat as an area of aggregation of spawners.

16. In 2023, the twenty-fourth session of the SAC shall evaluate the implementation of this recommendation, review the scientific information available and advise the GFCM on further or alternative management measures aiming at addressing the overexploitation of demersal stocks, in particular European hake, and protecting juveniles and spawners in the Gulf of Lion. The SAC shall evaluate the fishing effort regime and its reference period, the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the measures put in place by this recommendation as well as any additional measure consistent with the objectives of the FRA, including a modification of the current closures, in time, geographical extension or gear use, taking into account the characteristics of the fisheries, developments affecting gear selectivity, the implementation of the European multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea as well as the marine renewable energy context.

17. At its forty-sixth session, in 2023, upon receipt of advice from the SAC, the GFCM shall decide on further or alternative management measures.

18. The provisions contained in this recommendation are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that may be adopted by the CPCs.

19. This recommendation repeals and replaces Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lion to protect spawning aggregations and deep-sea sensitive habitats.

Annex 1

Geographical coordinates of the fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lion (geographical subarea 7)

Zone A	
Longitude	**Latitude**
43°00’ N	4°49,35’ E
43°00’ N	4°53,7’ E
42°55,896’ N	4°53,7’ E
42°55,896’ N	4°49,35’ E

Zone B	
Longitude	**Latitude**
42°40’ N	4°20’ E
42°40’ N	5°00’ E
43°00’ N	4°20’ E
43°00’ N	5°00’ E

Annex 2

The list referred to in paragraph 7 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by CPCs);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- type of vessel, length overall and gross tonnage and/or gross registered tonnage;
- name and address of owner(s) and operator(s);
- main type(s) of gear used to fish in the FRA;
- seasonal period authorized for fishing in the FRA; and
- number of fishing days exerted by each vessel in the previous year and number of fishing days that can be exerted in the FRA by each vessel.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/6 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas 24 to 27), amending Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas 24, 25, 26 and 27);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/4 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19, 20 and 21);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6 on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16);

NOTING that for deep-water red shrimp in the eastern-central Mediterranean, the joint MedSudMed/EastMed/GFCM data preparation meeting held in October 2019 noted numerous technical issues to be resolved and further explored prior to the provision of scientific advice and the forthcoming benchmark in 2022, namely in relation to data quality, misreporting of the geographical subarea of origin, identification of fishing grounds and stock assessment methodologies;

CONSIDERING that it is appropriate to align measures for deep-water red shrimp in the Levant Sea and the Ionian Sea to those adopted in the Strait of Sicily;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3

1. Paragraph 12 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 shall be amended as follows:

A GFCM working group shall be established in 2022, 30 calendar days following the twenty-third session of the SAC, in order to develop measures for the management of the key species listed in Annex 1, taking into consideration the efforts made by CPCs to manage relevant fisheries as well as the amount of historical catches, towards the identification and application, in some cases, of stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation, also based on socio-economic considerations.

2. Paragraph 16 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 shall be amended as follows:

At its forty-fifth session in 2022, the GFCM shall adopt long-term management measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives set out in paragraph 1, in complement to or in replacement of the measures referred to in Part IV.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/9 on management measures for the sustainable exploitation of European sprat in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states “should apply a precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures”*;*

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture provide a concrete set of actions for the riparian countries to implement, particularly with regard to existing management measures that will be complemented and expanded to progressively achieve exploitation at MSY;

NOTING that, for European sprat in geographical subarea (GSA) 29, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) concluded, at its eighth session (Turkey, September 2019) that the status of the stock was uncertain and fishing mortality should not be increased and noted the lack of scientifically robust advice, as the benchmark was not conclusive;

CONSIDERING that the WGBS, at its eight session, based on the conclusions of the benchmark session on European sprat of the Subregional Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea (Romania, December 2018), recommended a precautionary approach for European sprat in GSA 29 given the uncertain status of the stock;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the WGBS, at its ninth session (online, July 2021), based on scientific advice, suggested not to increase fishing mortality for European sprat in GSA 29 and agreed upon a roadmap towards the finalization of the benchmark;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and scientific knowledge, and that an appropriate method shall be established to this end;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. This recommendation, pending robust scientific advice by the WGBS, establishes transitional management measures for the sustainable exploitation of European sprat in the Black Sea (GSA 29) consistent with the precautionary approach.

2. The transitional management measures for fisheries exploiting European sprat shall prepare the ground for future management measures, which shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with MSY while guaranteeing a low risk of stock collapse and maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSA 29 agree to implement such transitional management measures for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the objectives set by this recommendation.

4. The transitional management measures shall also pursue the reduction of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in GSA 29.

Geographical scope

5. The transitional management measures established by the present recommendation shall apply to GSA 29.

Definitions

6. For the purpose of this recommendation:

   a) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2;

   b) "European sprat" means fish pertaining to the species Sprattus sprattus.

   c) "Vessel actively fishing" means any vessel targeting European sprat in the Black Sea and in possession of a valid fishing authorization for European sprat.

   d) "Authorized vessel" means any fishing vessel in possession of a fishing authorization entitling it to carry out fishing activities for the exploitation of European sprat during a specific period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

   e) "Fishing authorization" means an authorization entitling a vessel to engage in fishing activities for European sprat during a specified period in the given area.

   f) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present in GSA 29 and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

   g) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by CPCs in order to combat IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling

or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision

7. The CPCs shall ensure on an annual basis an adequate scientific monitoring of the status of European sprat in the Black Sea.

8. The WGBS shall provide, on an annual basis as from 2022, advice on the status of European sprat in the Black Sea, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the stock at levels that can produce MSY. In addition, at its 2022 session, the WGBS may provide advice on establishing temporal closures for European sprat fisheries and on defining a minimum reference conservation size for European sprat.

9. The WGBS shall organize in 2022 a dedicated working group to examine, analyse and report on possible climatic effects on European sprat in the Black Sea. This report shall also include advice on how to incorporate any likely climatic impact within the advice on stock status and potential management measures for European sprat.

10. The WGBS shall assess, in 2023, via the dedicated Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation (WGMSE), the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios, including, the introduction of catch limits, with the objective of restoring and maintaining the species population above levels that can produce MSY.

11. In 2023, upon receiving the suggestions of the WGMSE, the WGBS shall assess the effectiveness of the transitional management measures established by this recommendation and provide scientific advice in order to enable the GFCM to establish management measures for the long-term sustainable management of European sprat in the Black Sea, including a multiannual management plan.

PART III
Fleet management measures

12. Vessels authorized to fish for European sprat in the Black Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying. Vessels not listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying shall not catch, retain on board, transship, land, store or sell European sprat.

13. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 31 January each year, the list of the vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for European sprat for the current year or for the forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in the annex to this recommendation.

14. The vessels actively fishing for sprat shall provide national authorities with a detailed report of their fishing activities, including as minimum requirements: operating days, operating area and total catch of European sprat. This information shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat twice a year, not later than 31 July and 31 January each year, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform.

15. Without prejudice to the provisions referred to in paragraph 12, and when a system to avoid discards as well as the obligation to land all catches have been established by a CPC, the master of the fishing vessel shall not be allowed to discard those catches and shall therefore land the fish caught, in line with the provisions stipulated by such CPC. All such quantities landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale nor used for human consumption.

16. The CPCs implementing a landing obligation scheme as referred to in paragraph 15 shall notify its contents and characteristics to the GFCM Secretariat, prior to the subsequent annual session of the GFCM, with a view to informing the other parties. The CPCs may designate, where applicable, additional spatial/temporal restrictions/closures to those already established where fishing activities may be banned or restricted in order to protect aggregation areas of juveniles of sprat. In 2023, the WGMSE shall examine such additional measures. Where applicable, CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, by 31 December 2022 the list of these areas and the restrictions applied.

PART IV
Management of fishing effort

17. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat for the first time, not later than 31 January 2022, the list of all their vessels actively fishing for sprat.

18. Such list shall contain, for each vessel, the information referred to in the annex to this recommendation.

19. The CPCs shall ensure that their fleet capacity or fishing effort is maintained at the levels authorized and applied in the recent years for the exploitation of European sprat in the Black Sea.

20. The CPCs shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, deletion from and/or modification of the fishing fleets for European sprat at any time such changes may occur or at least on a monthly basis.

21. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for European sprat and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

22. Each CPC shall ensure the set-up of adequate mechanisms for the recording of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and for the recording of vessel catches and fishing effort via the logbook.

PART V
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

23. The obligation to declare catches shall apply irrespective of the volume of the catch.

24. Each CPC shall designate landing points where the landings by vessels actively fishing for European sprat in the Black Sea shall take place.

25. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of European sprat fished in the Black Sea at any place other than the designated landing points.

26. The CPCs shall engage in cooperation for the fight against IUU fishing, in particular by sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

27. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

28. All vessels above 12 metres length overall actively fishing for European sprat shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) or any other geopositioning system allowing control authorities to track their activities.

29. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1 all

catches of European sprat shall be reported in the logbook irrespectively of the live weight of the catch.

PART VII
Final provisions

30. The provisions contained in this recommendation shall be applied without prejudice to stricter national rules enforced in CPCs.

Annex

Fishing authorizations – List of authorized vessels

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraph 18 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by CPCs);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- port of registration (full name of the port);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- VMS (indicate Y/N)
- type of vessel, length overall, gross tonnage and engine power expressed in kW;
- name and address of owner(s) and operator(s);
- main gear used to fish for European sprat and DCRF fleet segment allocation; and
- seasonal period authorized for fishing European sprat.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/10 on management measures for the sustainable piked dogfish fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

NOTING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states "should apply a precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures"*;*

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture provide concrete set of actions for the riparian countries to implement, particularly with regard to existing management measures that will be complemented and expanded to progressively achieve exploitation at MSY;

NOTING that, for piked dogfish in geographical subarea (GSA) 29, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) concluded, at its eighth session (Turkey, September 2019) that the stock was considered depleted on a precautionary basis and advised to implement a recovery plan. The WGBS further noticed that information on piked dogfish remains scarce;

CONSIDERING that the WGBS, at its eighth session, based on the suggestions of the Subregional Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea (Romania, December 2018), included in its 2019–2021 work plan a concrete set of activities towards improving available information for the assessment of this stock and drafting technical elements in support of the management of piked dogfish;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the WGBS, at its ninth session (online, July 2021), in order to adopt adequate management measures to revert the critical state of the piked dogfish population in the Black Sea and in light of current knowledge gaps, recommended to proceed according to a two-step approach foreseeing: i) the initial implementation of transitional precautionary management measures accompanied by a research programme to improve available information, followed by ii) the identification of adaptive measures within a full-fledged multiannual management plan with

well-defined targets and goals upon availability of more data. To this end, the WGBS provided technical elements for the management of piked dogfish in the Black Sea;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/4 on management measures for piked dogfish in the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be reviewed and adapted to the evolution of both the status of the stock and scientific knowledge, and that an appropriate method shall be established to this end;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. This recommendation establishes initial transitional management measures for the exploitation of piked dogfish in the Black Sea (GSA 29) consistent with the precautionary approach and pending robust scientific advice by the WGBS, in line with the technical elements for the management of piked dogfish provided by the ninth meeting of the WGBS.

2. This recommendation also establishes a research programme for piked dogfish in the Black Sea in order to improve the information, scientific monitoring, scientific research and data collection for the stock and thus improve scientific advice for the second phase of the measures referred to in paragraph 3.

3. The transitional management measures for fisheries exploiting piked dogfish shall prepare the ground for future adaptative management measures within a fully-fledged multiannual management plan, which shall be designed to reverse the dire state of the stock, ensure a low risk of further reduction of the stock and develop a roadmap towards high long-term yields consistent with MSY.

4. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are fishing for piked dogfish in GSA 29 agree to implement such transitional management measures for the fisheries concerned as established by this recommendation and in accordance with its general and specific objectives.

5. The transitional management measures shall also pursue the curb of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in GSA 29 while strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures.

6. This recommendation integrates the measures introduced by Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/4, in view of reinforcing their effectiveness.

7. This recommendation shall also pursue the active involvement of the fishing sector engaged in piked dogfish fisheries and trade in the Black Sea, in view of a participative approach to fisheries management. In this regard, in 2022, CPCs shall conduct awareness campaigns under the coordination of the BlackSea4Fish project and report to the WGBS meeting in 2023.

Geographical scope

8. The management measures for piked dogfish fisheries established by this recommendation shall apply to the Black Sea (GSA 29).

Definitions

9. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

b) "Piked dogfish" (synonym: spiny dogfish) means shark pertaining to the species *Squalus aquanthias*.

c) "Bottom-set gillnet" means any net made up of a single piece of net, held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed, or capable of being fixed, by any means, to the bottom of the sea and maintaining the gear in place, either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

d) "Trawl nets" means nets which are actively towed by the main boat engine and consisting of a cone- or pyramid-shaped body (as a trawl body), closed at the back by a codend and which can extend at the opening by the wings or can be mounted on a rigid frame. Horizontal opening is either obtained by otter boards or provided by a beam or frame of variable shape and size. Such nets can be towed either on the bottom (bottom trawl net) or in mid-water (pelagic trawl net).

e) "Vessel actively fishing" means any authorized vessel targeting piked dogfish in the Black Sea and in possession of a valid fishing authorization for piked dogfish.

f) "Authorized vessel" means any fishing vessel in possession of a fishing authorization entitling it to carry out specific fishing activities during a specific period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

g) "Fishing authorization" means an authorization entitling a vessel to engage in fishing activities for piked dogfish during a specified period in the given area.

h) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present in GSA 29 and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

i) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the CPCs in order to combat IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

j) "Fisheries restricted area" (FRA) means a geographically-defined sea area in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted, in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of marine living resources or the protection of marine ecosystems.

PART II
Specific objectives of the transitional management measures

10. The objective of the transitional management measures is to prepare for a future multiannual management plan while reducing the risk that, in the absence of robust scientific advice, the stock reduces further. Fishing activities exploiting piked dogfish using all types of fishing gear fall under this recommendation.

11. Pending the identification of biological reference points in line with MSY, the general objectives of the transitional management measures set out in paragraph 1 shall be attained while maintaining the fishing fleet capacity or fishing effort at the levels authorized and exerted during the years 2015–2021 for the exploitation of piked dogfish in the Black Sea. This reference period shall be

without prejudice to the discussions to be taken in the context of the working group referred to in paragraph 19.

12. Operational objectives in terms of fighting against IUU fishing activities relevant for piked dogfish fisheries shall be developed as defined in Part V.

13. The GFCM, at its forty-sixth session in 2023, upon the advice of the WGBS and in consideration of the results of the research programme, shall adopt the adaptive management measures of the multiannual management plan towards the achievement of the objectives set out in paragraph 1, in complement to or in replacement of the measures referred to in Part IV.

PART III
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision

14. The CPCs shall contribute to the implementation of the GFCM research programme on piked dogfish in the Black Sea and shall ensure annually an adequate scientific monitoring of the status of piked dogfish species.

15. The CPCs shall ensure that:

a) information on fishing activities, catch data, incidental catch, release and/or discarding events for piked dogfish are recorded by the ship-owner/vessel master in the logbook or equivalent document, in line with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

b) this information is reported to the national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat within their annual national reporting to the WGBS and in accordance with the data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations, in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF);

c) any additional measure is taken to improve data collection for the purpose of the scientific monitoring of the species; and

d) reliable information is collected on the impacts of bottom-set gillnets targeting piked dogfish on cetacean populations in the Black Sea, in line with Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries exploiting turbot and for the conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea.

16. The CPCs shall, individually and collectively under the BlackSea4Fish project, engage in capacity-building efforts and other regional research activities to improve scientific knowledge on piked dogfish biology, including population dynamics, migrations, identification of reproduction sites and nursery areas, survival ratios, and any other characteristic that could effectively support the implementation of this recommendation, in line with the technical elements for the management of piked dogfish provided by the WGBS at its ninth session, including according to the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/16 on additional mitigation measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea.

17. The BlackSea4Fish project shall be tasked to ensure the appropriate coordination of the activities referred to in paragraphs 16 and 18 and to report on their results to the WGBS in 2023 at the latest.

18. The WGBS shall report, on an annual basis as from 2022, on the implementation of the step-by-step approach and of the roadmap for the improvement of input data and the assessment of piked dogfish in the Black Sea, including specific targets for the achievement of MSY. In addition, in 2023, the WGBS shall provide advice on: i) establishing temporal and spatial closures for piked dogfish fisheries during the reproduction season; ii) considering restocking as a management measure; and iii) measures to further reduce and mitigate bycatch. Furthermore, in 2023, the WGBS may reassess

the minimum landing size towards defining a minimum reference conservation size for piked dogfish, in line with the technical elements for Black Sea stocks.

19. The WGBS shall assess, in 2023, via the dedicated Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation (WGMSE), the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios, including the introduction of catch limits and the contribution of restocking, with the objective of restoring and maintaining the species population above levels that can produce MSY, as provided in Annex 2.

20. In 2023, upon receiving the WGMSE suggestions, the WGBS shall assess the effectiveness of the transitional measures, including the results of the research programme and of the scientific monitoring measures established by this recommendation, and shall provide scientific advice in order to enable the GFCM to establish a multiannual management plan for piked dogfish in the Black Sea.

21. Upon WGBS advice, the GFCM may review the content of the transitional management measures in accordance with the objectives set out in Parts I and II.

PART IV
Management measures

Management measures for piked dogfish

22. Specimens of piked dogfish smaller than 90 cm shall not be retained on board, transshipped, landed, stored, sold, displayed nor offered for sale. When accidentally caught, such specimens shall be promptly released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

23. Without prejudice to the provisions referred to in paragraphs 22 and 29, and when a system to avoid discards and the obligation to land all catches have been established by a CPC, the master of the fishing vessel shall not be allowed to discard those catches, and shall therefore land the fish caught, independently of the size of the fish, in line with the provisions stipulated by such CPC. All quantities landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale nor used for human consumption.

24. The CPCs implementing a landing obligation scheme shall notify its contents and characteristics to the GFCM Secretariat, prior to the subsequent WGBS meeting, with a view to informing the other parties.

Fisheries restricted areas and seasons

25. The CPCs shall establish a database of FRAs and closed seasons containing detailed information on regulations in place at the national level.

26. The CPCs may apply additional protective measures regarding the reduction of coastal trawl net fishing to enhance the protection of coastal sharks in addition to the restrictions established by Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application.

27. The CPCs shall report to the GFCM Secretariat the information referred to in paragraphs 25 and 26, not later than 31 May 2023.

Fleet management measures

28. The CPCs shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to actively fish for piked dogfish. Fishing vessels targeting piked dogfish shall be allowed to carry out fishing activities only if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities and specifying the technical conditions under which such activities shall be carried out, as defined in Annex 1.

29. Vessels authorized to fish for piked dogfish in the Black Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying. Vessels not listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying shall not catch, retain on board, transship, land, store or sell piked dogfish.

30. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 31 January of each year, the list of the fishing vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for piked dogfish for the current year or for the forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 1.

31. The vessels actively fishing for piked dogfish shall provide national authorities with a detailed report of their fishing activities, including as minimum requirements: operating days, operating area and total catch of piked dogfish. This information shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat twice a year, not later than 31 July and 31 January each year, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform.

32. The obligations referred to in paragraph 31 apply to fishing vessels other than those actively fishing for piked dogfish, in cases of piked dogfish caught as bycatch or incidentally caught by fishing vessels operating other types of fisheries in the Black Sea.

Management of fishing effort

33. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat for the first time, not later than 30 November 2022, the list of all their vessels actively fishing for piked dogfish, together with their historic level of fishing effort.

34. Such list shall contain, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 1.

35. The CPCs shall ensure that their fleet capacity or fishing effort is maintained to the levels authorized and implemented during the period 2015–2021 for the exploitation of piked dogfish in the Black Sea, as set out in paragraph 11.

36. The CPCs shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, deletion from and/or modification of the fishing fleets for piked dogfish at any time such changes may occur or at least on a monthly basis.

37. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for piked dogfish and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

38. Each CPC shall ensure to set up adequate mechanisms for the recording of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and for the recording of vessel catches and fishing effort via both the logbook and remote sensing, as well as for the monitoring of fishing vessel activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys, according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

39. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART V
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

40. The CPCs shall establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels fishing in GSA 29 declare all catches and bycatch of piked dogfish. The obligation to declare catches shall apply irrespective of the volume of the catch and the gear used.

41. Each CPC shall designate landing points where the landings by vessels actively fishing for piked dogfish in the Black Sea shall take place.

42. For each designated port, the port CPC shall specify permitted landing and transshipping times and places. The port CPC shall also ensure inspection coverage during all landing and transshipping times and at all landing and transshipping places.

43. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of piked dogfish fished in the Black Sea at any place other than the designated landing points.

44. The CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November each year, through the DCRF online platform, any changes to the list of the designated landing points in which landings of piked dogfish in GSA 29 may take place.

45. The CPCs shall engage in cooperation for the fight against IUU fishing, in particular by sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

46. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

47. All vessels above 12 metres length overall actively fishing for piked dogfish shall be equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) or any other geopositioning system allowing control authorities to track their activities.

48. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1, all catches of piked dogfish shall be reported in the logbook irrespectively of the live weight of the catch.

49. A working group shall be established in the context of the Compliance Committee (CoC) to develop integrated MCS measures for piked dogfish. The tasks of this working group are defined in Annex 3.

PART VII
Final provisions

50. The provisions contained in this recommendation shall be applied without prejudice to stricter national rules enforced by CPCs.

Annex 1

Fishing authorizations – List of authorized vessels

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the list referred to in paragraph 28 shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by CPCs);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- port of registration (full name of the port);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- international radio call sign (if any);
- VMS (indicate Y/N);
- type of vessel, length overall, gross tonnage and engine power expressed in kW;
- name and address of owner(s) and operator(s);
- Main gear used to fish for piked dogfish and DCRF fleet segment allocation; and
- seasonal period authorized for fishing piked dogfish.

Annex 2

Terms of reference for the Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for piked dogfish

The working group referred to in paragraph 19 shall:

- be supported by the GFCM Secretariat;
- be supported by the BlackSea4Fish project and the Subregional Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea, in view of preparing input data available to this working group;
- consider the results of the future benchmark assessment for piked dogfish;
- prepare a management strategy evaluation session to be held in 2023, in parallel to the WGBS meeting;
- develop several management scenarios, including the introduction of catch limits, with the objective of restoring and maintaining the species population above levels that can produce MSY;
- take into account biological, economic and social implications of several management scenarios developed; and
- report suggestions and opinions to the WGBS.

The mandate of the working group covers the elements as described in Part III of this recommendation.

Annex 3

Terms of reference for the Working Group on integrated monitoring, control and surveillance measures for piked dogfish in the Black Sea

The working group referred to in paragraph 49 shall:

- be supported by the GFCM Secretariat;
- establish a time schedule for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting in 2022 before the next session of the CoC;
- invite observers attending GFCM meetings, FAO, and other regional fisheries management organizations to participate in its meetings; and
- report its conclusions and opinions to the CoC.

The mandate of the working group covers the elements as described in Part VI of this recommendation.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/11 on management measures for the use of anchored fish aggregating devices in common dolphinfish fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that it is the responsibility of a regional fisheries management organization to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and to ensure management measures are established consistently with the precautionary approach;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that "also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species";

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

CONSIDERING the impact of the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) on essential fish and marine habitats and vulnerable marine ecosystems, their possible interactions with other fisheries and the need to establish a minimum set of management measures, in particular for better monitoring and control;

CONSIDERING the advice expressed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries at its twenty-first session (Egypt, June 2019) on measures to be implemented for the management of FADs, in particular in relation to the identification of fishing gear, fishing authorizations and improved information on catch and effort for the assessment of common dolphinfish, a GFCM priority species;

CONSIDERING the need to improve scientific advice by 2022;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1

1. Paragraph 8 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 shall be amended as follows:

The objective of the transitional management measures is to prepare for future management measures while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific assessment, the biomass level of the common dolphinfish stock would drop below biologically sustainable levels, with negative consequences on the socio-economic viability of the fisheries concerned. The transitional measures shall apply in international waters in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

2. Paragraph 13 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 shall be amended as follows:

A GFCM working group shall be established in 2022 in order to develop a multiannual management plan for common dolphinfish fisheries that comprises measures for the management of FADs, taking into consideration socio-economic elements as well as efforts made by CPCs in managing relevant fisheries and in applying, in some cases, stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/13 on the mitigation of fisheries impacts for the conservation of seabirds in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (New York, September 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.2 that specifically calls for sustainably managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts and taking action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the FAO International Plan of Action for reducing incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries;

RECOGNIZING that the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are key global biodiversity hotspots and critical habitats for seabirds;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING the recommendations by the second performance review of the GFCM to develop conservation measures and management plans, making full use of the science-policy interface provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and to initiate, within five years, appropriate interim management measures to conserve fisheries, stocks and habitats targeted by the different fisheries, comprising the small-scale fisheries sector;

NOTING that the signatories of the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, specifically in its paragraph 37, urged all riparian states to comply with the management measures adopted by the GFCM and to ensure an adequate protection of vulnerable species, including seabirds;

FURTHER NOTING that the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, specifically in its paragraphs 27 and 47, calls upon Black Sea riparian countries to enhance multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of resources, particularly with regard to data collection, scientific evaluation and implementation of an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework in the Black Sea;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that "also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species;

CONSIDERING that several seabird species are listed under Annex II: List of endangered or threatened species of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment

and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), and that the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas has implemented a regional action plan;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature recognizes the impaired conservation status of all Mediterranean and Black Sea seabirds, such as the critically endangered Balearic shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*), the vulnerable Yelkouan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*) and the vulnerable Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*);

CONSIDERING the need to develop a common regional strategy to understand and significantly reduce the impacts of fisheries on seabirds, including based on information collected through unified protocols;

RECOGNIZING that most seabird bycatch and fishing mortality in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea falls upon longline and trawl fisheries, and that mitigation measures need to be adopted to minimize and mitigate such unwanted interactions;

RECALLING the potential impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on many seabird species;

CONCERNED that despite measures adopted at the international level, including through Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/3 on reducing incidental catch of seabirds in fisheries in the GFCM area of application, many populations of seabird species breeding and foraging in the GFCM area of application, including the critically endangered Balearic shearwater, continue to decline and such reductions very seriously threaten the survival of these species;

CONSIDERING that synergies on issues of reciprocal interest shall be sought among regional fisheries management organizations, including by considering Recommendation 07-07 on reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds in longline fisheries of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas as well as Conservation Measure 24-02 on longline weighting for seabird conservation, Conservation Measure 25-02 on the minimisation of the incidental mortality of seabirds in the course of longline fishing or longline fishing research in the Convention Area and Conservation Measure 25-03 on the minimisation of the incidental mortality of seabirds and marine mammals in the course of trawl fishing in the Convention Area of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources;

TAKING into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) on the incidental catch of seabirds and especially the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) on the need to increase the selectivity of fishing gear in order to reduce bycatch and ensure a better conservation status of seabirds;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives and scope

General objectives

1. This recommendation engages contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to develop mechanisms ensuring that additional data are collected on the incidental catch of seabirds in fishing activities.

2. This recommendation also establishes measures to improve the conservation status of seabirds and minimize, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate the unwanted interactions between fishing operations and seabirds, particularly for species listed under Annex II to the SPA/BD protocol of the Barcelona Convention.

3. This recommendation engages the CPCs to develop conservation measures in high-risk areas defined by the SAC, ensuring that the incidental catch of the critically endangered Balearic shearwater in fishing activities is monitored and eliminated where possible and taking into consideration national measures.

Scope

4. This recommendation shall apply to all commercial fishing activities in geographical subareas (GSAs) 1 to 27 where, according to the SAC advice, the bycatch of seabird species listed under Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention occurs, mainly when seabirds are caught incidentally during fishing operations.

PART II
Specific objectives

5. This recommendation shall contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 of the GFCM Agreement and align with the principles listed in Article 5 therein.

6. In particular, the recommendation shall aim to:

a) improve the scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge of fisheries where the bycatch of seabirds occurs by applying the measures provided for in Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/3;

b) evaluate and develop mitigation measures for areas with high incidental catch of Balearic shearwater in order to ensure that these are recorded and monitored and solutions are developed to keep it at the lowest possible level;

c) develop, if necessary and upon the SAC advice, a protocol for the collection of data and the reporting of the incidental bycatch of seabirds during fishing activities;

d) develop transitional mitigation measures for areas with high incidental catch to ensure that bycatch events are recorded and monitored and solutions are developed to keep such incidental catch at the lowest possible level; and

e) develop pilot projects for seabird species with impaired conservation status in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, such as the critically endangered Balearic shearwater(*Puffinus mauretanicus*), the vulnerable Yelkouan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*), the vulnerable Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*) and Scopoli's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*).

PART III
Monitoring and data collection

7. In accordance with Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/3, the CPCs shall systematically report information on incidental catch rates of seabirds in line with Task 3 of the technical manual of the DCRF, as listed in Annex 1.

8. From 2022 onwards, all CPCs shall be involved in data collection to fully characterize the bycatch of seabirds in fisheries, including the incidental catch of the critically endangered Balearic shearwater. Therefore, in addition to the reporting obligations stemming from the DCRF, the CPCs shall report, by 30 April each year, on the basis of the SAC advice, the information listed in Annex 2.

9. Upon request of the CPCs and with the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, the GFCM shall establish, in 2023, pilot projects with a view to strengthening existing observation and monitoring programmes in order to collect additional data and ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation.

10. The SAC shall compile and assess, in 2025, all available information collected pursuant to Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/3 on the incidental bycatch of seabirds in fisheries in the GFCM area

of application, available under the DCRF or stemming from any other source of additional information, including, but not limited to, scientific literature, surveys at sea, research projects, etc. Based on the data collected, the SAC shall adapt, if need be on a fishery-by-fishery basis, the measures listed in Annex 3 to minimize, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate bycatch as well as to reduce post-release mortality and complement them with appropriate guidelines[1] and training.

11. In 2022, the current GFCM workshop on vulnerable and sensitive marine species shall identify the areas of high risk of incidental catch. A follow-up workshop building on additional data collected by pilot projects shall be conducted in 2025 in order to complete the provisional mapping and adapt the transitional conservation measures. All results shall be presented to the SAC in 2025 for the provision of advice on conservation measures.

PART IV
Conservation measures

12. In addition to GFCM Recommendation 35/2011/3, the CPCs shall evaluate, by 2024 at the latest, the effectiveness of at least two transitional mitigation measures contained in Annex 3 to improve the conservation status of seabird species, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate the risk of incidental catch of seabirds in fishing operations and associated mortality. In areas where the above GFCM workshop has identified a high incidental catch of Balearic shearwater, provided that there are no national measures established, two of the mitigation measures contained in Annex 3 shall be evaluated by the end of 2023 at the latest in order to reduce the incidental mortality of this species in longline and trawl fisheries by minimizing the attraction of individuals of the species to fishing vessels and by preventing them from attempting to seize baited hooks, particularly during line setting, and from accessing trawl cables.

PART V
Final provisions

13. In 2022, based on all the data collected and available in the literature, the SAC shall:

a) map the areas with a high risk of incidental catch for each seabird species covered by this recommendation;

b) adapt and complete, if necessary, the list of possible mitigation measures for these areas; and

c) evaluate scenarios of fishing behaviour, fishing gear and other variables where incidental catch is more likely to occur, for example in areas already protected and in feeding areas during the breeding/nesting seasons, and develop recommendations on actions that would improve the prevention of seabird bycatch. In doing so, the SAC shall take into account the socio-economic and environmental impacts of such scenarios.

14. At its twenty-sixth session in 2025, the SAC shall report on the progress accomplished thereon and on identified gaps in knowledge and provide the necessary elements for setting out future measures to enhance the conservation of seabirds in the GFCM area of application. The SAC and the Compliance Committee shall review the implementation of this recommendation on a biennial basis.

15. At its forty-eighth session in 2025, the GFCM shall review the SAC advice and consider adopting long-term mitigation measures to achieve the objectives of this recommendation.

16. The provisions contained in this recommendation are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that could be adopted by the CPCs.

[1] FAO and ACCOBAMS. 2019. *Good practice guide for the handling of seabirds caught incidentally in Mediterranean pelagic longline fisheries*. Leaflet. (available at: http://www.fao.org/3/i8937en/I8937EN.pdf)

Annex 1

Task 3 of the technical manual of the DCRF requires each CPC to report annually on the following elements:

- year;
- fleet segment;
- fishing gear;
- group of vulnerable species;
- family;
- species (when possible);
- total number of individuals caught;
- total weight of dead individuals caught;
- number of individuals released alive;
- number of dead individuals; and
- number of individuals released in unknown status.

Annex 2

In addition to the elements listed in Annex 1, CPCs shall report each year, possibly by 30 April, the following information:

- International Maritime Organization (IMO) number of the fishing vessel, date, time and location of the catch, measured size of individuals caught dead and estimated size of individuals caught alive;
- calculation of the rates of incidental mortality of seabirds associated with each fishery, details of the seabird species involved and estimates of total seabird mortality (at GSA or GFCM statistical rectangle level, if possible);
- measures to reduce or eliminate incidental mortality of seabirds that are in place in each fishery and the extent to which any of these are voluntary or mandatory, together with an assessment of their effectiveness; and
- scientific observer programmes that may provide additional spatial and temporal coverage of fisheries to allow statistically robust estimation of incidental catch of seabirds associated with each fishery.

Annex 3

The mitigation measures may comprise, *inter alia*, the following elements to be adapted according to the specificities of each fishery:

- Set fishing gear at night preferably (one hour after dusk and one hour before dawn).
- Use a modified gear with increased weighting. Vessels should be encouraged to develop gear configurations that minimize risks of seabird interaction with parts of the net, lines and hooks to which they are most vulnerable. This can include increasing the weighting or decreasing the buoyancy of the fishing gear to ensure that it sinks faster.
- Use a modified gear with at least a single tori line and coloured streamers. Brightly coloured streamers may be either short or long, or both. It is recommended that short streamers are attached at 1 m intervals and long streamers at 5 m intervals along the aerial extent of the line. For fishing vessels below 35 metres length overall, the tori line should be attached at a height of at least 6 metres and should include an aerial extent of 75 metres, with streamers reaching the surface of the water every 5 metre along the first 55 metres of the line. A suitable towed device should be used to drag, maximize aerial extent and maintain the line behind the vessel during crosswinds.
- Prohibit the discharge of offal and discards during the shooting and hauling of fishing gear. Nets and other types of fishing gear should be cleaned prior to setting in order to remove any item that might attract seabirds. Additionally, vessels should adopt shooting and hauling procedures that minimize the floating time of the fishing gear on the water surface. The maintenance of nets and other types of gear should not be carried out, to the extent possible, when the nets or gear are in the water.
- Ensure regular capacity-building (i.e. training) for an appropriate and safe release of caught individuals[2].
- Conduct fishing operations in such a way that hooklines or cables sink as soon as possible beyond the reach of seabirds once they are set in the water.
- Deploy a streamer line during the setting of the fishing gear to deter seabirds from approaching the hookline or trawling cables.
- Encourage the use of bird exclusion devices[1] to discourage seabirds from foraging on baits during the hauling of longlines.
- Make every effort to ensure that seabirds captured alive during fishing operations are released alive and hooks are safely removed, if necessary, without endangering their life[2].

[1]FAO and ACCOBAMS. 2019. Good practice guide for the handling of seabirds caught incidentally in Mediterranean pelagic longline fisheries. Leaflet (available at: http://www.fao.org/3/i8937en/I8937EN.pdf).

Examples of bird exclusion devices can be found at: https://www.ccamlr.org/en/fisheries/bird-exclusion-devices-use-ccamlr-longline-fisheries.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/14 on the mitigation of fisheries impacts for the conservation of sea turtles

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that the incidental catch of sea turtle species in relation to fishing activities may seriously affect sea turtle populations in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the recommendations by the second performance review of the GFCM to develop conservation measures and management plans, making full use of the science-policy interface provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), and to initiate, within five years, appropriate interim management measures to conserve fisheries, stocks and habitats targeted by the different fisheries, comprising the small-scale fisheries sector;

RECALLING the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of several marine reptile species occurring in the convention area therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/3 prohibiting the use of driftnets for fisheries of large pelagic species and Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/4 on the incidental catch of sea turtles in fisheries in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 “Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources” that “also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

AIMING to reduce the bycatch of sea turtles in the GFCM area of application, thus contributing to improve the conservation status of these animals, in line with an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECOGNIZING the need to collect more data and technical information in order to fully assess the advantages and risks associated with the possible adoption of other types of measures modifying the characteristics of fishing gear, as well as any other potential impact on fishing activities;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) and, in particular, the need to increase the selectivity of fishing gear to reduce bycatch and ensure a better conservation status of sea turtles;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Objectives

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall encourage further actions to improve the conservation status of sea turtle species and measures to mitigate or eliminate the risk of incidental catch of sea turtles in fishing operations and/or the associated mortality.

2. The CPCs shall enhance the reporting of data and information on the incidental catch rates of sea turtles in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF).

3. The CPCs are encouraged to take the necessary steps to implement existing legislation and mitigation measures to mitigate and, where possible, eliminate the incidental catch of sea turtles during fishing operations, such as but not limited to:

- fishing gear modifications and alternative fishing gear types;
- time-area fishing restrictions and closures, such as those based for instance on spatial recognition measures to identify sea turtle presence;
- improvements in fishing gear marking and detection, including acoustic reflectivity, such as the use of coloured nets, light passive reflectors, thicker twine diameter, corks or other materials within the net, metal compounds that have acoustic detection features such as barium sulfate, and illuminating nets with battery-operated light sticks;
- implementation of maximum potential bycatch thresholds and use of turtle excluder devices with sorting and shepherding devices; and
- modifications in fishing behaviour and strategies, such as reduced soaking time, retrieving gear during daytime and setting hooks deeper than turtles most common depth range (40–100 metres).

4. The CPCs are encouraged to facilitate the implementation of measures to avoid entanglement during depredation activity and to reduce post-release mortality, through appropriate guidelines[1] and training.

5. In 2026 at the latest, the CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat at least two mitigation measures adopted pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 in order to improve the conservation status of sea turtles, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate the risk of incidental catch of sea turtles during fishing operations and the associated mortality. In this regard, the areas and fleets with higher risks of interactions should be taken into consideration.

PART II
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision

6. The SAC shall compile, assess and evaluate all available data and information collected under the DCRF pursuant to Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/4 as well as any source of additional information including, but not limited to, scientific literature, surveys at sea and research projects.

7. Upon request of CPCs and with the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, the GFCM shall establish, in 2023 at the latest, pilot projects with a view to strengthening existing observation and monitoring programmes to collect additional data and ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation.

[1] FAO and ACCOBAMS. 2019. *Good practice guide for the handling of sea turtles caught incidentally in Mediterranean fisheries*. Leaflet (available at http://www.fao.org/3/i8951en/I8951EN.pdf).

8. At its twenty-sixth session in 2025, the SAC shall report to the GFCM on the progress accomplished thereon and on identified gaps in knowledge and provide the necessary elements for setting out future measures to enhance the conservation of sea turtle populations in the GFCM area of application.

9. At its forty-eighth session in 2025, upon receipt of advice from the SAC, the GFCM may consider, if appropriate, adopting further measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives of this recommendation.

10. The provisions contained in this recommendation are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that could be adopted by the CPC

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/15 on the mitigation of fisheries impacts for the conservation of cetaceans

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that the incidental catch of cetacean species in relation to fishing activities may seriously affect cetacean populations in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the recommendations by the second performance review of the GFCM to develop conservation measures and management plans, making full use of the science-policy interface provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), and to initiate, within five years, appropriate interim management measures to conserve fisheries, stocks and habitats targeted by the different fisheries, comprising the small-scale fisheries sector;

RECALLING the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area whose objectives include the mitigation of negative impacts between cetaceans and fishing activities;

RECALLING the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of several cetacean species occurring in the convention area therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/3 prohibiting the use of driftnets for fisheries of large pelagic species, Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2 on the mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application, Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and the conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea and Resolution GFCM/43/2019/2 on enhancing the conservation of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 “Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources” that “also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

AIMING to reduce the bycatch of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application, thus contributing to improve the conservation status of these animals, in line with an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the SAC on the need to endorse measures to reduce the bycatch of cetaceans;

RECOGNIZING the need to collect more data and technical information in order to fully assess the advantages and risks associated with the possible adoption of other types of measures modifying the characteristics of fishing gear, as well as any other potential impact on fishing activities;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) and, in particular, the need to increase the selectivity of fishing gear to reduce bycatch and ensure a better conservation status of cetaceans;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall encourage further actions to improve the conservation status of cetacean species and make every effort to support global and regional actions to investigate on the most appropriate measures to mitigate bycatch and depredation and implement them, as necessary, in close collaboration with the fishing communities and other relevant stakeholders.

2. The CPCs shall further enhance the collection and monitoring of data and the reporting of information on the incidental catch rates of cetaceans, in line with the FAO technical manual on *Monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: methodology for data collection* and the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), with the aim to support regional monitoring programmes.

PART II
Conservation and management measures

3. The CPCs are invited to expand bycatch mitigation measures to minimize and eliminate, where possible, the incidental catch of cetaceans during fishing operations in fisheries with a high risk of bycatch identified by the SAC. Such mitigation measures shall be accompanied by an appropriate monitoring to establish the efficacy of the actions and may include, *inter alia*:

- fishing gear modifications and alternative fishing gear types;
- improvements in fishing gear marking and detection;
- time-area fishing restrictions or closures, if appropriate;
- implementation of maximum potential bycatch thresholds;
- use of acoustic deterrent devices; and
- modifications in fishing behaviour and strategies.

4. The CPCs are invited to identify areas with a high risk of interactions between fisheries and cetaceans and, based on the existing pressures, may consider modifying the national legislation in force.

5. The CPCs may also consider, on a voluntary basis, other types of management such as incentive-based management, rewarding low-impact operators while simultaneously driving poorly performing operators to adopt better practices or leave the industry, or market-based incentive management employing, for example, dolphin-safe or dolphin-friendly labelling in fisheries with a medium to high risk of interactions with cetaceans.

6. The CPCs are encouraged to facilitate the implementation of measures to avoid entanglement during depredation and to reduce post-release mortality, through appropriate guidelines[1] and training.

[1] FAO and ACCOBAMS. 2019. *Good practice guide for the handling of cetaceans caught incidentally in Mediterranean fisheries*. Leaflet. (available at: http://www.fao.org/3/ca0015en/CA0015EN.pdf)

7. In 2026 at the latest, the CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, at least two mitigation measures adopted pursuant to paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6 in order to improve the conservation status of cetaceans, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate the risk of incidental catch of cetaceans in fishing operations and the associated mortality.

8. The SAC may recommend additional measures to be examined at the forty-eighth annual session of the GFCM.

PART III
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision

9. The SAC and the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) shall compile, assess and evaluate all available data and information collected under the DCRF pursuant to Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2 as well as any source of additional information including, but not limited to, scientific literature, surveys at sea and research projects.

10. Upon request of CPCs and with the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, the GFCM shall develop, in 2023 at the latest, a pilot project with a view to establishing an observation and monitoring programme to collect additional data and ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation.

11. The twenty-sixth session of the SAC in 2025 and the thirteenth session of the WGBS shall report to the GFCM on the progress accomplished thereon and on the identified knowledge gaps as well as on socio-economic studies on the depredation by cetaceans, in order to elaborate appropriate compensation and bycatch mitigation measures, which may help to prevent fishers' reactions. The SAC and the WGBS shall provide the necessary elements for the set-up of a bycatch management framework that will also include reflections on conservation objectives and targets and a timescale for their achievement, the maximum potential bycatch thresholds, the coverage of onboard scientific observer and, if possible, the best estimates of population size. Based on the data collected, the SAC shall adapt, if need be, on a fishery-by-fishery basis, the measures listed in Part II to minimize, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate bycatch and complement them with appropriate guidelines[1] and training.

12. The advice of the SAC and the WGBS in 2025 should facilitate area- and threat-based[2] conservation efforts to contribute to the conservation management of cetaceans.

13. At its forty-eighth session, in 2025, upon receipt of advice from the SAC and the WGBS, the GFCM shall consider, if appropriate, the adoption of further measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives set in this recommendation.

PART IV
Final provisions

14. The provisions contained in this recommendation are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that could be adopted by the CPCs.

[2]ACCOBAMS threat-based management approach based on pressures such as: interactions with fisheries (all), pollution including marine litter, anthropogenic noise, ship strikes, cetacean watching, captivity-related issues, climate change impacts, others.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/16 on additional mitigation measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fishery management;

RECOGNIZING that fisheries and bycatch are likely the most serious current anthropogenic threat to elasmobranchs (including sharks, skates and rays);

RECALLING the FAO International Plan of Action for the conservation and management of sharks;

RECALLING the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of some shark species in its Annex II and Annex III;

NOTING the importance of harmonizing conservation and management measures with other international conventions for the protection of elasmobranch species;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and, in particular, the need to identify species and ensure a better conservation status of elasmobranchs, including by protecting coastal areas from the most active fishing gear;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the conservation status assessment of select elasmobranch species currently included in Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol;

RECALLING the recommendations by the second performance review of the GFCM to develop conservation measures and management plans, making full use of the science-policy interface provided by the SAC and to initiate, within five years, appropriate interim management measures, to conserve fisheries, stocks and habitats targeted by the different fisheries, comprising the small-scale fisheries sector;

FURTHER RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea , in particular its Output 1.3 “Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources” that “also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species”;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/2 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3, which prohibits the finning of sharks and requires that retention measures be adopted and fins be naturally attached for all shark landing;

FURTHER CONSIDERING Recommendation 04-10 of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT and supplemental Recommendation 07-06 concerning sharks as well as Conservation and Management Measure 2010-07 of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission requiring the safe release of all shark species caught and the implementation of trade-related measures as well as measures on gear selectivity, size limits and spatial and seasonal closures;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that synergies on issues of reciprocal interest shall be sought between ICCAT, the GFCM and other regional fisheries management organizations;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) and, in particular, the need to increase the selectivity of fishing gear to reduce bycatch and ensure a better conservation status of elasmobranchs;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, scope and definitions

General objective

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall encourage further actions to improve the conservation status of elasmobranchs and measures to mitigate or eliminate, where possible, the risk of incidental catch in fishing operations and/or the associated mortality in the GFCM area of application.

Scope

2. This recommendation applies to all elasmobranch species of the Mediterranean Sea listed in Annex II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol and includes the adoption of species-specific actions as listed in the annex to this recommendation.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

   a) "Recreational fishing" means non-commercial fishing exploiting marine living resources for recreation, tourism or sport. Such activities may be exerted by natural or legal persons, including by commercial entities in the tourism and sport competition sectors.

   b) "DCRF manual" means the manual prepared by the SAC and endorsed by the GFCM at its thirty-ninth session, resulting from the implementation of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF).

PART II
Conservation measures

4. The CPCs are invited to take the necessary steps to reduce the mortality of any elasmobranch species incidentally caught during fishing operations by adopting relevant mitigation measures, including the establishment of an incentive system for vessel captains to reduce incidental elasmobranch mortality as well as technical training and certification schemes for vessel captains; and by conducting research to improve fishing gear, equipment and fishing techniques, with to a view to reducing bycatch elasmobranch mortality and increasing post-release survival rates.

5. The CPCs are invited to adopt mitigation measures to minimize and eliminate, where possible, the incidental catch of elasmobranchs during fishing operations in fisheries with a high risk of bycatch identified by the SAC and, where possible, in fisheries with a low risk of bycatch. Such measures shall be accompanied by an appropriate monitoring to establish the efficacy of the actions and may include, *inter alia*:

- fishing gear modifications and alternative fishing gear types;
- improvements in fishing gear marking and detection;
- time-area fishing restrictions or closures, if appropriate;
- implementation of maximum potential bycatch thresholds; and
- use of magnetic deterrent devices, when based on scientific studies and after a cost-benefit evaluation.

6. The CPCs may also consider, on a voluntary basis, other types of management such as incentive-based management, which rewards low impact operators while simultaneously driving poorly performing operators to adopt better practices or leave the industry, or market-based incentive management, which includes for example elasmobranch-safe and elasmobranch-friendly labelling in medium to high-risk fisheries.

7. The CPCs shall require fishing vessels catching sharks species as bycatch or incidental catch to limit the bycatch of sharks listed in Annex III to the SPA/BD Protocol to a maximum percentage of the total catch in weight by fishing trip or to no more than three specimens. In 2023, the SAC shall assess the most up-to-date catch and composition data by species. Based on SAC scientific advice, the GFCM will agree, at its forty-sixth session, on a limit of a maximum percentage of catch, expressed in weight.

PART III
Data collection, monitoring and research

8. The CPCs shall enhance the collection and monitoring of data and the reporting of information on the incidental catch of elasmobranchs in line with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/2, with the FAO technical manual on *Monitoring the incidental catch of vulnerable species in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: methodology for data collection* and with Task 3 of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), with the aim to support regional monitoring programmes.

9. The CPCs are invited to identify elasmobranch critical habitats, study the impacts of fishing gear (e.g. wire leader in longline) and possible alternative fishing gear; and based on the existing pressures, may consider modifying the national legislation in force.

10. The SAC is invited, when relevant, to conduct socio-economic studies on the depredation caused by elasmobranchs, in order to elaborate appropriate compensation and bycatch mitigation measures, which may help to prevent fishers' reactions.

11. Upon request of the CPCs and with the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, the GFCM shall establish, in 2022, pilot projects for the species listed under Annex II and Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol with a view to establishing an observation and monitoring programme to collect additional data and ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation.

12. The CPCs shall report, by 30 April 2026 at the latest, on at least one activity per species/gender listed in the annex to this recommendation and present in the geographical subarea where fishing activities are carried out, or on at least five species-specific actions in total to improve the conservation status of elasmobranchs, mitigate and, where possible, eliminate the risk of incidental catch of elasmobranch in fishing operations and the associated mortality.

13. By 2025, the SAC is requested to compile, assess and evaluate the results of the actions listed in the annex to this recommendation as reported by CPCs, including available data on the spatial distribution of critical habitats of elasmobranchs. The GFCM Secretariat shall implement ad hoc IT reporting tools to facilitate the transmission of requested data through current platforms such as the DCRF and/or the national reports to the SAC.

14. Based on the results, the SAC shall advise on the setting of new measures with the objective to improve the status of elasmobranchs listed in Annex II and Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, including but not limited to:

a) the establishment of a maximum percentage in weight or of a catch limit of no more than three specimens per species listed in Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol in the total bycatch by vessel and by fishing trip;

b) the adoption of a species-specific minimum and maximum landing size taking into account the gestation and reproductive strategy of the species listed in Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol and not covered by d);

c) the restriction of the recreational fishing of elasmobranchs; and

d) the restriction of the catch, landing and sale of species covered by this recommendation.

15. The SAC shall advise, by 2025, on other endangered or critically endangered species of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea and provide an update of the annex to this recommendation.

16. In addition, the SAC shall advise, by 2023, on good practices to increase post-release survival rates of elasmobranchs caught as bycatch in fisheries other than pelagic longlines, for which a good practice guide has been already produced and circulated among CPCs[1].

17. At its twenty-fourth session in 2023, the SAC shall report to the GFCM on the progress accomplished thereon and on the identified knowledge gaps as well as provide the necessary elements for setting out a conservation and management framework for species listed in Annex II and Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol, that will also include reflections on conservation objectives and targets and a timescale for their achievement, the annual maximum potential elasmobranch-limit-mortality, the coverage of onboard scientific observers and, if possible, the best estimates of population size.

PART V
Final provisions

18. The CPCs shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to protect elasmobranch species from the impacts of fishing activities that jeopardize the conservation of these particular species.

19. This recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

20. The SAC advice, in 2023, should facilitate area- and threat-based[2] conservation efforts to contribute to the conservation management of elasmobranch species.

21. The SAC shall review this recommendation in 2024 and the Compliance Committee (CoC) shall review its implementation on a biennial basis afterwards.

22. At its forty-sixth session, in 2023, upon receipt of advice from the SAC and the CoC, the GFCM shall consider, if appropriate, the adoption of further measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives set in this recommendation.

[1] FAO and ACCOBAMS. 2019. Good practice guide for the handling of sharks and rays caught incidentally in Mediterranean pelagic longline fisheries. Leaflet. (available at: http://www.fao.org/3/i9152en/I9152EN.pdf).

[2] The threats-based management approach is based on pressures such as: interactions with fisheries (all), pollution including marine litter, anthropogenic noise, ship strikes, at-sea watching, captivity related issues, climate change impacts, others. It has been adopted for instance by ACCOBAMS for cetacean species.

Annex

Species-specific actions for elasmobranchs

Smooth-hound sharks (*Mustelus asterias, M. mustelus, M. punctulatus*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of smooth-hound sharks in all fisheries, including pelagic/midwater trawlers targeting small pelagics;
- assess the survival rates of smooth-hound sharks caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify the critical habitats of smooth-hound sharks;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of smooth-hound sharks, if any; and
- assess priority market demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Common thresher (*Alopias vulpinus*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of common thresher in all fisheries;
- assess the survival rates of common thresher caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify the critical habitats of common thresher;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of common thresher, if any; and
- assess priority market demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of sandbar shark in all fisheries;
- assess the survival rates of sandbar sharks caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify the critical habitats of sandbar shark;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of sandbar shark, if any; and
- assess priority market demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Gulper shark (*Centrophorus granulosus*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of gulper shark in all fisheries;
- assess the survival rates of gulper sharks caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify the critical habitats of gulper shark;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of the gulper shark, if any; and
- assess priority market's demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Sharpnose sevengill shark (*Heptranchias perlo*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of sharpnose sevengill shark in all fisheries;
- assess the survival rates of sharpnose sevengill sharks caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify critical habitats of sharpnose sevengill shark;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of sharpnose sevengill shark, if any; and
- assess priority market's demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Piked dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of piked dogfish in all fisheries;
- assess the survival rates of piked dogfish caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify critical habitats of piked dogfish;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of piked dogfish, if any; and
- assess priority market's demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*):

- assess the incidental (bycatch) and targeted catch rates of blue shark in all fisheries;
- assess the survival rates of blue shark caught as bycatch in the different fisheries;
- identify critical habitats of blue shark;
- identify fishing technology solutions to reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival rates;
- compile any fisheries management measures in place, including spatial measures, that can positively affect the conservation of blue shark, if any; and
- assess priority market's demand (domestic, export, etc.), if any.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/17 on a catch certificate scheme for turbot in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

NOTING that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 recognizes the need to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in order to ensure prosperity, food security and sustainability for all;

ACKNOWLEDGING the principles and international standards of responsible fishing practices enshrined in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the FAO international plans of action, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture provide a concrete set of actions to be implemented by the riparian countries, particularly with regard to the fight against IUU fishing;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3 amending Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29), in particular paragraph 3 b) on the development of a catch certificate pilot scheme for turbot;

NOTING that the Compliance Committee, at its fourteenth session (online, May 2021), recommended developing a catch documentation scheme for Black Sea turbot;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, geographical scope and definitions

General objective

1. This recommendation establishes a regional catch documentation scheme (CDS) to identify the origin of turbot catches in the Black Sea. The regional CDS shall be implemented in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3, whereby the development of the CDS aims at identifying the origin of turbot catches in the Black Sea and ensuring their traceability.

Geographical scope

2. This recommendation applies to all fishing activities exploiting turbot in geographical subarea (GSA) 29.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

b) "Catch documentation scheme" or "CDS" means a system established in accordance with relevant international obligations, with the primary purpose of helping to determine, throughout the supply chain whether the fish originates from catches that are consistent with applicable national, regional and international conservation and management measures.

c) "Catch certificate" means an official document accompanying a consignment and validated by the competent authority, allowing to pass accurate and verifiable information concerning fish throughout the supply chain.

d) "Supply chain" means a sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of fish from catch to the point of import in the end market, including events such as landing, transshipments, re-export, processing and transport.

e) "Turbot" means fish pertaining to the species *Scophthalmus maximus*.

PART II
Traceability of turbot catches in the Black Sea

Principles

4. A GFCM catch certificate shall be issued by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting Parties (CPCs) to identify the origin of turbot catches in GSA 29 in all the steps of the supply chain. Such certificate shall be used to certify that such catches have been made in accordance with the conservation and management measures established in Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4 as amended by Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3.

5. A valid GFCM catch certificate issued by the competent authorities of the flag CPC shall accompany all landings, imports, exports and re-exports of turbot.

6. Each CPC shall take the necessary steps to implement a CDS for the purpose of identifying the origin of turbot catches in GSA 29 and in order to support the implementation of the multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries established under Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3.

7. Such measure shall be without prejudice to other traceability systems in force ensuring the same level of control over the traceability of turbot by CPCs.

8. Each catch certificate shall have a unique document identification number. Such number shall be specific to the flag CPC and assigned to each fishing vessel authorized to fish for turbot. The catch certificate shall not be transferable to another fishing vessel.

9. The competent authorities of the relevant flag CPC shall validate the catch certificates for turbot only once it has been established, after a verification of the supporting documents and corresponding consignment, that all the information contained in the certificates is accurate.

Pilot phase

10. For a transitional period of two years, from 2022 to 2023, the CPCs shall participate in the pilot phase of the CDS, where all the above traceability measures shall be fully implemented to the extent possible, taking into account specificities of the turbot fisheries of CPCs.

11. A validated catch certificate, based on the template in the annex to this recommendation (for the pilot phase) and issued by the competent authorities of the flag CPC, shall be attached to all landings, imports, exports and re-exports of turbot caught from the entry into force of this recommendation.

12. In parallel to the pilot phase, the Working Group on integrated MCS measures and catch documentation scheme for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea, established pursuant to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4 as amended by Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3, shall be tasked to develop a permanent GFCM turbot CDS according to the terms of reference provided in the annex of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3. In 2023, such working group shall submit to the Compliance Committee (CoC) its recommendations for a permanent GFCM CDS for turbot.

13. The working group referred to in paragraph 12 shall be tasked to develop a user guide for the implementation of the permanent GFCM CDS for turbot, based on the results and experience from the implementation of the pilot phase. The working group shall recommend training and capacity-building activities to the CoC, taking into account the experience of CPCs in implementing existing national, regional and international traceability schemes to ensure the effective implementation of the permanent GFCM CDS for turbot. In addition, the working group shall assess the results of the pilot phase of the paper-based CDS when working towards the establishment of the permanent CDS scheme, which may be electronic.

14. The CPCs shall report annually to the working group referred to in paragraph 12 on the implementation of the CDS pilot phase in preparation of a permanent GFCM CDS for turbot. The CPCs shall submit their annual reports to the GFCM Secretariat at least 60 days before the date of the session of the CoC.

15. Upon CoC advice, the GFCM shall adopt the permanent GFCM CDS for turbot at its forty-sixth session in 2023 and CPCs shall start implementing it from 1 January 2025.

16. Flag CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat their competent authorities for the validation, check and verification of the catch certificates referred to in paragraph 1 by the entry into force of this recommendation at the latest.

PART III
Final provisions

17. The provisions contained in this recommendation shall be applied without prejudice to stricter rules enforced by the CPCs.

Annex

GFCM pilot catch documentation scheme for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">GFCM catch certificate

Turbot in GSA 29</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Catch document number</td><td colspan="2">Validating authority</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Name of the fishing vessel’s master</td><td colspan="2">Address

Tel/fax/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Signature and stamp of the fishing vessel’s master</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">2. Vessel name and registration no.</td><td>Flag and home port</td><td>Call sign/IMO (where applicable)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Inmarsat/fax/telephone number/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">3. Port</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Port of departure and country</td><td>Port of landing and country</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4. Master of the fishing vessel</td><td colspan="2">Name

Address

Tel/fax/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fishing licence number - valid to (date)</td><td>Turbot fishing authorization number - valid to (date)</td><td>Signature of the holder</td></tr>
<tr><td>5. Catch area (coordinates longitude, latitude)</td><td>Catch date</td><td>Estimated live weight (kg)</td><td>Verified landed weight (kg)</td></tr>
<tr><td>a.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>b.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

c.			
d.			
e.			
6. Flag state authority validation			
Name and title		**Signature**	**Date and stamp**
7. Name of the exporter, if applicable		**Address** **Tel/fax/email**	
Exported weight (kg)		**Product type**	
Signature and stamp of the exporter – Date			
8. Export authority validation **Name and title**		**Signature**	**Date and stamp**
9. Name of the importer		**Address** **Tel/fax/email**	
Weight imported (kg)		**Product type**	
Signature and stamp of the importer – Date			
10. Import authority validation **Name and title**		**Signature**	**Date and stamp**

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/20 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply a precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stocks collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 (southern Adriatic Sea) as well as the transitional and emergency measures adopted since 2013 to curb the high levels of fishing mortality and implementing spatio-temporal measures including a catch limit, namely Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1,

Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18) and Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/8 on further emergency measures in 2019-2021 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18);

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recurrently considered that the stocks of anchovy and sardine are in overexploitation in geographical subareas (GSAs) 17 and 18;

RECALLING that, according to the latest scientific advice provided by the SAC at its twenty-second session (online, June 2021), both anchovy and sardine stocks are overexploited and in overexploitation with F/F_{MSY} = 1.51, SSB/SSB_{lim} = 1.05 and SSB/SSB_{pa} = 0.80 for anchovy and F/F_{MSY} = 4.43, SSB/SSB_{lim} = 1.11 and SSB/SSBpa = 0.67 for sardine;

NOTING that, the SAC, at its twenty-second session, acknowledged that the status of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea, despite extensive measures taken, is both overexploited and in overexploitation ($F_{current}/F_{MSY}$ ratio: 1.51 and 4.43 for anchovy and sardine, respectively; current spawning stock biomass was between B_{pa} and B_{lim} for both species);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable fisheries exploiting key small pelagic stocks (anchovy and sardine) in the Adriatic Sea (GSAs 17 and 18) by means of purse-seiners and pelagic-trawlers. On the basis of the SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other stocks and types of fishing gear.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stocks collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries including dependent industries. The plan should take account of the mixed nature of the fisheries and the nature of stock dynamics.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 17 and 18 agree to implement such multiannual management plan for the fisheries mentioned in paragraph 1 and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Adriatic Sea shall be developed in order to ensure that pending the finalization of scientific advice by the SAC and while minimizing socio-economic impacts, the stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels.

5. The multiannual management plan shall also pursue a reduction of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in GSAs 17 and 18.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation shall apply to GSAs 17 and 18.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

   a) "F_{msy}" means the value of the estimated fishing mortality that, with a given fishing pattern and under current average environmental conditions, gives the long-term maximum sustainable

yield, in the case of anchovy and sardine the agreed F_{msy} proxy is based on the Patterson exploitation rate of E= 0.4.

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "$B_{escapement}$" means a biomass limit below which a stock is considered to have reduced reproductive capacity, including any identified additional biomass need.

d) "F_{cap}" means a limit to F, which is used when providing catch advice without directly estimating the probability of stock spawning biomass > $B_{escapement}$.

e) "Stock within safe biological limits" means a stock with a high probability that its estimated spawning biomass at the end of the previous year is higher than the limit biomass reference point (B_{lim}).

f) "Adriatic Sea" means GSAs 17 and 18 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

g) "Vessel actively fishing" means any pelagic trawler or purse seiner targeting key stocks and entitled by the CPC whose flag it is flying to carry out specific fishing operations, during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

h) "Key stocks" means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined hereafter.

i) "Anchovy" means fish pertaining to the *Engraulis encrasicolus* species.

j) "Sardine" means fish pertaining to the *Sardina pilchardus* species.

k) "Small pelagics" means stocks of anchovy and sardine.

l) "Pelagic trawler" means a fishing vessel operating single or in pair with pelagic trawl net.

m) "Purse seiner" means a fishing vessel operating with purse seine net for small pelagic species.

n) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing' or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

o) "Designated landing points" means ports or places close to the shore designated by the CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

Part II

Specific objectives of the multiannual management plan and transitional measures

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim at contributing to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 of the GFCM Agreement and to the principles listed in Article 5 therein.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at MSY as soon as possible and at the latest by 31 December 2028, taking into account possible interactions between the two species;

c) prevent an increase in fishing capacity in relation to year 2014;

d) protect nursery and spawning areas and essential fish habitats important for the key stocks;

e) contribute to elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches, and by ensuring that all catches are landed; and

f) provide for measures to adjust the fishing capacity and catches to levels of fishing mortalities consistent with MSY, with a view to ensuring economically viable fleets and without overexploiting marine living resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-steps approach where: i) in the first two years, with the possibility of a third transitional year in case certain conditions are not met as set out in paragraph 12, catch limits and spatio-temporal measures shall be applied; and ii) from 2024 or 2025, on the basis of new scientific data, the SAC shall evaluate the state of the stocks and propose, on the basis of the harvest control rule (HCR), further measures and advisable yearly catch limits per species that would contribute to reaching Fmsy or Fmsy proxy and maintaining the stocks within safe biological limits, in line with the provisions contained in Parts II to VI.

11. In 2022 and 2023, a transitional fishing regime shall be established. The CPCs shall ensure that national or joint catch limits are established for small pelagics, aligned with an annual reduction of 5 percent for anchovy and 8 percent for sardine in 2022, and of 5 percent for anchovy and 9 percent for sardine in 2023. Such reductions shall be calculated with respect to 2021 catch limits. Based on this paragraph, the catch limits for 2022 and 2023, with the temporary allocation, are established in the annex to this recommendation.

12. In 2022 and 2023, the CPCs shall fully engage in supporting and completing the sardine benchmark assessment and the management strategy evaluation (MSE) as planned in paragraph 16 and in line with the details provided in Appendix 12 of the report of the twenty-second session of the SAC. If, by the annual session of the GFCM in 2023 the sardine benchmark and MSE are incomplete, the GFCM shall ensure that the transitional period is extended by one year so that both the benchmark and MSE for sardine are completed and agreed upon, in line with the SAC advice on the catch limits to be applied in 2024 based on latest available status of the stocks.

13. For CPCs with declared catches under 2 500 tonnes in 2014, a joint catch limit shall be established, where the same reductions as those identified in paragraph 11 shall apply. Catch limits for 2022–2023 are reported in the annex to this recommendation. The CPCs falling under the conditions of this paragraph shall not exceed 70 percent of the total joint limit at any time.

14. The catch limits by CPC established in paragraphs 11 to 13 for the period 2022–2023 or 2024, shall be set without prejudice to the discussions to take place in the context of the working group referred to under paragraph 15.

15. In 2022, within 30 calendar days following the twenty-third session of the SAC, the GFCM shall create a working group in order to establish a fair and equitable allocation key for small pelagics in the Adriatic Sea, taking into consideration the efforts made by the CPCs to manage small pelagic fisheries as well as the amount of historical catches, and apply in some cases stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation, also based on socio-economic considerations.

16. The SAC, at its twenty-third session in 2022, shall give mandate to the Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (WGSASP) to complete a sardine benchmark assessment in 2022 and to the Workshop on the assessment of management measures (WKMSE) to carry out an MSE in order to define the most appropriate HCR to be implemented for anchovy and sardine according to paragraphs 17 and 18.

PART III
Long-term management plan

17. A long-term management plan is established for the period 2024–2029 or 2025–2029. Each year, on the basis of the SAC advice and of the advisory timing established in paragraph 35, the GFCM

shall establish yearly catch limits by single species based on a HCR, in line with paragraph 18, based on the proposals of the WKMSE and endorsed by the SAC in 2023 or 2024.

18. The single species HCR, coupled with management based on catch limits, shall ensure a low probability of stock spawning biomass to fall below B_{lim} (5 percent probability), and shall be based on either:

a. a fixed F_{msy} strategy HCR based on F_{msy} or $F_{msy\ proxy}$ and $B_{pa;}$

b. a $B_{escapement}$ HCR, based on an optimal level of $B_{escapement}$ and, if necessary, F_{cap}; or

c. another HCR proposed by the WKMSE, in line with the terms of reference provided in Annex 2 of Recommendation GFCM 42/2018/8.

19. Catch limits allocations to CPCs shall be based on the outcomes of the working group referred to in paragraph 15.

20. The catches of species in excess of catch limits for the stocks in question may be deducted from the catch limits for the target species, provided that they do not exceed 9 percent of the catch limits for the target species. This provision shall only apply where the stocks of non-target species are within safe biological limits.

21. Starting from 2024, for the first three years, for any of the two species, the variation between the annual catch limits in comparison to the previous year shall not be higher than 10 percent, while for the remaining years of the multiannual management plan it shall not exceed 20 percent. These limitations in variation between the annual catch limits shall not apply in cases where the stocks are not within safe biological limits.

Safeguards

22. During the transitional period and/or during the long-term management plan, where scientific advice shows that the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below Blim, on the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the stocks concerned to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the targeted fishery for the stocks concerned and applying an adequate reduction of the catch limit.

PART IV
Technical measures

Spatial and temporal closure

23. During the transitional period, the CPCs shall apply specific temporal closures at the fleet level, not necessarily simultaneous for purse seiners and pelagic trawlers, in view of protecting the stocks during the spawning period. Such closures shall cover the entire distribution of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and affect all fleets targeting small pelagics, for no less than 30 successive days per fleet segment. During the closure period, vessels belonging to fleets subject to a closure shall be prohibited to change gear to target small pelagics (such as purse seine to or from pelagic trawl). Such closures shall take place according to the following timeframes:

a) from 1 October to 31 March for sardine; and

b) from 1 April to 30 September for anchovy.

24. By way of derogation from paragraph 23, such temporal closures may be implemented for periods of no less than 15 successive days for national fleets of less than 15 purse seiners and/or pelagic trawlers actively fishing for small pelagic stocks.

25. During the transitional period, the CPCs shall apply spatial closures to vessels over 12 metre length overall (LOA) for no less than 9 months. Such closures shall cover 30 percent of the territorial or inner waters identified as important for the protection of early-age classes of fish.

26. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 April 2022 and thereafter annually, the spatial restrictions, as defined in paragraphs 23 and 25, that they apply in the waters under their jurisdiction with a view to protecting spawning and nursery areas of small pelagic stocks.

27. In 2023, the WGSASP shall make an analysis and assess the benefits of spatio-temporal restrictions in order to define further appropriate restrictions, in view of protecting spawning and nursery areas for small pelagic stocks.

PART V
Fleet management measures

28. The CPCs shall ensure that the overall capacity of the fleets operating with pelagic trawls and purse-seines and actively fishing for key small pelagic stocks, in terms of gross tonnage and/or gross registered tonnage, engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in the national and GFCM registers, does not exceed the fleet capacity of small pelagic fisheries in 2014 over the duration of this recommendation.

29. Vessels authorized to fish for key small pelagic stocks by means of pelagic trawls and purse seines in the Adriatic Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying.

30. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 1 August of the first year and 31 March of each subsequent year, the list of vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for key small pelagic stocks for the current year or the forthcoming years, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 3 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/8 on further emergency measures in 2019–2021 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18).

31. Each CPC shall ensure the setting up of adequate mechanisms for the recording of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and for the recording of vessels' catches and fishing effort via the logbook as well as for the monitoring of fishing vessels' activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys, according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

32. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

33. By way derogation from paragraph 28, for national fleets with less than ten purse seiners and/or pelagic trawlers actively fishing for key small pelagic stocks, as recorded in national registers and in the GFCM fleet register in 2014, the CPCs shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity in terms of gross tonnage and/or gross registered tonnage, engine power (kW) and number of vessels, does not increase by more than 50 percent over the duration of this recommendation.

PART VI
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

34. From 2022, the SAC shall provide, on an annual basis, advice on the status of the key small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary reference points and to maintain or restore key stocks at levels which can produce MSY, in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 9.

35. Since the timely provision of scientific advice is essential for a correct management of short-lived species such as small pelagics, the CPCs shall ensure yearly that all scientific data (such as those from echo surveys) and commercial data (such as those on catch and discards) collected in Year N, are

provided to the GFCM Secretariat by 1 April of year N+1 in order to perform a yearly updated stock assessment in May of year N+1. From 2024 or 2025, yearly, on the basis of scientific advice and HCR and taking into account the socio-economic effects on fleets and on the industry, the SAC shall propose catch limits by single species to be adopted by the GFCM at its annual session of year N+1 and implemented from 1 January of year N+2.

36. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM may review the contents of the multiannual management plan.

37. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures in order to contribute to achieving those objectives.

38. Where, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide an accurate advice on the status of the key small pelagic stocks and on their exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. Such measures shall be based on the SAC advice, in accordance with the precautionary approach and taking into consideration environmental and socio-economic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

PART VII
Specific measures to address IUU fishing activities

39. The CPCs shall establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels actively fishing in the Adriatic Sea declare all the catches of key small pelagic stocks. From 1 January 2022, the obligation to declare catches by electronic means, including catches of non-target species in excess of 50 kg, shall apply, irrespective of the volume of the catch, to vessels above 12 metres LOA and to vessels catching more than 10 000 kg per year regardless of their length. For vessels below 12 metres LOA catching less than 10 000 kg per year, the Compliance Committee shall assess the most appropriate catch reporting system.

40. Each CPC shall designate landing points where the landings by vessels actively fishing for key small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea shall take place.

41. For each designated port, the port CPC shall specify permitted landing and transshipping times and places.

42. The CPCs shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

43. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of key small pelagic species fished by pelagic trawlers or purse seiners in the Adriatic Sea at any place other than the landing ports designated by the CPCs in accordance with paragraph 40.

44. The CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 April 2022 and subsequently 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points in which landings of key small pelagic species in Adriatic Sea may take place.

45. The CPCs shall engage in cooperation for the fight against IUU fishing, in particular by sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

46. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

PART VIII
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

47. Vessels operating with purse seines and pelagic trawls exploiting small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea shall only be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities.

48. Starting from 30 April 2022, authorized vessels above 12 metres LOA shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system (VMS). A CPC may grant to its authorized vessels of less than 15 metres LOA flying its flag a derogation from the requirement to be fitted with a VMS if they exclusively operate within the territorial seas of the CPC and/or never spend more than 24 hours at sea from the time of departure to the return to the port. The CPCs shall notify these derogations as well as other control means deployed to monitor the fishing vessels concerned to the GFCM Secretariat without delay.

49. The CPCs shall monitor the consumption of the catch limit or total allowable catch set in accordance with paragraphs 11 to 13 and reported in the annex to this recommendation until the end of the transitional period and thereafter set in accordance with paragraph 17 as follows:

a) In case of individual catch limits by CPC, as from the date when 80 percent of the quota have been exhausted, the CPC concerned shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat monthly reports on the catch. Such reports shall be sent by the fifteenth day of the following month. When the catch limit has been reached, the CPC shall prohibit the catch of small pelagics or individual species, taking into account paragraph 20.

b) In case of joint catch limits, the CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat monthly reports on the catch. Such reports shall be sent by fifteenth of the following month. When 70 percent of the joint catch limit have been exhausted or one CPC has reached 70 percent of the total joint catch limit, the GFCM Secretariat shall notify the CPCs involved, which shall establish a plan for fishing activities in order to avoid exceeding the jointly allocated catch limit. When the joint catch limit has been reached, all CPCs involved shall prohibit the catch of small pelagics or individual species.

PART IX
Permanent inspection scheme

50. The pilot inspection scheme established for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea by Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/8 shall be extended until 31 December 2023.

51. From 1 January 2024, the GFCM shall establish a permanent observation and inspection programme in order to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation.

52. The permanent observation and inspection programme referred to in paragraph 51 shall be based on the results of the pilot inspection scheme referred to in paragraph 50. It shall comprise, *inter alia*, the following elements:

a) high seas inspections;

b) procedures for an effective investigation of alleged violations of the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation and for reporting to the GFCM on the actions taken, including procedures for exchanging information;

c) provisions for appropriate action to be taken when inspections reveal serious violations as well as the expedient and transparent follow-up of such actions in order to uphold the flag state’s responsibility within the intended programme;

d) port inspections;

e) monitoring of landings and catches, including statistical follow-up for management purposes; and

f) specific monitoring programmes, including boarding and inspection.

PART X
National management plans

53. In order to ensure adequate conservation of small pelagic stocks, the CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Adriatic Sea.

54. From 30 September 2022, the CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, the CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 30 April of the following year.

PART XI
Final provisions

55. The multiannual management plan shall remain in force for seven years from the date of its adoption.

56. This recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

57. On the basis of scientific advice, the SAC may revise this recommendation.

Annex

Fishing opportunities in the Adriatic Sea (GSAs 17–18) for small pelagics during the 2022–2023 transitional period, including a possible conditional year in 2024 in case the conditions specified in paragraph 12 are not met.

In line with paragraphs 11 to 13, starting from catch limits for 2021, the catch limits for combined species are reported in table below.

Species	**EU 2022**	**EU 2023**	**[EU 2024]**	**Joint catch limit 2022**	**Joint catch limit 2023**	**[Joint catch limit 2024]**
Anchovy and sardine combined	91 998 tonnes	84 976 tonnes	[]	4 650 tonnes	4 301 tonnes	[]

Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 on a set of management measures for the use of anchored fish aggregating devices in common dolphinfish fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that it is the responsibility of a regional fisheries management organization to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and to ensure management measures are established consistently with the precautionary approach;

RECALLING the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, in particular Target 4 "Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment" and the development of actions related to Output 4.2 "Healthier marine ecosystems and more productive fisheries";

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

CONSIDERING the impact of the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) on essential fish and marine habitats and vulnerable marine ecosystems, their possible interactions with other fisheries and the need to establish a minimum set of management measures, in particular for better monitoring and control;

CONSIDERING the advice expressed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-first session (Egypt, June 2019) on measures to be implemented for the management of FADs, in particular in relation to the identification of fishing gear, fishing authorizations and improved information on catch and effort for the assessment of common dolphinfish, a GFCM priority species;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, scope and definitions

General objectives

1. This recommendation complements Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices and establishes a set of management measures for the use of anchored FADs by the fishing vessels of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application. These management measures contain transitional measures that shall apply until the adoption of permanent measures, based on the scientific advice provided by the SAC.

2. The management measures shall be consistent with the precautionary approach to fisheries management. Permanent measures shall be established within the framework of a future management plan designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), when established, and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable common dolphinfish fisheries.

3. A set of transitional management measures shall be developed in order to contribute, pending formal scientific advice by the SAC, to the sustainability of the common dolphinfish stock and fisheries.

4. The CPCs whose vessels actively exploit common dolphinfish using FADs shall agree to implement such transitional management measures for the fisheries concerned, in accordance with the general and specific objectives set by this recommendation.

Scope

5. The management measures established by this recommendation shall apply to commercial fisheries targeting common dolphinfish using FADs throughout the Mediterranean Sea (geographical subareas [GSAs] 1 to 27).

Definitions

6. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Fish aggregating device" or "FAD" means any anchored equipment floating on the sea surface with the objective of attracting fish.

b) "Common dolphinfish" means fish belonging to the species *Coryphaena hippurus*.

c) "Associated species" means secondary target species that are usually caught in fisheries targeting common dolphinfish such as greater amberjack *(Seriola dumerili),* pilotfish *(Naucrates ductor)* and grey triggerfish *(Balistes carolinensis).*

PART II
Operational objectives

Management measures

7. The operational objectives of the management measures shall be to:

a) improve knowledge on the characteristics of FADs, buoys, FAD fishing and their related impacts on common dolphinfish and on associated and non-targeted species;

b) manage the deployment and recovery of FADs and their potential loss; and

c) reduce and limit the impacts of FADs and FAD fishing on the ecosystem including, where appropriate, by acting on the different components of fishing mortality (e.g. by limiting the number of FADs deployed, including the number of FADs set per vessel).

Transitional management measures

8. The objective of the transitional management measures is to prepare for future management measures while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific assessment, the biomass level of the common dolphinfish stock would drop below biologically sustainable levels, with negative consequences also on the socio-economic viability of the fisheries concerned. The transitional measures shall apply in international waters in 2020 and 2021.

9. Pending the scientific advice of the SAC and in view of a future management plan, fishing effort shall be maintained at the current level, expressed in number of vessels targeting common dolphinfish. Such measure shall be without prejudice to discussions in the context of the working group referred to under paragraph 13 of this recommendation.

10. Notwithstanding paragraph 9, CPCs considering starting to target common dolphinfish using FADs shall submit to the GFCM their national measures adopted in this respect. The SAC shall examine these measures and formulate appropriate advice should they not comply with the objectives of this recommendation.

11. Notwithstanding paragraph 9, competent national authorities may authorize scientific surveys or pilot programmes with a view to assessing new common dolphinfish fisheries using FADs. In cases where new fisheries are authorized by a CPC after scientific assessment, the number of new FADs authorized shall be limited under the national management measures adopted.

12. Each CPC shall establish a code of conduct prior to the start of the fishing season in order to ensure the implementation of the provisions of this recommendation. Where applicable, the concerned CPCs could communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the measures contained in such code of conduct. If necessary, the concerned CPCs could organize meetings with a view to ensuring proper coordination and full implementation of the provisions of this recommendation. The GFCM Secretariat shall be informed by the relevant CPCs about such initiatives.

13. A GFCM working group shall be established in 2020 in order to develop a multiannual management plan for common dolphinfish fisheries that comprises measures for the management of FADs, taking into consideration socio-economic elements as well as efforts made by CPCs in managing relevant fisheries and in applying, in some cases, stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation.

14. Within the framework of a research programme, the SAC shall, upon the availability of updated data, assess the state of common dolphinfish stock and define any other FAD fisheries management measure that would contribute to the sustainability of the common dolphinfish stock.

15. On the basis of SAC advice and research programme, the GFCM shall, at its forty-sixth session at the latest, adopt a long-term multiannual management plan to allow for the achievement of the objectives set out in paragraph 1, in complement to or in replacement of the measures referred to in this recommendation.

PART III

Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of management measures

16. The CPCs shall ensure adequate monitoring of the biological and environmental impacts of FADs used by vessels flying their flag and exploiting common dolphinfish.

17. As from 2020, the SAC shall assess on an annual basis the impact of FADs on restoring and maintaining the common dolphinfish stock above levels that can produce MSY.

18. Based on SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the management measures.

19. In cases where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the management measures have not been met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

20. Should the SAC, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), not be in a position to provide an accurate advice on the impact of FADs on the common dolphinfish stock and on their suitable number, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. Such measures shall be based on SAC advice, in accordance with the precautionary approach to fisheries management, and take into consideration environmental and socio-economic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

21. With a view to providing advice towards the revision/adaptation of the management measures, the CPCs and the SAC shall facilitate the collation of existing relevant data and the collection of additional relevant data (including research survey data) and organize workshops to this end. For this purpose, the SAC shall promote scientific cooperation and a harmonised approach amongst all CPCs.

22. The research programme on common dolphinfish shall be finalized by 2022 at the latest and include the assessment of the stock and of the fishing effort exerted by the fisheries concerned. Such programme shall also aim at developing conservation measures, including the minimum depth of deployment of FADs and their number, taking into account the characteristics of different areas.

PART IV
FAD management measures

23. Vessels of CPCs shall be allowed to use FADs for the exploitation of common dolphinfish only if they hold a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities. Each CPC shall maintain a register of these authorizations and communicate the list of authorized vessels to the GFCM Secretariat each year by 31 July, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform.

24. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of authorized vessels and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

FAD composition, location, maintenance and replacement

25. In cases where the surface structure of the FAD is covered with material, CPCs shall ensure that it is either not covered or covered only with material that involve minimal risk of entangling non-target species, especially vulnerable species, or affecting other vessels.

26. FAD subsurface components shall be exclusively composed of materials that do not entangle non-target species.

27. When designing FADs, biodegradable materials shall be prioritized

28. FADs shall be constructed so that they can be reliably located at their place of deployment. The design of FADs shall include an appropriate number of counterweights along the rope to ensure that the rope sinks to the sea bottom in the event that the raft section is detached and drifts away.

29. The CPCs shall ensure that FADs are regularly maintained, replaced as necessary and removed when not in use. The replacement FADs shall be of the same type, design, construction, materials and identification as the FAD being replaced. Replacement anchored FADs shall be in the same position as the FADs being replaced.

30. In the event of loss or impossibility to haul in a FAD, CPCs shall ensure the recording of the last known position and its date.

31. The CPCs shall adopt all necessary measures to ensure obsolete and unused FADs are retrieved.

32. It shall be prohibited for a CPC vessel to catch fish attracted by a FAD that has not been set by this CPC vessel.

FAD identification and marking

33. The CPCs shall ensure that each FAD is marked in such a way that it can be readily identified.

34. Each FAD shall be marked externally with the registration number of the fishing vessel(s) using it. Such marking shall be visible without dismounting the beacon, seawater-proof and legible throughout the entire lifespan of the beacon. Visibility distance must be the shortest possible.

PART V
Recording of FAD activities

35. The CPCs shall ensure that all fishing vessels flying their flag and exploiting common dolphinfish record their fishing activities with FADs.

36. In the event of FAD loss, CPCs shall ensure that the vessels flying their flag collect and report the last registered position of the lost FAD as well as the date of its last registered position, its identification number and any information allowing the identification of the FAD owner.

PART VI
National management measures

37. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 1 April 2020, national management measures that are already in force in relation to the use of FADs in common dolphinfish fisheries.

38. The CPCs that do not have national management measures in force shall adopt, by 30 June 2020, a set of measures containing at least the elements listed in the annex of this recommendation and communicate them to the GFCM Secretariat by 31 January 2021 at the latest.

39. The CPCs may adopt voluntary measures. Such voluntary measures may take into account, *inter alia*, the conservation state of common dolphinfish and the impact of fishing activities exploiting common dolphinfish in their waters.

40. The above measures shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat within one month of their entry into force.

Annex

Guidelines for the elaboration of fish aggregating devices management measures

FAD management measures for CPC vessels must include the following:

1) description:
    a) type of FAD/beacon/buoy;
    b) maximum number of FADs to be deployed per vessel;
    c) minimum distance between each FAD;
    d) incidental catch reduction and utilisation policy;
    e) potential interactions with other gear types;
    f) statement or policy on FAD ownership;
2) institutional arrangements:
    a) institutional responsibilities for FAD management measures;
    b) application processes for the approval of FAD deployment;
    c) obligations for vessel owners and masters regarding FAD deployment and use;
    d) FAD replacement policy;
    e) additional reporting obligations beyond this recommendation;
    f) conflict resolution policy in respect of FADs;
    g) details on any closed area or period (e.g. territorial waters, shipping lanes, proximity of small-scale fisheries, etc.;
3) FAD construction specifications and requirements:
    a) FAD design characteristics (description);
    b) lighting requirements;
    c) radar reflectors;
    d) visible distance;
    e) FAD marking and identifier;
    f) radio buoy marking and identifier (requirement for serial numbers);
    g) echosounder buoy marking and identifier (requirement for serial numbers);
    h) research undertaken on biodegradable FADs;
    i) prevention of loss or abandonment of FADs;
    j) management of FAD recovery;
4) applicable period for the FAD management measures; and
5) means for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of FAD management measures.

Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/3 amending Recommendation GFCM41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that “States should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures”;

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture provide a concrete set of actions for the riparian countries to implement, particularly with regard to existing management measures that will be complemented and expanded to progressively achieve exploitation at MSY;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29);

NOTING that for turbot in geographical subarea (GSA) 29, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) concluded, at its seventh session (Bulgaria, July 2018), that the stock is overexploited and in overexploitation. The WGBS noted first signs of reversal in the trend of the overexploitation rate and positive trends in spawning stock biomass, concluding that the constructive evolution of fishing mortality seemed confirmed due to the gradual application of management measures, and that the stock was in line with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM41/2017/4. The WGBS further advised for a benchmark assessment in 2019 and the implementation of a management plan;

NOTING that for turbot in GSA 29, the WGBS at its eight session (Turkey, September 2019), based on the conclusions of the turbot benchmark sessions of the Subregional Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea (SGSABS) (Bulgaria, July 2019 and Turkey, September 2019), recommended

implementing a precautionary approach by establishing a precautionary total allowable catch (TAC) and confirmed that the perception of the stock continued to show a positive trend;

CONSIDERING that the Working Group on the allocation of the total allowable catch for turbot in GSA 29 (Turkey, September 2019) concluded on the allocation scheme provided for by Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting turbot and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of turbot stock and scientific knowledge, and that an appropriate method to this end shall be established;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4

1. Part II, paragraph 12, shall be amended as follows:

a) For the years 2020–2022, an annual TAC shall be set to 857 tonnes for CPCs with the following allocation:

CPCs	Annual quotas 2020–2022 (in tonnes)	Percentage
European Union	150	17.5
Turkey	497	58.0
Ukraine	160	18.7
Georgia	20	2.3
Others	30	3.5
Total	857	100

b) The quota under “others’’ is reserved for parties that are not qualified as GFCM CPCs.

c) When 90 percent of the quota of a CPC is exceeded, the concerned CPC shall inform the GFCM Secretariat, which shall notify all CPCs. When a CPC exhausts its quota, it should immediately close the fishery and inform the GFCM Secretariat accordingly, which shall notify all CPCs.

d) If the total catch exceeds the TAC in a given year, the excess amount shall be paid back by CPCs. The excess quantities shall be deducted the following year from the adjusted quota(s) of the concerned CPC(s). If any CPC exceeds its catch limit during any two consecutive years, the GFCM shall recommend appropriate measures, which may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in the quota corresponding to a minimum of 125 percent of the excess harvest.

e) The maximum underage that a CPC may carry over in any given year shall not exceed 15 percent of its initial annual quota. If the stock is in a dire state and scientific advice of the

WGBS recommends a reduction in fishing mortality, then carrying-over of any unused quota may be prohibited.

2. Part II, paragraph 14, shall be amended as follows:

a) The level of the TAC referred to in paragraph 12, as amended, may be reviewed by the GFCM in line with the recommendations and assessments of the WGBS, should the continuation of the constructive evolution of the stock recovery not be confirmed.

b) The level of the TAC and the allocation key, referred to in paragraph 12, as amended, may be reviewed by the GFCM in case of new parties becoming CPCs to the GFCM Agreement.

3. Part VII, paragraph 54, shall be amended as follows:

In order to support the implementation of the conservation and management measures of the multiannual management plan and to ensure the traceability of turbot catches, a working group shall be established in the context of the Compliance Committee (CoC) with a view to developing integrated MCS measures, in accordance with this recommendation. Such working group shall assess the following and report to the CoC and the GFCM at its forty-fourth annual session:

a) the results of the voluntary observation and inspection pilot project;

b) the development of a catch certificate pilot scheme for turbot. For the purpose of identifying the origin of turbot catch in the GFCM area of application, CPCs shall issue a valid catch documentation scheme certificate. Such certificate, issued by the competent authorities of the flag CPC, shall accompany all landings, imports, exports and re-exports of caught turbot.

The tasks of this working group are defined in the annex 2 of this recommendation.

4. Part VIII, paragraph 56, shall be inserted as follows:

In the context of the multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries, the WGBS shall provide scientific advice, including the necessary elements for setting biological reference points and for the revision of TAC and quotas, at its eleventh annual meeting (2022), to be adopted by the GFCM in 2022 at its forty-sixth annual session.

5. The Annex, shall be replaced as follows:

Annex

Terms of reference for the Working Group on integrated MCS measures and catch documentation scheme for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (GSA 29)

The mandate of the working group covers the elements described in Part VII of this recommendation. The working group referred to in paragraph 54, shall:

1) be supported by the GFCM and the CoC;

2) establish a calendar for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting during the intersession period and before the sessions of the CoC and of the GFCM;

3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, the FAO, and other regional fisheries management organizations to participate in its meetings, if appropriate;

4) report its conclusions and opinions to the CoC; and

5) develop an effective and cost-efficient permanent catch documentation scheme, taking into account possible national best practices, the state of the stock, the specificities of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea, the results of the inspection pilot project, information on IUU fishing activities, the schemes in place in various RFMOs, as well as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Doc

Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/4 on a management plan for the sustainable exploitation of red coral in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 (Fish Stocks Agreement) and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING the international nature of red coral trade, the high socio-economic importance of local fisheries exploiting red coral and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that red coral is listed in the Annex III of the Protocol concerning the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), which implies that its exploitation needs to be properly regulated at the national and international level;

RECALLING that red coral is listed as “endangered” under the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);

RECALLING that, at its twenty-first session (Egypt, June 2019), the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) endorsed the work of the Workshop on red coral (WKREDCORAL) pointing to a possible overexploitation with signs of deterioration of red coral populations;

NOTING that, at its twenty-first session, the SAC acknowledged the urgent need to implement management measures for red coral, in particular by not increasing catches;

FURTHER NOTING that, at its twenty-first session, the SAC acknowledged the urgent need to implement a traceability scheme for red coral in order to curb the likely high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) catches and to ensure a sustainable exploitation of this species;

FURTHER NOTING that, at its twenty-first session, the SAC endorsed, in Annex 9 to its report, an updated research programme on red coral to be launched in 2020;

CONSIDERING that cooperation between research teams and professional operators could promote and facilitate stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process with a view to enhancing compliance with the rules regulating the management and exploitation of red coral;

CONSIDERING the measures already established for the management of red coral at GFCM level in Recommendations GFCM/35/2011/2 on the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application, GFCM/36/2012/1 on further measures for the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application, GFCM/40/2016/7 concerning the authorization of the use of remotely operated vehicles within the framework of national scientific research programmes on red coral and GFCM/41/2017/5

on the establishment of a regional adaptive management plan for the exploitation of red coral in the Mediterranean Sea;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, scope and definitions

General objective

1. This recommendation establishes an adaptive multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of red coral populations in the Mediterranean Sea.

Scope

2. This recommendation applies to all commercial fishing activities exploiting red coral in the geographical subareas (GSAs) 1 to 27 included.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Red coral" means colonies pertaining to the species *Corallium rubrum*.

b) "Red coral colony" or "colony" means a genetic unit formed by hundreds/thousands of red coral polyps. A colony can have a tree-like shape with several branches. The red coral colony is the biological unit exploited in red coral fisheries.

c) "Red coral bank" ("bank") or "red coral zone" ("zone") means an area of variable size identified by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) where red coral colonies are relatively abundant.

d) "Fishing authorization" means a specific entitlement other than a fishing licence issued by a CPC and allowing a fisher to engage in specific fishing activities with a given fishing gear, during a given period and in a given area, or for a given fishery under specific conditions listed in the fishing authorization. In the case of red coral, the fishing authorization specifically allows fishers, fishing vessels, concessionaries or legal persons/entities to harvest red coral.

e) "Authorized fisher" means a fisher (diver), fishing vessel, concessionary or legal person/entity in possession of a specific fishing authorization allowing the harvest and landing of red coral.

f) "Harvest" means the red coral catch proceeding from harvesting operations targeting red coral.

g) "Live weight" means the weight of freshly caught colonies weighed immediately after the end of the fishing operations or, at the latest and in case of daily fishing trips only, before their landing at the designated port. The weight refers, where possible, to clean colonies without epibionts or rocks attached.

h) "Authorized port" means a port designated by the concerned CPC where the landing of red coral catches is authorized.

i) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities mentioned in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU).

PART II
Specific objectives

4. The multiannual management plan shall contribute to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

5. The multiannual management plan shall also contribute to improve the scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge of fisheries exploiting red coral.

6. In particular, the multiannual management plan shall aim to:

f) apply the precautionary approach to red coral fisheries management;

g) counteract or prevent overfishing with a view to ensuring long-term yields while maintaining the red coral populations within biologically sustainable levels;

h) establish measures to adjust exploitation rates and fishing effort to sustainable levels; and

i) deter IUU fishing activities.

7. Pending the results of the research programme on red coral to be launched by the GFCM Secretariat in 2020 and the consolidated SAC advice on sustainable exploitation levels for red coral in the Mediterranean, transitional measures shall apply.

PART III
National management plans

8. Where no national management plan for red coral is in place, CPCs shall adopt one no later than 30 June 2020. Depending on available scientific information, management shall take place at red coral bank, GFCM statistical rectangle or CPC level. Any national management plan shall comprise at least the elements listed in Part IV (Conservation measures), Part V (Fleet management measures) and Part VI (Control and enforcement) of this recommendation. The CPCs shall submit their national management plan for red coral to the GFCM Secretariat at the latest within 15 days after their adoption. The CPCs shall immediately resubmit any updated national management plan for red coral, in particular when new closures or new openings of red coral banks are decided.

PART IV
Conservation measures

Harvest method

9. The only gear authorized for harvesting red coral colonies shall be a hammer used by an authorized fisher or fishing vessel using scuba diving equipment. During the harvest, the authorized fisher shall ensure that the base of the coral colony is not detached from the substrate.

Minimum harvest depth

10. It shall be prohibited to harvest red coral colonies in waters less than 50 metres deep.

11. By way of derogation from paragraph 10, CPCs may adopt derogations from the minimum harvest depth provided that:

a) such derogations have been continuously implemented by means of management rules during at least the five years preceding the entry into force of this recommendation; or

b) SAC assessment demonstrates that requests for new derogations are in line with the general and specific objectives of this recommendation.

Minimum conservation reference size

12. It shall be prohibited to harvest red coral colonies whose diameter is less than 7 millimetres, measured within one centimetre from the base of the colony.

13. If a national management plan is in force, the concerned CPC may apply a maximum tolerance of 10 percent in live weight of colonies below the minimum conservation reference size (MCRS).

Transitional precautionary harvest and effort limits for 2020–2023

14. During the transitional period (2020–2023), CPCs that harvest red coral shall:

a) maintain their harvest of red coral at the average level authorized and exerted over the period 2015–2017 or over another period of three consecutive years after 2000, as chosen by the CPCs; and

b) maintain the number of fishing authorizations delivered for the exploitation of red coral at the level exerted in 2019 or over another period of three consecutive year after 2000, as chosen by the CPCs, without prejudice to paragraph 29.

This shall be without prejudice to the discussions to take place in the context of paragraph 18.

15. The CPCs shall inform the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 1 March 2020, about the reference period chosen, the harvest limits and the effort limits to be observed by their authorized fishers or fishing vessels during the transitional period. Where CPCs have not harvested red coral in recent years, they may use a reference period based on the last years where their authorized fishers harvested red coral. Such transitional harvest and effort limits do not prejudge future decisions or the right of CPCs to reopen their red coral fishery.

16. By way of derogation from Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6 on the submission of data on fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat once a year, at the latest on 30 June of each year, their exerted harvest and effort over the preceding year.

17. The CPCs may set individual daily/annual harvest and/or effort limits for their authorized fishers and fishing vessels. Such limits shall be consistent with the number of fishing authorizations granted as well as with the annual harvest limits and effort limits set for the concerned CPC.

Long-term harvest and effort limits

18. Upon SAC advice and based on the results of the research programme, and, if applicable, of the pilot phase of the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) referred to in paragraph 47, the GFCM, at its forty-seventh session, shall adopt harvest and effort limits for CPCs interested in having red coral fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea. Such limits shall apply as of 1 January 2024, taking due account of the state of red coral populations in each CPC.

19. For CPCs that have no historical red coral harvest data owing to long-standing prohibition, harvest and effort limits shall be determined based on the red coral national management plan provided by those CPCs.

20. The GFCM may revise harvest limits upon scientific advice validated by the SAC.

Harvest control rules and precautionary closure

21. The harvest control rules set out in Annex 1 shall apply. They shall trigger specific management actions according to the percentage of red coral colonies below the MCRS in the annual harvest of a given CPC.

22. When the proportion of the red coral colonies below the MCRS exceeds 25 percent (trigger) of the total annual harvest from a given red coral bank, relevant CPCs shall close the concerned area to any red coral fishery on precautionary grounds and immediately inform the GFCM Secretariat. Where red coral banks have not yet been properly identified, the trigger and precautionary closures foreseen in paragraph 21 shall apply at the scale of the relevant GFCM statistical rectangle.

23. The CPCs shall take the necessary measures to implement precautionary closures. The decision establishing precautionary closures shall clearly define the geographical area of the affected harvest ground, its duration and the conditions governing red coral fisheries in that area during the precautionary closure as well as the conditions for reopening the fishery. Such decision shall be immediately transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat.

Spatio-temporal closures

24. In addition to closures already established at the national level, CPCs actively harvesting red coral may introduce, not later than 1 January 2020, additional spatio-temporal closures for the protection of red coral and immediately inform the GFCM Secretariat.

25. By way of derogation from paragraph 24, CPCs that adopted spatio-temporal closures for a duration of at least ten years for all or part of their waters at the date of entry into force of this recommendation may choose not to introduce additional such closures.

Move-on rule

26. The CPCs may implement a move-on rule to avoid reaching the trigger defined in paragraph 22 and ensure an optimal exploitation and recovery of the colonies. When CPCs implement move-on rules, they shall immediately notify the GFCM Secretariat. Such mechanism shall be consistent, *inter alia,* with the objectives of the multiannual management plan, the fishing pressure exerted on red coral (mortality) and the growth parameters of red coral colonies in the banks concerned.

Crop rotation

27. The CPCs may implement a crop rotation system between their red coral banks to ensure an optimal exploitation and recovery of the colonies. When CPCs implement a crop rotation mechanism, they shall immediately notify the GFCM Secretariat. The closure period shall be consistent, *inter alia*, with the objectives of the multiannual management plan, the harvest pressure and the growth parameters of red coral colonies in the banks concerned.

PART V
Fleet management measures

Fishing authorizations

28. Fishers shall be authorized to harvest red coral in the Mediterranean Sea only if they hold a valid fishing authorization issued by the flag CPC authorities where the fishing activity takes place (fishers) or by the flag CPC authority (vessel). Such authorization shall specify the technical conditions governing the fishery. In the absence of such authorization, fishers shall not harvest, retain on board, transship, land, store or sell red coral. A fishing authorization may only be granted to a fisher (diver) who complies with national standards for professional diving.

29. The CPCs shall maintain an updated register of the fishing authorizations they issue. Every year and no later than 30 June, CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the list of fishers and/or vessels authorized to harvest red coral, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. Such list shall include, for each vessel, at least the information referred to in Annex 2 of this recommendation.

30. The CPCs shall not increase the number of fishing authorizations they issue until scientific advice validated by the SAC indicates that red coral populations have rebuilt to sustainable levels allowing them to sustain increased exploitation.

31. The CPCs shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the catch and retention on board, transshipment or landing of red coral for recreational fisheries.

Development plans

32. By way of derogation from paragraph 14, CPCs intending to start targeting red coral shall submit a management plan for red coral as referred to in paragraph 8 and a development plan during the period between the entry into force of this recommendation and the adoption of permanent management measures by the GFCM. The SAC shall review the development plan and formulate appropriate advice if it is not in line with the general and specific objectives set out in this

recommendation. Pending possible amendments in line with SAC advice, the GFCM shall take a decision on the adoption of such development plan.

PART VI
Control and enforcement

Authorized ports

33. Each CPC shall designate ports in which the landing and transshipment of red coral harvest is authorized and communicate such list to the GFCM Secretariat not later than the date set out in paragraph 29, through the DCRF online platform. The CPCs shall immediately communicate any update in this respect to the GFCM Secretariat. It is only permitted to land and transship red coral in authorized ports.

34. Prior to entry into any port, and at least four hours before the estimated time of arrival, or at least one hour if the fishing grounds are less than four hours from the port of arrival, the authorized fishers or their representative shall notify the relevant authorities of the following information:

a) estimated time of arrival to the port;

b) external identification number and name of the authorized vessel or vessel used for harvesting;

c) estimated live weight and number of red coral colonies retained on board; and

d) harvesting area, preferably with geographical coordinates.

Harvest recording

35. The CPCs shall ensure that the authorized fishers or the masters of the vessels authorized to harvest red coral have the obligation to record their harvest daily after each harvest operation, in line with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2.

36. By way of derogation from paragraph 2 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1, each CPC shall set a mechanism to record all red coral daily harvests in the logbook, irrespective of the live weight of the harvest.

Vessel tracking

37. Without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application, CPCs may, on a voluntary basis, implement pilot projects to ensure that all fishers and/or vessels authorized to harvest red coral use a vessel monitoring system (VMS) or any other geolocation system allowing control authorities to track their activity at all times during the fishing trips.

Control of landings

38. Each CPC shall establish a risk-based control programme, in particular to check the landing and logbook information.

Transshipment

39. It shall be prohibited to transship red coral at sea.

Inspection plan

40. All such control and enforcement measures shall be contained in an inspection plan that each CPC shall establish taking into account, as guidelines, the elements listed in Annex 5. Such inspection plans shall be communicated to the GFCM secretariat by 31 January of each year.

PART VII
Traceability of red coral products

Principles

41. Each CPC shall take the necessary steps to implement a CDS for the purpose of identifying the origin of red coral harvested in the GFCM area of application and in order to support the implementation of relevant GFCM conservation and management measures.

42. Such measure shall not prejudice other traceability systems in force ensuring the same level of control over the traceability of red coral products by CPCs.

43. A validated CDS certificate as referred to in Annex 3 to this recommendation (for the pilot phase) and issued by the competent authorities of the flag CPC shall accompany all landings, imports, exports and re-exports of red coral harvested from the entry into force of this recommendation.

44. Each CDS form shall have a unique document identification number. Such number shall be specific to the flag CPC and be assigned to each fisher or harvesting vessel. Such forms shall not be transferable to another fisher or harvesting vessel.

45. The CPCs shall validate the CDS harvest certificates for red coral only when all the information contained in the CDS has been established to be accurate as a result of the verification of the supporting documents and corresponding consignment.

46. Not later than 1 January 2021, CPCs shall ensure that they have put in place a system (e.g. a specific customs code for red coral) allowing for the collection of statistical data and the monitoring of their red coral imports, exports and re-exports.

Pilot phase

47. For a transitional period of three years (2020–2022), CPCs may participate in the pilot phase of the CDS, where all the above traceability measures shall be fully implemented.

48. In parallel to the pilot phase, the GFCM shall set up, in 2020, a Compliance Committee (CoC) working group tasked with developing a permanent GFCM CDS, according to the terms for reference provided in Annex 4 of this recommendation.

49. The CPCs shall report on the implementation of the pilot phase to the CoC working group referred to in paragraph 48 in preparing a permanent GFCM CDS for red coral.

50. Upon the advice of the CoC, the GFCM shall adopt the permanent GFCM CDS for red coral at its forty-sixth session and CPCs shall start implementing it on 1 January 2023.

PART VIII
Scientific information

51. In addition to the provisions related to red coral contained in Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2, CPCs shall report the data listed below at the bank, GFCM statistical grid and national level, when available:

a) number of red coral fishing authorizations granted for fishers and for authorized vessels;

b) number of dives per authorized fisher and fishing trip;

c) number of authorized fishers on board for each fishing trip; and

d) diameter of each colony harvested, if possible.

Such data shall be reported first in a single batch by 30 June 2020 for years dating as far back as possible in the past, and thereafter by the deadline stipulated for red coral in the recommendation referred to above

52. The CPCs whose authorized fishers target red coral shall ensure that a mechanism for adequate scientific monitoring of red coral fisheries and red coral harvest is in place to allow the SAC to provide descriptive information and advice on at least:

a) fishing effort deployed (e.g. weekly, monthly or annual number of fishing trips or dive time, if possible) and overall catch levels at the bank, GFCM statistical grid, national or supranational level;

b) reference points with a view to improving this multiannual management plan in line with MSY objective and low risk of stock collapse;

c) biological and socio-economic effects of alternative management scenarios, including input/output and/or technical measures; and

d) possible additional spatio-temporal closures in order to preserve the sustainability of red coral fisheries.

53. The use of remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) shall be allowed until 31 December 2022 for scientific purposes only and within CPC authorized research programmes led by scientific institutions. Such authorizations shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by CPCs.

54. It shall be strictly forbidden to commercialise red coral colonies harvested within the framework of such research programmes.

55. Each CPC intending to use ROVs shall submit the following information to the GFCM Secretariat, at least one month before the start of the campaign. The GFCM Secretariat shall immediately communicate to all CPCs the following information:

a) objectives and protocol followed during the research campaign;

b) list of vessels authorized to use ROVs;

c) duration of the research campaign mission involving the use of ROVs; and

d) geographical coordinates of the areas where ROVs will be used for research purposes.

56. Each year, the SAC shall evaluate the use of ROVs and report to the GFCM annual session.

57. The CPCs may deploy national scientific observers on the vessels that are used to harvest red coral in the Mediterranean Sea. In this case, CPCs are encouraged to report on the information collected to the GFCM Secretariat.

58. In 2020, the GFCM shall launch the research programme on red coral endorsed by the SAC at its twenty-first session and referred to in Appendix 9 to its report. The research programme shall be completed in 2022. The research programme shall in particular evaluate the trigger for closure as established in paragraph 22.

59. The GFCM may adopt any urgent measure in case of risk of collapse of red coral identified by the SAC.

60. At its twenty-fifth session, the SAC shall advise the GFCM, based on the review and assessment of the following elements:

a) results of the red coral research programme launched by the GFCM Secretariat;

b) lessons learnt from the pilot phase of the CDS, in coordination with the CoC;

c) effectiveness of the management measures in place in CPCs;

d) effectiveness of this multiannual management plan with regards to the objectives pursued; and

e) any other scientific information available.

PART IX
Final provisions

61. In light of available information, the GFCM may adopt appropriate measures concerning, *inter alia*, control measures, catch documentation, authorized areas for red coral harvesting, the use of ROVs for scientific purposes only, the minimum harvesting depth and the MCRS.

62. Recommendations GFCM/35/2011/2, GFCM/36/2012/1, GFCM/40/2016/7 and GFCM/41/2017/5 are hereby repealed.

63. The provisions contained in this recommendation shall be applied without prejudice to stricter rules enforced in the CPCs.

Annex 1

Harvest control rules

Proportion of undersize colonies in the harvest = 0%	No specific management action
0% < proportion of undersize colonies in the harvest < 10%	If a national management plan is in place: no specific management action. If no plan: implement stricter control
10% < proportion of undersize colonies in the harvest < 25% (= trigger)	Implement stricter control and survey the size structure of the population
Proportion of undersize colonies in the harvest > 25% (trigger)	Close the fishery in the area on precautionary grounds

Annex 2

Fishing authorization

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM data collection reference framework (DCRF), the fishing authorization shall contain for each vessel authorized at least the following information:

- Vessel name (authorized vessel or vessel used for harvesting);
- National registration number (code assigned by the CPCs);
- Vessel registration number, where relevant (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits);
- Port of registration (full name of the port);
- Previous name (if any);
- Previous flag (if any);
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- International radio call sign (if any);
- VMS or other equipment for vessel geolocation (indicate Y/N);
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW;
- Safety and security equipment to host observer(s) on board (indicate Y/N);
- Time period authorized for fishing red coral;
- Area(s) authorized for fishing red coral: GSA(s) and rectangles of the GFCM statistical grid; and
- Participation in research programmes led by national/international scientific institutions (indicate Y/N; provide some description).

Annex 3

Harvest certificate for the GFCM pilot catch documentation scheme

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">HARVEST CERTIFICATE FOR THE GFCM RED CORAL PILOT CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Harvest document number</td><td colspan="2">Validating authority</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Name of the fishing vessel master, if applicable</td><td colspan="2">Address - Tel/fax/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Signature and stamp of the fishing vessel master</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">2. Vessel name and registration No</td><td>Flag and home port</td><td>Call sign/IMO (where applicable)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Inmarsat/fax/telephone number/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">3. Port</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Port of departure and country</td><td>Port of landing and country</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4. Authorized fisher(s) on board</td><td colspan="2">Name - Address - Tel/fax/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fishing licence number(s) - valid to (date), if applicable</td><td>Red coral fishing authorization number - valid to (date)</td><td>Signature of the holder</td></tr>
<tr><td>5. Harvest area (coordinates Long., Lat.)</td><td>Harvest date</td><td>Estimated live weight (kg)</td><td>Landed live weight (kg)</td></tr>
<tr><td>a.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>b.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>c.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>d.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

e.			
6. Flag state authority validation			
Name and title		**Signature**	**Date and stamp**
7. Name of the exporter, if applicable		**Address - Tel/fax/email**	
Signature and stamp of the exporter – Date			
8. Export authority validation - **Name and title**		**Signature**	**Date and stamp**
9. Name of the importer		**Address - Tel/fax/email**	
Signature and stamp of the importer – Date			
10. Import authority validation **Name and title**		**Signature**	**Date and stamp**

Annex 4

Terms of reference for the CoC Working Group on a permanent GFCM red coral catch documentation scheme

1. The objective of the catch documentation scheme (CDS) is to help curb illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The working group shall develop an effective and cost-efficient permanent CDS ensuring that individual batches of red coral batches are labelled with a unique identifier (code, tag or other, as appropriate) and documented all along the value chain, from authorized fishers to the final seller. The CDS shall also be designed to inform final customers on the red coral products they buy, including the conditions, date and place of catch and transformation.

2. In developing the CDS and accompanying documents, the working group shall take into account the following:

a) experience gathered and best practices identified during the pilot project;

b) overall conservation status of red coral;

c) specificities of red coral fisheries in the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs);

d) specificities of red coral, including its high potential for long-term storage;

e) information (including qualitative) on the level of IUU fishing;

f) schemes in force in CPCs and their effectiveness, if appropriate;

g) respective administrative capacities of CPCs;

h) schemes in force in various regional fisheries management organizations such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), as well as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes; and

i) schemes in force in the jewellery industry, or in extractive industries, if appropriate.

3. The CDS shall ensure, inter alia, the traceability of red coral catches along the value chain from the first authorized operator (fisher) to the final buyer. Each red coral batch shall be labelled with a unique identifier (code, tag or other, as appropriate).

Annex 5

Guidelines for the development of inspection plans for red coral

Inspection plans shall clearly define the following:

a) means of control: description of human, technical and financial means specifically available for the implementation of the plans; and

b) inspection strategy (including inspection protocols).

Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stocks collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recurrently considered that the stocks of European hake, Norway lobster, red mullet, common sole, mantis shrimp and deep-water rose shrimp are in overexploitation in geographical subareas (GSAs) 17 and 18;

NOTING that the SAC, at its twenty-first session, advised that management measures should be implemented and highlighted the importance of identifying and implementing additional fisheries restricted area (FRAs), ensuring that fishing capacity is not increased while fishing effort is managed in a sustainable way and minimum landing sizes are enforced;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fishing activities in the Adriatic Sea (GSAs 17 and 18) exploiting demersal stocks, by means of otter-trawling, beam-trawling, bottom pair trawling and otter twin trawling, including the key stocks listed in Annex 1. On the basis of SAC advice, the scope of this recommendation could be extended to other types of gear and other stocks.

2. The multiannual management plan shall be consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stocks collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries. It shall take account of the mixed nature of the fisheries and the dynamics between the stocks driving them.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 17 and 18 agree to implement such multiannual management plan for the concerned fisheries and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Adriatic Sea shall be developed in order to ensure that, while minimizing socio-economic impacts and finalizing SAC scientific advice, the stocks and fisheries progress towards biologically sustainable levels.

5. The multiannual management plan shall also pursue the reduction in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in GSAs 17 and 18.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply in GSAs 17 and 18.

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

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

b) "B_{lim}" means the limit reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass below which there may be reduced reproductive capacity.

c) "B_{pa}" means the precautionary reference point, expressed as spawning stock biomass, that ensures that the spawning stock biomass has less than 5 percent probability of being below B_{lim}.

d) "Adriatic Sea" means GSAs 17 and 18 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

e) "Vessel actively fishing" means any trawler targeting the key species listed in Annex 1 and entitled by the CPC whose flag it is flying to carry out specific fishing operations, during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

f) "Key stocks" means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined in Annex 1 of the current recommendation.

g) "Fleet segment" means group of vessels operating with combinations of gear types and vessel length classes as identified in Annex 3 and targeting key stocks as defined in Annex 1.

h) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IOPA-IUU) and following the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

i) "Designated landing point" means ports or places close to the shore designated by CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Specific objectives

8. The multiannual management plan shall aim at contributing to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

9. The multiannual management plan shall, in particular:

a) apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

b) ensure that exploitation levels of key stocks are at the MSY by 2026;

c) prevent increase in fishing capacity in relation to either year 2015 or the average of 2015–2017, and in fishing effort in relation to either 2015 or the average of three years within the range 2015–2018;

d) protect nursery and spawning areas as well as essential fish habitats that are important for the most important commercial demersal stocks;

e) contribute to the elimination of discards, by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches and ensuring that all catches are landed; and

f) provide measures to adjust the fishing capacity and effort of the fleets to levels of fishing mortality consistent with the MSY, with a view to having economically viable fleets and without overexploiting marine biological resources.

10. The multiannual management plan shall be based on a two-step approach where: i) in the first two years, a provisional fishing effort regime shall be applied; and ii) in 2021, on the basis of new scientific data, the SAC shall evaluate the state of the stocks and propose yearly fishing effort quotas, in line with the provisions contained in Parts II, IV and V of this recommendation, thus contributing to reaching F_{msy} and staying within safe biological limits.

11. In 2020 and 2021, a transitional fishing effort regime shall be established. The CPCs shall jointly ensure that, by 2021, the overall fishing effort (number of fishing days) deployed by fleets actively fishing for key demersal stocks using bottom otter trawls (OTB), beam trawls (TBB), bottom pair trawls (PTB) and otter twin trawls (OTT) and operating in GSAs 17 and 18, shall be reduced by at least 12 percent for OTB and 16 percent for TBB with respect to the annual effort exerted in 2015 or to the three-year average within the 2015–2018 period. Each CPC shall ensure that its effort reduction is proportional to its contribution to the total effort in the reference year in the area by the gear groups in Annex 4, as reported through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) Task V.2 in 2017. Such contribution shall be calculated according to the formula and gear groups in Annex 4. The overall fishing effort reduction shall be equally divided across the transitional years, resulting in the effort quotas listed in Annex 4 that shall apply in 2020 and 2021.

12. A five-year fishing effort regime shall be established for 2022–2026. The CPCs shall communicate their yearly fishing effort data to the GFCM Secretariat, in line with the provisions of paragraph 36. Each year, on the basis of SAC advice, the GFCM shall establish yearly effort quotas. Such quotas shall be expressed in fishing days per CPC and effort group for the fleet segments and gear listed in Annex 3 and shall allow for the achievement of the objectives set in paragraph 9. The GFCM shall ensure that, for each CPC, increase or decrease towards effort allocation is in line with the formula in Annex 4 and with total effort in the reference year in the area by the effort groups listed in Annex 3, as reported starting from 2021.

13. The provisions in paragraphs 11 and 12 shall not apply to national fleets operating with OTB and fishing for less than 1 000 days during the reference period mentioned in paragraph 9 c); such national fleets shall not exceed the effort limit of 3 000 fishing days per year.

Targets

14. The operational objective of the multiannual management plan shall be to maintain fishing mortality for key stocks listed in Annex 1 within the agreed precautionary reference values for F_{msy}, with a view to achieving or maintaining F_{msy} level, in accordance with the objectives of this recommendation.

Safeguards

15. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{pa}, the GFCM shall take remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, fishing effort shall be set at levels consistent with producing a fishing mortality lower than F_{msy}, taking into account the decrease in biomass.

16. Where, based on SAC scientific advice, the spawning biomass of any of the key stocks is below B_{lim}, the GFCM shall take further remedial measures to ensure the rapid return of the concerned stocks to levels above those capable of producing MSY. In particular, such remedial measures may include suspending the targeted fishery for the concerned stocks and an adequate reduction of fishing effort or catch limit.

PART III
Technical measures

Minimum conservation reference size

17. Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5 establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea shall apply.

18. The minimum conservation reference size shall be set as follow:

a) for deep-water rose shrimp, at 20 mm carapace length (CL);

b) for Norway lobster, at 20 mm CL or 70 mm total length (TL);

c) for common sole, at 20 cm TL; and

d) for red mullet, at 11 cm TL.

19. Specimens of key stocks smaller than the minimum conservation reference size as defined in paragraphs 17 and 18 shall not be retained on board, transshipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale.

20. The CPCs shall communicate annually to the GFCM Secretariat, and not later than 30 June, the specific modalities they apply under the provisions stipulated in paragraphs 17 to19, including landing obligations aiming at avoiding discards which are in force in some CPCs as well as landing inspection modalities when a flexibility scheme is foreseen at the national level.

Fisheries restricted areas

21. Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/3 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit in the Adriatic Sea shall apply.

22. FRAs shall be established for the conservation and management of stocks in the Adriatic Sea. The SAC shall examine the possibility of establishing new FRAs in the southern Adriatic and in the northern Adriatic Sea. The CPCs concerned should possibly submit necessary data for the evaluation of FRAs at the latest one month ahead of the 2020 Subregional Committee for the Adriatic Sea (SRC-AS) and support the work for the evaluation of FRAs in line with the roadmap outlined in Annex 2.

23. Any fishing activity with OTB, PTB, OTT and TBB in FRAs established as per paragraphs 21 and 22 shall be prohibited unless differently provided for by a specific recommendation setting management rules for any of these areas.

24. The SAC may identify additional nursery or spawning areas for any of the demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea and, in the case where the stock is out of safe limits, the SAC may propose additional measures, which may include the restriction of fishing activity outside territorial waters.

Spatial and temporal closure

25. For conservation purposes, CPCs shall close the coastal zone, irrespective of depth, out to six nautical miles, or four nautical miles for vessels not allowed to fish beyond six nautical miles, to towed gear targeting demersal stocks, for a continuous period of at least eight weeks.

26. In alternative to paragraph 25, CPCs shall set a closure of at least 30 continuous days and covering at least 20 percent of territorial sea for fishing activities with OTB, PTB, OTT and TBB irrespective of their overall length in the areas and periods recognized as important for the protection of juveniles of demersal stocks. Such areas shall also account for migration routes and spatial patterns of juvenile distribution.

27. In order to define appropriate spatio-temporal restrictions in view of the sustainable management of the stocks referred to in Annex 1, CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 June 2020, and annually thereafter, the spatial restrictions, as defined in paragraphs 25 or 26, in the waters under their jurisdiction, that they apply with a view to protecting spawning and nursery areas for demersal stocks listed in Annex 1.

PART IV
Fleet management measures

28. The CPCs shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of the fleets operating with OTB, TBB, PTB and OTT and actively fishing for key demersal stocks, in terms of gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, does not exceed, over the duration of this recommendation, the fleet capacity for demersal fisheries in 2015 or its average over 2015–2017.

29. The provisions of paragraphs 9 c) and 28 shall not apply to national fleets operating with OTB and fishing for less than 1 000 days during the reference period mentioned in paragraph 9 c). The fishing capacity of such active fleets operating with OTB shall not increase by more than 50 percent with respect to the reference period.

30. Vessels authorized to fish for the key stocks listed in Annex 1 using OTB, PTB, OTT and TBB in the Adriatic Sea shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying.

31. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, no later than 31 January of each year, the list of authorized vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for the key stocks listed in Annex 1 for the current year or forthcoming years, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 3 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 on a multiannual management plan for bottom trawl fisheries

exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16, repealing Recommendations GFCM/39/2015/2 and GFCM/40/2016/4.

32. Vessels operating with OTB, PTB, OTT and TBB and exploiting demersal stocks in the Adriatic Sea shall only be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities. Authorized vessels above 12 metres length shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) from 1 January 2021 and with an electronic logbook from 1 January 2022, while, for authorized vessels below 12 metres, the Compliance Committee (CoC) shall assess the most appropriate geopositioning and catch reporting systems.

33. Each CPC shall ensure adequate mechanisms are set up for the recording of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, for the recording of the vessel's catches and fishing effort via the logbook as well as for the monitoring of fishing vessel activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

34. To explore a finer monitoring of deployed fishing effort in order to detect actual fishing hours, the GFCM shall launch a pilot project aimed at installing sensors on the vessel winches so to record and report in real time the shooting and hauling of deployed demersal towed gear.

35. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

36. Starting from 1 January 2021, for the purpose of collecting fishing effort data for the establishment of a future fishing effort regime, CPCs shall report annually to the GFCM Secretariat by 30 June each year data from the previous year on kW * fishing days by gear and vessel length, with no merging of vessel length classes.

PART V

Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the multiannual management plan

37. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis as of 2020, advice on the status of key stocks in the Adriatic Sea, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore key stocks to levels which can produce the MSY in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 1.

38. The SAC shall assess the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios with the objective of restoring and maintaining the stocks' population above levels which can produce the MSY.

39. Based on SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

40. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

41. If, for any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide an accurate advice on the stock status of the key stocks listed in Annex 1 and on their exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure sustainability of the fisheries. Such measures shall be based on SAC advice, be in accordance with the precautionary approach and take into consideration environmental and socio-economic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

42. In 2020, the SAC shall evaluate the impact of bottom longlines targeting the adult spawning population of the Adriatic stock of European hake. The SAC shall assess the need to incorporate the fleets operating with such gear in this multiannual management plan and the need to adopt specific spatial measures to protect the spawning component of the European hake stock in the Adriatic Sea.

PART VI
Specific measures to address IUU fishing activities

43. The CPCs shall establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels actively fishing in the Adriatic Sea declare all the catch and bycatch of the key stocks listed in Annex 1. The obligation to electronically declare catch shall apply from 1 January 2022, irrespective of the volume of the catch, to vessels above 12 metres length, while for vessels below 12 metres, the CoC shall assess the most appropriate system of catch reporting.

44. Each CPC shall designate landing points where landings by vessels actively fishing for key stocks in the Adriatic Sea shall take place.

45. For each designated port, CPCs shall specify permitted landing and transshipping times and places.

46. The CPCs shall carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

47. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of key stocks fished using OTB, PTB, OTT and TBB in the Adriatic Sea at any place other than the ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 44 above.

48. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November each year, any change to the list of designated landing points where landings of key stocks in the Adriatic Sea may take place, through the DCRF online platform.

49. The CPCs shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

50. Part VI of this recommendation is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

PART VII
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

51. Starting from 1 January 2021, authorized trawl vessels actively fishing for the key stocks listed in Annex 1 shall be equipped, with VMS, if above 12 metres length; for vessels below 12 metres, the CoC shall assess the most appropriate system of geopositioning, allowing control authorities to track their activities.

52. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1, all catches of key stocks, irrespectively of the live weight of the catch, as well as catches of non-target species in excess of 50 kg, shall be reported in the logbook.

53. The CPCs shall monitor the consumption of the effort quota, or the effort limit in accordance with paragraph 13, expressed in fishing days until 2021 (Annex 4) and in fishing days by effort group (Annex 3) thereafter. As from the date when a quota effort is exhausted or an effort limit is reached, the concerned CPC shall communicate it to the GFCM Secretariat and prohibit fishing in the fishery where the effort quota or limit has been reached by all or part of the fishing vessels flying its flag.

PART VIII
Pilot inspection scheme

54. Upon request of CPCs, with the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, the GFCM shall establish, in 2020, a pilot project with a view to establishing an observation and inspection programme in order to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation.

55. Such observation and inspection programme shall be based on the results of the pilot project and adopted before the end of 2020. It shall comprise, *inter alia*, the following elements:

a) high seas inspection;

b) procedures for an effective investigation on an alleged violation of the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation and for reporting to the GFCM on the actions taken, including procedures for exchanging information;

c) provisions for appropriate action to be taken when inspections reveal serious violations as well as the expedient and transparent follow-up of such actions in order to uphold the flag state's responsibility within the intended programme;

d) port inspections;

e) monitoring of landings and catches, including statistical follow-up for management purposes;

f) specific monitoring programmes, including boarding and inspection; and

g) observer programmes.

PART IX
National management plans

56. In order to ensure adequate conservation of demersal stocks, CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in the Adriatic Sea.

57. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, from 31 January 2020, of the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 31 January of the following year.

Final provisions

58. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation remains in force for seven years from the date of its adoption.

59. The measures in this recommendation shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs.

60. On the basis of SAC scientific advice, the GFCM may revise this recommendation.

Annex 1

List of key stocks addressed by this recommendation

Name	**Scientific name**	**GSA**	
		17	**18**
European hake	*Merluccius merluccius*	X	X
Norway lobster	*Nephrops norvegicus*	X	X
Common sole	*Solea solea*	X	
Deep-water rose shrimp	*Parapenaeus longirostris*	X	X
Red mullet	*Mullus barbatus*	X	X

Annex 2

Terms of reference towards the establishment of FRAs in the Adriatic Sea

In the wake of the positive implementation of the Jabuka/Pomo pit FRA, with similar cooperative spirit and recognizing the value of adopting similar measures in the rest of the Adriatic Sea, work should progress towards the establishment of FRAs in the southern Adriatic and in the northern Adriatic.

The following steps are planned:

1. The CPCs separately evaluate the feasibility of FRAs, in consultation with national stakeholders.
2. The key components should cover vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME), essential fish habitats (EFH), spatial fishing fleet dynamics and the socio-economic impacts, as provided by the national administrations.
3. Bilateral discussions are held between CPCs regarding potential FRAs.
4. A workshop is convened with CPCs, scientists and stakeholders, and with the support of the FAO AdriaMed project, to examine all key components for the establishment of new FRAs.

The working group, tentatively before the next Subregional Committee for the Adriatic Sea shall finalize and agree on all the elements that need to be contained in the FRA proposal as outlined in the "Standard form for the submission of proposals for GFCM fisheries restricted areas in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea".

Annex 3

Effort groups as defined for the combination of gear type and vessel length class ("fleet segment") accounting for at least 5 percent of the landings in 2017

Gear type	Geographical subareas (GSAs)	Stocks concerned	CPC	Overall length of vessels[1]	Effort group code	Fishing days[2]
Single boat bottom otter trawls (OTB)	17–18	Red mullet; European hake; deep-water rose shrimp and Norway lobster		< 12 m	OTB12<	
				≥ 12 m and < 24 m	OTB12-24	
				≥ 24 m	OTB>24	
Beam trawls (TBB)	17	Common sole		< 12 m	TBB12<	
				≥ 12 m and < 24 m	TBB12-24	
				≥ 24 m	TBB>24	
Bottom pair trawls (PTB)	17–18	Red mullet; European hake; deep-water rose shrimp and Norway lobster		< 12 m	PTB12<	
				≥ 12 m and < 24 m	PTB 12-24	
				≥ 24 m	PTB >24	
Twin bottom tter trawls (OTT)	17–18	Red mullet, European hake, deep-water rose shrimp and Norway lobster		< 12 m	OTT12<	
				≥ 12 m and < 24 m	OTT 12-24	
				≥ 24 m	OTT >24	

[1]Fleet segments and gear will be simplified once effort data is available.

[2] This data will become available from 2021.

Annex 4

Effort allocation formula

Allocation formula where effort quotas are made proportional to the contribution of CPCs to the total effort, in a given reference year and effort group:

[CPC a reduction = Overall reduction * ($CPCa^2$/ ($CPCa^2$+$CPCb^2$+ $CPCc^2$+$CPCd^2$+$CPCe^2$))]

For the number of fishing days reported via the DCRF Task V.2 in 2017, on the basis of the reference year 2015 or of the average over 2015–2018, a global reduction of 12 percent for OTB and 16 percent for TBB is established for 2020–2021.

The above formula is used to allocate the fishing days quota by CPC and gear as reported in table below.

Gear type	**Geographical subareas (GSAs)**	**Number of fishing days**					
		EU 2020	**EU 2021**	**Albania 2020**	**Albania 2021**	**Montenegro 2020**	**Montenegro 2021**
Single boat bottom otter trawls (OTB)	17–18	147 606	137 046	23 124	22 748	Not applicable[1]	Not applicable[2]
Beam trawls (TBB)	17	8 663	7 910				

[1]Montenegro shall not exceed the effort limit of 3 000 fishing days per year in accordance with paragraph 13.

[2] Montenegro shall not exceed the effort limit of 3 000 fishing days per year in accordance with paragraph 13.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1 on a multiannual management plan for European eel in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

TAKING NOTE that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 recommends that marine and coastal ecosystems should be protected and sustainably managed by 2020;

TAKING NOTE that the SDG 14 recommends that scientific knowledge should be increased and research capacity developed;

TAKING NOTE that the SDG 14 recognizes the need to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in order to ensure prosperity, food security and sustainability for all;

ACKNOWLEDGING that states have the duty, under international law, to cooperate through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in order to promote responsible fishing practices;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) concluded, at its nineteenth session (Slovenia, May 2017), that the stock of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) was in a critical state;

ACKOWLEDGING that the SAC, following the conclusions of the joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels (WGEEL), recommended at its nineteenth session that anthropogenic mortality affecting the production and escapement of silver eels be reduced – or maintained – as close to zero as possible;

WELCOMING the fact that the SAC recommended at its nineteenth session that data concerning European eel be collected within the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and scientific knowledge, taking into account socio-enonomic aspects, and that an appropriate method shall be established to this end;

ACKNOWLEDGING the principles and international standards of responsible fishing practices enshrined in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

RECALLING that the signatories of the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration urged all riparian States to comply with the management measures adopted by the GFCM and to fully implement the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries;

NOTING that Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries includes a specific target on reversing the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management;

BEARING IN MIND that Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 lists European eel as a priority commercial species of conservation concern for which an advice should be produced for the Mediterranean Sea;

WELCOMING management efforts made by certain contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to support sustainable exploitation of European eel in their marine waters, freshwaters and in their transitional brackish waters such as lagoons and estuaries;

RECOGNIZING that urgent action is needed to ensure the recovery of the stock across its range of natural distribution and that measures need to apply during all stages of European eel life cycle, from the glass eel to the silver eel stage;

BEARING IN MIND that the particular migration and life cycle patterns displayed by catadromous fish require specific management and conservation measures;

NOTING that the SAC recommended, at its nineteenth session, that a Mediterranean adaptive regional management plan for this species shall be developed;

CONSIDERING that the population of European eel is considered a single stock so that the provisions included in this recommendation shall contribute to the recovery of the species;

CONSIDERING that the specific life cycle traits of catadromous species such as European eel call for specific management measures;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives of the multiannual plan

1. This recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for the fisheries catching European eel in the Mediterranean Sea, in line with the precautionary approach to fisheries management. It shall be designed to provide and maintain high long-term yields and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.

2. The CPCs in the territory of which fishing activities catch European eel in the area referred to in paragraph 1 agree to implement such multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned, in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

3. With due regard to the critical state of the European eel stock as reported by the SAC and to the ensuing urgency to restore the conservation state of this stock, CPCs agree that all activities catching European eel shall be covered by this plan, namely targeted, incidental and recreational catches.

4. A set of transitional precautionary management measures shall be developed in order to address the immediate need to decrease fishing mortality and to ensure that the stock is kept at biologically sustainable levels in the long term.

5. The CPCs may take into account in their management measures other anthropogenic mortality factors, in order to reduce their impact on European eel and increase the likelihood that individuals escape to the sea, as well as include restocking or translocation practices.

6. Upon adequate data collection, the SAC shall formulate advice on long-term measures in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 1.

7. On the basis of SAC advice, the GFCM shall adapt and complement as appropriate the transitional precautionary management measures in order to meet the objectives set out in paragraph 1.

8. The multiannual management plan shall be applied in a fair, timely, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with international law and without prejudice to stricter or broader-encompassing measures that may already be established by CPCs in their national management plans.

Geographical scope

9. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation shall apply to all marine waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

10. Taking into account the specificities of the life cycle of European eel, and the importance to include the management measures foreseen in all the habitats where fishing activities occur, CPCs agree to include freshwaters and transitional brackish waters, such as lagoons and estuaries, within the scope of this recommendation.

Definitions

11. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "European eel" means fish pertaining to the *Anguilla anguilla* species.

b) "Mediterranean Sea" means geographical subareas (GSAs) 1 to 27 included, as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

c) "Recreational fishing" means a non-commercial fishing activity exploiting marine living resources for recreation, tourism or sport.

d) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

e) "Authorized landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore and designated by the CPCs where landing of European eel catches is authorized.

f) "Fishing authorization" means a special authorization granted by legal authorities and entitling a natural or legal person or fishing vessel to engage in commercial fishing activities catching European eel, whether these catches are targeted during a specified period or in a given area.

g) "Closure period" means a specific period of the day or the year when fishing activities resulting in landings of European eel are prohibited.

h) "DCRF manual" means the manual prepared by the SAC and endorsed by the GFCM at its thirty-ninth session, resulting from the implementation of the DCRF.

PART II
Specific objectives

12. This recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan for European eel. The operational objective of this management plan is to contribute to controlling the fishing mortality and

ensuring the long-term conservation and long-term sustainable use of this species in the Mediterranean Sea, in accordance with Article 2 of the GFCM Agreement and paragraph 1 of this plan.

13. The objective of the transitional precautionary management measures is to immediately adjust fishing mortality levels together with other possible measures and to address the critical state of the stock, as mentionned in Part III of this recommendation.

14. The transitional management measures shall also prepare the ground for a future management plan while reducing the risk that, in the absence of scientific assessment, the stock biomass will drop to extremely low levels, jeopardizing the economic viability of the fisheries exploiting European eel.

15. The plan shall ensure that relevant data concerning European eel and the fisheries exploiting it are collected through the DCRF online platform and in accordance with relevant GFCM decisions, and that scientific research is conducted in order to, *inter alia*, identify long-term management measures.

16. The plan shall ensure that, upon the timely provision of scientific advice by the SAC, the GFCM reviews and adapts the short-term management measures, if appropriate.

17. The plan shall finally pursue the reduction of IUU fishing activities in its area of application.

PART III
Transitional management measures

Transitional management measures

18. In the short term, CPCs shall implement a reduction of the fishing effort or catches of European eel of at least 30 percent compared to the reference period 2006–2008 or to another three-year reference period defined by CPCs. This reduction shall apply on a progressive basis of an annual 10 percent reduction over a period of three years starting from 1 January 2019, i.e. the year following the forty-second session of the GFCM. The reference period shall be without prejudice to the discussions in the context of the working group referred to under paragraph 33 of this recommendation and shall not prejudge from the definition of a future reference period. Where national management plans resulting in effort or catch reductions of at least 30 percent have been implemented before the entry into force of this recommendation, the reference period may be the one designated in the national management plan.

19. The CPCs shall establish an annual fishing closure of three consecutive months where landing European eel shall be prohibited. In order to decrease fishing mortality effectively, the closure period shall be defined by the CPCs in their national management plan, together with its fisheries and the gear targeting European eel. The fishing closure period shall be consistent with the objective defined in paragraph 18, with national management plans in place and with the temporal migration patterns of European eel in the CPC concerned.

20. The CPCs may establish fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) within the geographical scope of this recommendation to further protect European eel. It shall be prohibited to land catches of European eel made in the FRAs, and specimens accidentally captured shall be immediately released upon their catch. The location and boundaries of the FRAs shall be consistent with the provisions set out in paragraph 18 and with the distribution of the main habitats of European eel in the CPC concerned.

National management plans and national management measures

21. National management plans and national management measures already in force in the territories under the jurisdiction of CPCs shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat by 31 January 2019 at the latest.

22. The CPCs which do not have national measures in force shall adopt by 30 June 2019 a minimun set of measures consistent with paragraphs 18 to 20, and shall communicate them to the GFCM

Secretariat by 31 January 2020 at the latest.

23. The national management plans adopted by CPCs shall establish technical measures, such as authorized fishing gear and mesh size.

24. The CPCs may adopt voluntary measures to complement the multiannual management plan. These voluntary measures may take into account *inter alia* the conservation state of European eel in their waters, the impact of fishing activities catching European eel in their waters and relevant context specific to the relevant CPC, such as other anthropogenic mortality sources.

25. These measures shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat within one month of their entry into force.

PART IV
Data collection, scientific research programme and review clause

Data collection

26. Data provided by CPCs and referred to in the DCRF manual, including past data as far back as possible and the areas where European eel is known or likely to occur in their respective waters under the scope of this recommendation, shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat not later than the forty-third session of the CGPM. The areas where European eel is known or likely to occur shall be defined, where possible, by closed polygons, where the summits coordinates are reported using the World Geodetic System 1984 spatial coordinate system. The CPCs are encouraged to provide maps illustrating these areas, using the same spatial coordinate system.

27. Where recreational and/or IUU fishing are known to occur, data available, including estimates, shall also be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat no later than the forty-third session of the GFCM.

28. The CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat data pertaining to restocking activities as well as data pertaining to fattening activities in accordance with the deadlines set in Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/6 on reporting of aquaculture data and information, amending Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/4.

29. The CPCs may also transmit to the GFCM Secretariat any additional information on a voluntary basis, if possible no later than the forty-third session of the GFCM.

Scientific research programme

30. The GFCM Secretariat, with the support of the SAC, shall provide terms of reference, including costs, services and other requirements to support the implementation of a research programme on European eel in the Mediterranean Sea, in line with the one described in Appendix 7 of the report of the nineteenth session of the SAC. The research programme shall be launched in 2019 and completed in 2021, at the latest 6 months before the forty-fifth session of the GFCM.

Review clause

31. The multiannual management plan shall be assessed by the SAC and, if necessary, reviewed by the GFCM at its forty-fifth session.

PART V
Working group, assessment by the SAC and adoption of measures to achieve the long-term objectives

32. The CPCs shall report on the implementation of the multiannual management plan to the GFCM in 2021, no later than the forty-fifth session of the GFCM. If national measures were implemented, their assessment should be included in this report. If possible, CPCs are encouraged to provide an estimate of the impacts of the multiannual management plan and of their voluntary measures.

Working group

33. A working group shall be established to examine management measures for European eel. The tasks of the working group are defined in the annex to this recommendation.

Assessment by the SAC

34. In 2023, not later than six months before the forty-seventh session of the GFCM, the SAC shall advise on appropriate measures to achieve the long-term objectives set out in paragraph 1. To this effect, the SAC shall formulate an advice taking into account the reports of the CPCs, the result of the scientific research programme, the output of the working group, the data collected in the DCRF framework and the characteristics of the European eel conservation status and of the fisheries in the territories of the CPCs. The SAC, while duly taking into account the specificities of the European eel fisheries of CPCs, shall advise, *inter alia,* on the effectiveness of the management measures referred to in Part III, as well as on suitable catch limits or effort measures, on the minimum sizes, on appropriate technical measures, such as mesh and hook sizes and on other possible measures resulting in selectivity improvements.

Adoption of measures to achieve the long-term objectives

35. In 2023, at the forty-seventh session of the GFCM, CPCs shall adopt long-term management measures to achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 1, complementing or replacing the measures referred to in Part III.

PART VI
Fishing authorizations, landings and measures to fight IUU fishing: catch registration, traceability and control

Fishing authorizations

36. The authorization to land catches of European eel shall be conditioned to the granting of a fishing authorization, in accordance with the national management plans in place. Fishing authorizations shall be subject to the provisions set out in Part III and the CPCs shall maintain an updated register.

37. By 1 January 2020, each CPC shall establish a list of all fishing vessels flying its flag and authorized to fish for European eel in their respective waters under the scope of this recommendation, irrespective of the length overall of the vessel.

38. By 1 January 2020, each CPC shall establish a list of all authorized transitional and brackish waters, such as lagoons and estuaries, where traditional permanent fish-harvesting static gear used to catch European eel are in place.

39. Authorizations referred to in paragraphs 36 to 38 shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat by 30 June 2020, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform, and updated regularly.

Landings

40. Landings of European eel shall only be authorized in landing points designated for this purpose. The CPCs shall communicate the list of such landing points to the GFCM Secretariat not later than the forty-third session of the GFCM.

41. By way of derogation from paragraph 40, CPCs may put in place measures alternative to designated landing points, provided that they effectively contribute to the fight against IUU fishing.

Measures to fight IUU fishing: catch registration, control and traceability

42. The CPCs shall ensure that the fishers or masters of the vessels authorized to harvest European eel have the obligation to record their catches in live weight.

43. The CPCs shall ensure that, in the special case of transitional and brackish waters such as lagoons and estuaries where European eel catching continues to be carried out with permanent traditional fish-harvesting static gear, authorized operators have the obligation to record their catches in live weight.

44. Without prejudice to paragraph 2 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1, each CPC shall put in place a mechanism to record in the logbook its daily catches of European eel, irrespective of the live weight of the harvest.

45. The CPCs shall set up a traceability system for landings, sales and exports allowing the catches to be traced from the authorized landing point to the final destination, whether the specimen are sold alive, dead or transformed.

46. By 1 January 2020, each CPC shall establish a list of auction halls, bodies or persons authorized by this CPC to undertake the first marketing of European eel.

Recreational fishing of European eel

47. The CPCs shall establish on a regular basis an estimate of the number of recreational fishers and their catches of glass, yellow and silver eels.

PART VII
Final provisions

Entry into force

48. National measures or measures referred to in Part III shall not derogate to or weaken the provisions agreed by CPCs under this multiannual management plan but complement them with a view to increasing the recovery rate of the stock of European eel.

49. The multiannual management plan does not prevent CPCs from adopting more stringent national measures.

50. Developing countries intending to develop their European eel fishery shall present a development plan including a management plan based on this recommendation which shall be assessed by the SAC not later than 30 June 2020. If the development plans are not in line with the general and specific objectives set out in this multiannual management plan, the SAC shall formulate recommendations, taking into account the specificities of the developing country in question.

Annex

Terms of reference for the working group on European eel

The working group referred to in paragraph 33 shall:

1) be supported by the GFCM;
2) establish a working plan for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting during 2019, before the next meeting of the SAC;
3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, the FAO, and other regional fisheries management organizations to participate in its meetings; and
4) report its conclusions and opinions to the SAC.

Based on the information collected under Parts III and IV of this recommendation, the working group shall advise the SAC, at the latest in 2022, on appropriate management measures to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1 of this recommendation. While duly taking into account the specificities of the European eel fisheries of the CPCs, it shall advise, *inter alia,* the SAC on the effectiveness of the management and technical measures referred to in Part III, on suitable catch limits, fishing effort, minimum sizes, mesh and hooks sizes and on other possible measures resulting in selectivity improvements.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/2 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fishery management;

RECALLING the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and the Management of Sharks (IPOA-SHARKS);

RECALLING the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of some shark species in either Annex II or Annex III of its Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol);

NOTING the importance of harmonizing conservation and management measures with other international conventions for the protection of these species;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and, in particular, the need to identify species and ensure a better conservation status of sharks, including by protecting coastal areas from the most active fishing gear;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Scope

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall ensure that sharks are kept on board, transshipped, landed and marketed at first sale in a way that species are recognizable and identifiable, and that the catch, incidental catch and, whenever appropriate, release of these species can be monitored and recorded.

2. The CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures to ensure adequate conservation status of sharks.

PART II
Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

   a) “Shark” means any species of the taxon Elasmobranchii.

   b) “Shark fins” means any fin of sharks, including caudal fins but excluding the pectoral fins of rays, which are a constituent part of ray wings.

c) "Trawl nets" means nets which are actively towed by the main boat engine and consisting of a cone- or pyramid-shaped body (as trawl body) closed at the back by a codend and which can extend at the opening by the wings or can be mounted on a rigid frame. Horizontal opening is either obtained by otter boards or provided by a beam or frame of variable shape and size. Such nets can be towed either on the bottom (bottom trawl net) or in midwater (pelagic trawl net).

PART III
Fisheries management measures

4. The CPCs shall ensure that:

a) it is prohibited to remove shark fins onboard vessels and to retain, transship or land shark fins;

b) in order to facilitate onboard storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the carcass, but they shall not be removed from the carcass before landing;

c) beheading and skinning of specimens onboard and before landing are prohibited, and beheaded and skinned sharks shall not be marketed at first sale after landing; and

d) it is prohibited to purchase, offer for sale or sell shark fins which have been removed, retained onboard, transshipped or landed in contravention of this recommendation.

5. In relation to the reduction of trawl fishing in coastal areas to enhance the protection of coastal sharks:

a) the CPCs shall ensure that fishing activities carried out with trawl nets are prohibited within 3 nautical miles off the coast, provided that the 50 metre isobath is not reached, or within the 50 metre isobath where that depth is reached at a shorter distance from the coast.

b) Specific and spatially limited derogations may be granted by CPCs on condition that such derogations only affect a limited number of vessels and provided that they:

i) are justified by particular geographical constraints, such as the limited size of the continental shelf along the entire coastline of a CPC or the limited extent of trawlable fishing grounds due to different factors;

and/or

ii) concern small trawling vessels of less than or equal to 12 metres length overall and engine power of less than or equal to 85 kW traditionally operating in coastal areas;

or

iii) concern a limited number of vessels during a seasonal fishing campaign; and

iv) have no significant impact on the marine environment.

c) The CPCs shall inform the GFCM Secretariat on the modalities of applying the derogations under subparagraph b) above no later than 31 March. Such notification shall include:

i) a list of authorized trawling vessels with their characteristics;

ii) relevant zones identified by geographic coordinates, both on land and at sea, and by GFCM statistical rectangles as defined in Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1; and

iii) measures taken to monitor and mitigate impacts on the marine environment.

d) The CPCs shall establish a specific monitoring plan for the trawl fisheries operating under derogation, as stipulated by subparagraph b).

e) These provisions are without prejudice to more detailed or stricter rules implemented by CPCs.

Elasmobranchs species under Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) and Annex III (list of species whose exploitation is regulated) of the SPA/BD Protocol to the Barcelona Convention

6. The CPCs shall ensure a high protection from fishing activities for elasmobranch species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention, which must be released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

7. Specimens of shark species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol shall not be retained on board, transshipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold or displayed or offered for sale.

8. The CPCs shall ensure that tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*) specimens caught with bottom-set gillnets, longlines and tuna traps be promptly released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

PART IV
Monitoring, data collection and research

9. The CPCs shall ensure that:

a) information on fishing activities, catch data, incidental catches, release and/or discarding of sharks species listed either in Annex II or Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol, is recorded by the ship owner in the logbook or in an equivalent document, in line with the requirements of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1;

b) such information is reported to the national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat within their annual national reporting to the SAC and in accordance with the data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations, in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF); and

c) any other additional measure is taken to improve data collection in view of the scientific monitoring of species.

10. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs shall, individually and collectively, engage in capacity-building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on sharks and shark fisheries and to support the effective implementation of this recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other relevant international bodies.

11. The provisions referred to in paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are without prejudice to stricter rules implemented by CPCs.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/7 on a regional research programme on blue crab in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stock and scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method shall be established to this end;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic impact in the Mediterranean Sea of fisheries exploiting blue crab, which is considered as a non-indigenous species of commercial interest that constitutes a fishery resource providing profits for local communities;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Objectives, scope and definitions

Objectives of the research programme and of the transitional measures

1. This recommendation shall establish a regional research programme towards the sustainable exploitation of blue crab in the Mediterranean Sea (hereafter “regional research programme”) aimed at ensuring socio-economic sustainability.

2. This recommendation applies to all commercial fishing activities exploiting blue crab in the Mediterranean Sea.

3. The regional research programme established by this recommendation shall support the work of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC).

4. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) who are actively fishing in the Mediterranean Sea agree to implement the regional research programme in accordance with the objectives of this recommendation.

Geographical scope

5. The regional research programme established by this recommendation shall apply to the Mediterranean Sea.

Definition

6. For the purpose of this recommendation, "blue crab" means the species *Portunus segnis* and *Callinectes sapidus.*

PART II
Operational and specific objectives

7. The operational objective of this recommendation shall be to improve scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge of the fisheries exploiting blue crab by establishing a regional research programme on blue crab.

8. The specific objective of this recommendation shall be to collect data on fishing activities in order to improve research and scientific knowledge for the sustainable exploitation of the stock, aiming at maintaining the stock at MSY levels as well as the socio-economic viability of blue crab fisheries.

9. The SAC, at its twenty-third session in 2021, shall assess the outcomes of the regional research programme established by this recommendation. The SAC shall report to the GFCM at its forty-fifth session in 2021, and, if deemed necessary, present proposals for the adaptation of the measures set by this recommendation and for complementary management and control measures.

10. Based on the recommendations and advice under paragraph 9, the GFCM, at its forty-fifth session, may adapt these measures in accordance with the objectives set out in Parts I and II of this recommendation.

PART III
Regional research programme and scientific monitoring

11. The CPCs with fishing activities targeting blue crab shall ensure that a mechanism for adequate scientific monitoring of blue crab catches in the Mediterranean Sea is duly in place, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the regional research programme and to allowing the SAC to provide descriptive information and advice on at least the following:

a) deployed fishing effort (e.g. number of fishing days/week) and overall catch levels at the national or supranational levels, indicating the fishing gear used; and

b) biological and socio-economic effects of alternative management scenarios, including input/output and/or technical measures, such as fishing gear/environmental impacts, as proposed by CPCs.

12. The GFCM Secretariat shall provide terms of reference, including costs, services and other requirements to support the implementation of a research programme on blue crab in the Mediterranean Sea, as described in the Annex to this recommendation. The regional research programme shall be launched in 2019.

PART IV
Final provisions

13. These measures shall be assessed by the SAC and, if necessary, reviewed by the GFCM at its forty-fifth session in 2021.

14. In light of the results of the regional research programme referred to in Part III of this recommendation, the GFCM may propose and adopt new appropriate management and control measures, including the monitoring of fishing activities and catches.

Annex

Key elements of the regional research programme on blue crab in the Mediterranean Sea

Introduction

There is high need for scientific and research projects aimed to fill gaps of knowledge on blue crab as a fishery resource.

Main features of the regional research programme on blue crab in the Mediterranean Sea

- Clear objectives defined in advance (e.g. biomass in tonnes, in number of km^2, spatio-temporal distribution patterns);
- priority given to the collection of useful data for the provision of scientific advice in support of management (length, age, life cycle);
- combination of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent sources of information to ensure a regular monitoring;
- all CPCs should be involved; and
- the regional research programme should also provide guidelines and facilitate harmonization, standardization of protocols, coordination and comparison of the results obtained by past, ongoing and future national, regional and international research programmes addressing blue crab.

Work packages

Work packages are designed to address the main aspects mentioned above as well as the need to evaluate the social and economic aspects of the blue crab fishery in the context of the sustainable management and exploitation of the stock.

Work Package 1 – Biology and ecology

Work Package 2 – Fishery-independent data collection – Surveys-at-sea

Work Package 3 – Fishery-dependent data collection

Work Package 4 – Stock assessment

Work Package 5 – Socio-economic elements

Work Package 6 – Management proposals

Main objectives of each work package

WP 1 – Biology and ecology of blue crab, including demography. Biology: studies on size, density, abundance, biomass, recruitment, growth, reproduction, physiology, environmental parameters, habitat, feeding and bycatch surveys. Ecology: genetics, interactions with other species, impacts of fishing gear on the marine environment.

WP 2 – Fishery-independent data collection through multiannual demersal beam trawl/dredge surveys-at-sea, e.g. biomass and abundance indices, size/age distribution, bycatch.

WP 3 – Fishery-dependent data collection through port sampling (e.g. landings, length/distribution, fishing techniques used and vessels engaged in the fishing activity, value), and through observers on board (e.g. bycatch, days at sea).

WP 4 – Stock assessment: investigation on methodologies for assessing the status of blue crab including by compiling historical data.

WP 5 – Socio-economic elements: socio-economic survey on the sector, trade, markets and development of economic indicators, external aspects affecting the fisheries, economic sustainability of related fishing gears.

WP 6 – Management proposals: identification of possible additional measures through management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the sustainability of the blue crab fisheries.

Implementation of the regional research programme

The GFCM shall:

- assess progress in the different work packages;
- define standardized methods (e.g. in ageing) as well as research protocols; and
- organize capacity-building activities.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/8 on further emergency measures in 2019-2021 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has considered that the stocks of anchovy and sardine are distributed in geographical subarea (GSA) 17 and in GSA 18 and has carried out the first joint assessments at its eighteenth session;

NOTING that the revision of input data and the benchmark assessment for sardine and anchovy in GSA 17 and GSA 18 were undertaken in 2015–2016 and final stock assessment models based on the revised data were provided by the Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (WGSASP) in November 2017;

CONSIDERING that the SAC, at its twentieth session (June 2018, Morocco), concluded that both anchovy and sardine stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18 are overexploited and in overexploitation with F/F_{msy} at 2.23 and 2.77 respectively and advised once again to decrease fishing mortality;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality is an overall measurement system, which can be adjusted by applying reductions in terms of fishing capacity and/or fishing effort;

CONSIDERING that the emergency measures for 2017 and 2018 (Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3 establishing further emergency measures in 2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea

[geographical subareas 17 and 18]) have expired, that the Commission shall update the current management plan (Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 [northern Adriatic Sea] and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 [southern Adriatic Sea]) with the latest scientific advice to ensure implementation in 2022 at the latest, and that, due to the particularly bad state of anchovy stocks, it is necessary to adopt new emergency measures to reduce the fishing mortality of the small pelagic stocks in 2019, 2020 and 2021;

CONSIDERING that, in accordance with paragraph 18 of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3, if the SAC concludes that anchovy and sardine are still overexploited, the Commission may adopt more stringent measures aiming at ensuring that the exploitation levels of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea are at MSY by 2020.

NOTING that acoustic survey data for both small pelagic species, sardine and anchovy, indicate a declining trend in total biomass;

NOTING that the latest assessment of stock status made by the SAC in 2018 also indicates a further declining trend in spawning stock biomass (SSB) of anchovy since 2005 and a decline in SSB of sardine compared to the assessment of 2017;

NOTING that, since temporal restrictions are considered to have a beneficial effect on fisheries, a closed period during the spawning season of anchovy and sardine in the Adriatic Sea shall be applied;

CONSIDERING that, due to stock dynamics, it may take several years to observe the effects of the management measures adopted and applied to date on the stock status of small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea but that this delay should not be taken as a justification to delay action to improve the status of these stocks;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM may envisage to adopt additional measures including catch limitations;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting sardine and anchovy in the Adriatic Sea and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraph 2 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraphs 2 and 3 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 (southern Adriatic Sea);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17, amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1;

NOTING that, under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, a reduction of fishing effort as well as spatio-temporal closures was applied in 2015 for vessels fishing for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18);

NOTING that, under Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1, a reduction of fishing effort was applied in 2016 for fishing vessels targeting anchovy in GSA 17 and spatio-temporal closures were applied in 2016 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, geographical scope and definitions

1. The general objective of the present recommendation is to ensure that exploitation levels of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea are reduced in order to achieve MSY by 2020 and to ensure the stability, in socio-economic terms, of fishing fleets targeting small pelagics.

2. The present recommendation shall apply to GSA 17 and GSA 18 (Adriatic Sea) until 2021.

3. For the purpose of this recommendation:

a) "Anchovy" means fish pertaining to the *Engraulis encrasicolus* species.

b) "Sardine" means fish pertaining to the *Sardina pilchardus* species.

c) "Small pelagics" means stocks of anchovy and sardine.

d) "Pelagic trawler" means fishing vessel operating single or in pair with pelagic trawl net.

e) "Purse seiner" means fishing vessel operating with purse seine net for small pelagic species.

PART II
Emergency management measures

4. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall not exceed the level of catches for small pelagics exerted in 2014 as reported in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix and repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1.

5. The provisions under paragraph 4 shall not apply to CPCs with catches below 2 500 tonnes in 2014 and these CPCs shall not exceed catches of 2 500 tonnes in any of the three years covered by this recommendation.

6. In addition, in 2019, 2020 and 2021, the CPCs with declared catches over 2 500tonnes in 2014 shall implement a progressive 5 percent reduction each year starting from the level of catches of small pelagics in 2014, as reported in Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3.

7. If the catch limit set in paragraph 4 is exceeded in any given year, the GFCM shall recommend appropriate management measures compensating the overcatch.

Fishing effort

8. Notwithstanding the fishing effort established under paragraph 27 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, CPCs shall ensure that their fishing vessels targeting small pelagics shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year, with a maximum of 144 fishing days targeting sardine and of 144 fishing days targeting anchovy.

Closures

9. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, CPCs shall apply specific temporal closures at the fleet level (even if not simultaneous for purse seiners and pelagic trawlers) in view of protecting stocks during spawning periods. Such closures shall cover the entire distribution of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and affect all fleets targeting small pelagics, for periods of no less than 30 continuous days per fleet segment. Vessels belonging to fleets subject to closure shall be prohibited to change gear for targeting small pelagics (purse seine to/from pelagic trawl) during the closure period. Such closures shall take place during the following timeframes:

- for sardine, from 1 October to 31 March
- for anchovy, from 1 April to 30 September

10. By way of derogation from paragraph 9, such temporal closures may be implemented for periods of no less than 15 continuous days for national fleets of less than 15 purse seiners and/or pelagic trawlers actively fishing for small pelagic stocks.

11. The CPCs shall apply spatial closures to vessels over 12 m length overall for no less than 7 months in 2019, 8 months in 2020 and 9 months in 2021. Such closures shall cover 30 percent of the territorial or inner waters identified as important for the protection of early age classes of fish.

12. In order to protect small pelagics, in 2019, 2020 and 2021 fishing activity with purse seiners and pelagic trawlers targeting anchovy or sardine shall be prohibited in the area outlined in the map in Annex 1.

13. The CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 31 December 2018, the set of closure dates and areas of application listed under paragraphs 9, 10 and 11.

Fleet capacity and fleet register

14. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2018, the list of all pelagic trawlers (single or pair trawlers) and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in 2014.

15. The CPCs shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of trawlers and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks, in terms of gross tonnage (GT) engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, does not exceed the fleet capacity for small pelagics in 2014.

16. The provision under paragraph 15 shall not apply to the national fleets of less than ten purse seiners and/or pelagic trawlers actively fishing for small pelagic stocks. In such case, the capacity of active fleets may increase by not more than 50 percent in number of vessels and in terms of GT and kW.

PART III
Scientific monitoring

17. The SAC shall suggest alternative solutions to ensure the availability of the results of hydroacoustic surveys of the previous year not later than 31 January of a given year including the implementation of additional winter surveys.

18. The SAC shall evaluate each year the effectiveness of the emergency measures established by this recommendation towards achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 1.

19. The SAC, at its twenty-second session in 2020, shall give mandate to the Workshop on the assessment of management measures (WKMSE) to carry out a management strategy evaluation (MSE) in order to test alternative management approaches to be implemented starting from 2022, in accordance with the terms of reference in Annex 2.

20. On the basis of the outcomes of the work mentioned at paragraph 19 and of SAC advice, the GFCM shall, in 2021, revise Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and, in 2022 at the latest, implement a management plan.

PART IV
Monitoring, control and surveillance programme

21. In order to facilitate the monitoring of catches, all catches shall be landed, with the exception of those catches which may be discarded in accordance with existing national legislation.

22. Upon request of CPCs, with the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, a pilot project shall be established in 2019 with a view to establishing a voluntary observation and inspection programme, in order to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures of this recommendation.

23. Such voluntary observation and inspection programme, to be implemented in 2019, 2020 and 2021, shall comprise, *inter alia*, the following elements:

a) Inspections at sea;

b) Procedures for an effective investigation of alleged violations of the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation, and for reporting to the GFCM on the actions taken, including procedures for exchanging information;

c) Provisions for appropriate action to be taken when inspections reveal serious violations as well as for the expedient and transparent follow-up of such actions in order to uphold the flag state's responsibility within the intended programme;

d) Port inspections;

e) Monitoring of landings and catches, including statistical follow-up for management purposes;

f) Specific monitoring programmes, including boarding and inspection.

Annex 1



Jabuka/Pomo Pit		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	43°32,044’ N	15°16,501’ E
2	43°05,452’ N	14°58,658’ E
3	43°03,477’ N	14°54,982’ E
4	42°49,811’ N	14°29,550’ E
5	42°35,205’ N	14°59,611’ E
6	42°49,668’ N	15°05,802’ E
7	42°50,450’ N	15°07,431’ E
8	42°55,618’ N	15°18,194’ E
9	43°17,436’ N	15°29,496’ E
10	43°24,758’ N	15°33,215’ E
11	43°20,345’ N	15°47,012’ E
12	43°18,150’ N	15°51,362’ E

13	43°13,984’ N	15°55,232’ E
14	43°12,873’ N	15°52,761’ E
15	43°13,494’ N	15°40,040’ E

Annex 2

Terms of reference for the Working Group on Management Strategies for Small Pelagics in the Adriatic Sea

The working group shall test, starting from 2022, alternative management approaches (harvest control rule [HCR]) for anchovy and sardine in the Adriatic Sea using different effort and/or catch-based management strategies and reference points operating on the basis of fixed values of fishing mortality and biomass.

Management decisions

a) Test fixed F_{msy} HCR coupled with effort and catch-based management that will ensure a low probability of SSB to fall below B_{lim} (5 percent probability), including the scenarios agreed at the WKMSE 2017.

b) Test a biomass escapement HCR that will ensure a low probability of SSB to fall below B_{lim} (5 percent probability), coupled with effort and catch-based management. For this HCR, define:

   - an optimal level of the biomass escapement ($B_{escapement}$)
   - the need of a fishing mortality cap (F_{cap})

c) The WKMSE may propose and test other appropriate management scenarios for small pelagics fisheries in the Adriatic based on the ecosystem approach.

Economic performance

Evaluate the impact of the different HCR on the socio-economic aspects of the concerned fleets and related industries (processing and tuna farming).

Performance statistics

Evaluate the performance of alternate scenarios on a 5–10–20 year time scale using standard MSE diagnostic tools, focusing in particular on the following in relation to harvest rate:

- probability of SSB falling below B_{lim};
- risk versus catch level;
- catch variability;
- average catch;
- level of SSB; and
- probability of fisheries closure.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/9 on a regional research programme for rapa whelk fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECALLING that the 2016 Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, in particular the technical outputs of the expert meetings (Panel 1) in its Annex, recommends cooperation with the GFCM towards the promotion of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, which includes the collection of information on fisheries-related issues, such as relevant socio-economic data, discards, incidental catches of vulnerable species, invasive species and other aspects of marine ecosystems;

RECALLING that the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture calls upon Black Sea riparian countries to enhance multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of resources, particularly with regard to data collection, scientific evaluation and implementation of an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework in the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that the measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available and on the work of the BlackSea4Fish project in supporting the advice delivered by the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS), taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

NOTING that the conclusions of the fifth meeting of the Subregional Group on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea (Georgia, December 2017) suggest that rapa whelk fisheries are already reaching MSY levels and that care should be taken in further expanding this fishery;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stocks collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of rapa whelk fisheries in the Black Sea and the need to ensure their long-term economic sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stock and scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method shall be established to this end;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement the following recommendation:

PART I
Objectives, scope and definitions

Objectives of the research programme

1. This recommendation shall establish a regional research programme towards the sustainable exploitation of rapa whelk in the Black Sea (geographical subarea [GSA] 29) (hereafter "regional research programme").

2. This recommendation shall apply to all commercial fishing activities exploiting rapa whelk in the Black Sea (GSA 29).

3. The regional research programme established by this recommendation shall support the WGBS and be scientifically assessed and coordinated within the BlackSea4Fish project.

4. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSA 29 agree to implement the regional research programme in accordance with the objectives of this recommendation.

Geographical scope

5. The regional research programme and the transitional measures established by this recommendation shall apply to GSA 29.

Definitions

6. For the purpose of this recommendation:

a) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

b) "Rapa whelk" means gastropods pertaining to the species *Rapana venosa*.

c) "Vessel actively fishing for rapa whelk" means any vessel equipped with fishing gear to fish for rapa whelk or used for scuba diving to fish for rapa whelk, and holding a valid fishing authorization for rapa whelk.

PART II
Operational and specific objectives

7. The operational objective of this recommendation shall be to improve scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge of the fisheries exploiting rapa whelk by establishing a regional research programme on rapa whelk.

8. The specific objective of this recommendation shall be to collect data on fishing activities in order to improve research and scientific knowledge for the sustainable exploitation of the stock, aiming at maintaining the stock at MSY levels as well as the socio-economic viability of rapa whelk fisheries.

9. The WGBS, at its annual meeting in 2021, shall assess the outcome of the regional research programme established by this recommendation, taking into consideration the national efforts made by CPCs to manage rapa whelk fisheries. The WGBS shall report to the GFCM, at its forty-fifth session in 2021, and, if deemed necessary, present proposals for the adaptation of the measures set by this recommendation and for complementary management and control measures.

PART III
Regional research programme and scientific monitoring

10. The CPCs with fishing fleets targeting rapa whelk shall ensure that a mechanism for adequate scientific monitoring of rapa whelk catches in the Black Sea is duly in place, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the regional research programme and to allowing the WGBS to provide descriptive information and advice on at least the following:

a) deployed fishing effort (e.g. number of fishing days/week) and overall catch levels at the national or supranational levels, indicating the fishing gear used;

b) data on overall bycatch quantities by fishing gear and species, excluding scuba diving;

c) biological and socio-economic effects of alternative management scenarios, including input/output and/or technical measures, such as fishing gear/environmental impacts, as proposed by the CPCs; and

d) possible spatio-temporal closures in order to preserve fisheries sustainability.

11. The BlackSea4Fish project shall facilitate and coordinate the assessment of relevant data at the regional level under the regional research programme.

12. The GFCM Secretariat, with the support of the WGBS, shall provide terms of reference, including costs, services and other requirements to support the implementation of a research programme on rapa whelk in the Black Sea, as described in the Annex to this recommendation. The regional research programme shall be launched in 2019.

PART IV
Final provisions

13. In light of the results of the regional research programme referred to in Part III of this recommendation, the GFCM may propose and adopt new appropriate management and control measures, including monitoring of fishing activities and catches.

Annex

Key elements of the regional research programme on rapa whelk in the Black Sea

Introduction

There is high need for scientific and research projects in the Black Sea aimed to fill gaps of knowledge on rapa whelk, a high commercial value species in the Black Sea. There has been an increase in the coverage and in the quality of data on the abundance of rapa whelk, with some data on length and age composition. Based on such data, the first rapa whelk scientific assessment was carried out in 2017 by the Subregional Group on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea. However, the overall lack of fisheries-independent surveys in the Black Sea covering the regional distribution of the main commercial species in a comprehensive manner persists.

Main features of the regional research programme on rapa whelk in the Black Sea

- Clear objectives defined in advance (e.g. biomass in tonnes, abundance in number of km^2, spatio-temporal distribution patterns);
- priority given to the collection of useful data for the provision of scientific advice in support of management (length, age, life cycle);
- combination of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent sources of information to ensure a regular monitoring;
- all Black Sea CPCs should be involved; and
- the regional research programme should also provide guidelines and facilitate harmonization, standardization of protocols, coordination and comparison of the results obtained by past, ongoing and future national, regional and international research programmes addressing rapa whelk, such as the BlackSea4Fish project.

Work packages

Work packages are designed to address the main aspects mentioned above as well as the need to evaluate the social and economic aspects of the rapa whelk fisheries in the context of the sustainable management and exploitation of the stock.

Work Package 1 – Biology and ecology

Work Package 2 – Fishery-independent data collection – Surveys-at-sea

Work Package 3 – Fishery-dependent data collection

Work Package 4 – Stock assessment

Work Package 5 – Socio-economic elements

Work Package 6 – Management proposals

Main objectives of each work package

WP 1 – Biology and ecology of rapa whelk, including demography. Biology: studies on size, density, abundance, biomass, recruitment, growth, reproduction, physiology, environmental parameters, habitat, feeding and bycatch surveys). Ecology: genetics, interactions with other species, impacts of fishing gear on the marine environment).

WP 2 – Fishery-independent data collection through multiannual demersal beam trawl/dredge surveys-at-sea, e.g. biomass and abundance indices, size/age distribution, bycatch.

WP 3 – Fishery-dependent data collection through port sampling (e.g. landings, length/distribution, fishing techniques used and vessels engaged in the fishing activity, value) and through observers on board (e.g. bycatch, days at sea).

WP 4 – Stock assessment: investigation on methodologies for assessing the status of rapa whelk, including by compiling historical data.

WP 5 – Socio-economic elements: socio-economic survey on the sector, trade, markets and development of economic indicators, external aspects affecting the fishery, economic sustainability of related fishing gear.

WP 6 – Management proposals: identification of possible additional measures through management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the sustainability of rapa whelk fisheries.

Implementation of the regional research programme

The GFCM shall:

- assess progress in the different work packages;
- define standardized methods (e.g. in ageing) as well as research protocols; and
- organize capacity-building activities.

Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/3 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit in the Adriatic Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available" and that the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement "to minimize impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement "to establish fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), including but not limited to nursery and spawning areas […]";

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, particularly Target 4, Output 4.2 a) on "the promotion of the identification and establishment of new FRAs to protect priority areas within ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), VMEs, etc. from harmful fishing activities, and the implementation of monitoring and control systems to ensure the efficiency of these spatial measures, also in relation to Target 3";

RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraph 38;

CONSIDERING that the Jabuka/Pomo Pit is identified as an EBSA under the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5 that specifically calls for conserving at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), as expressed at its nineteenth session (Slovenia, May 2017), on the establishment of a FRA in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Subject matter, scope and definitions

Subject matter and scope

1. This recommendation shall establish a FRA in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area in the Adriatic Sea, with a view to contributing to the protection of VMEs and important essential fish habitats for demersal stocks such as European hake and Norway lobster.

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, the FRA established in paragraph 1 shall be divided in zone A, zone B and zone C and bounded by the lines joining the geographic coordinates defined in Annex 1.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Fisheries restricted area" (FRA) means a geographically-defined area in which some specific fishing activities are temporarily banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of demersal stocks.

b) "Recreational fishing" means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living resources, including leisure, sport, underwater and charter fisheries.

c) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

d) "Fishing authorization" means entitlement other than fishing licence and issued by CPCs to engage in fishing activities with specific fishing gear, during a specified period and in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

e) "Authorized vessel" means fishing vessel in possession of a specific fishing authorization.

f) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

PART II
Management and monitoring of fishing capacity and fishing effort in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA

Zone A

4. Any professional fishing activity with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps shall be prohibited in zone A.

5. Any recreational fishing activity shall be prohibited in zone A.

Zone B

6. Fishing activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps shall be prohibited in zone B, from 1 September to 31 October each year and starting from 2017.

7. Without prejudice to paragraph 6, professional activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps may be allowed in zone B, provided that the vessel and/or its master is in

possession of a specific authorization and that historical fishing activities in zone B are demonstrated. The CPCs shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to fish in this zone.

8. Authorized fishing vessels shall not be entitled to fish for more than two fishing days per week.

9. Authorized fishing vessels using otter twin trawl gear shall not be entitled to fish for more than one fishing day per week.

Zone C

10. Fishing activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps and recreational fisheries shall be prohibited in zone C, from 1 September to 31 October each year and starting from 2017.

11. Without prejudice to paragraph 10, professional activities with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps may be allowed in zone C, provided that the vessel or its master is in possession of a specific authorization and that historical fishing activities in zone C are demonstrated. The CPCs shall establish a register of the fishing vessels authorized to fish in this zone.

12. Authorized vessels fishing with bottom trawls shall be entitled to fish on saturdays and sundays only, from 05.00 hours till 22.00 hours.

13. Authorized vessels fishing with bottom-set nets, set longlines and traps shall be allowed to fish from Monday 05.00 hours till Thursday 22.00 hours.

PART III
Control measures

14. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 April 2018, the list of authorized vessels for 2018 and subsequently, not later than 31 May each year, the list of authorized vessels for the forthcoming year, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). For each vessel, the list shall contain the information detailed in Annex 2.

15. Authorized fishing vessels shall only land catches of demersal stocks in CPCs designated landing points. To this end, each CPC shall designate landing points in which landings of demersal stocks from the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA is authorized. The list of such landing points shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat by 30 April each year.

16. Fishing vessels authorized to fish in zone B and/or zone C shall be equipped with vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and/or automated identification systems (AIS) in correct working order, and fishing gear on board or in use shall be duly identified, numbered and marked before starting any fishing operation or navigation in the FRA.

17. Fishing vessels equipped with bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, set longlines and traps without authorization shall be allowed to transit through the FRA, only if they follow a direct course at a constant speed of not less than 7 knots and are equipped with VMS and/or AIS active on board.

PART IV
Final provisions

18. The CPCs shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to protect the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA from the impact of any activity that may jeopardize the conservation of the characteristic features of these particular habitats.

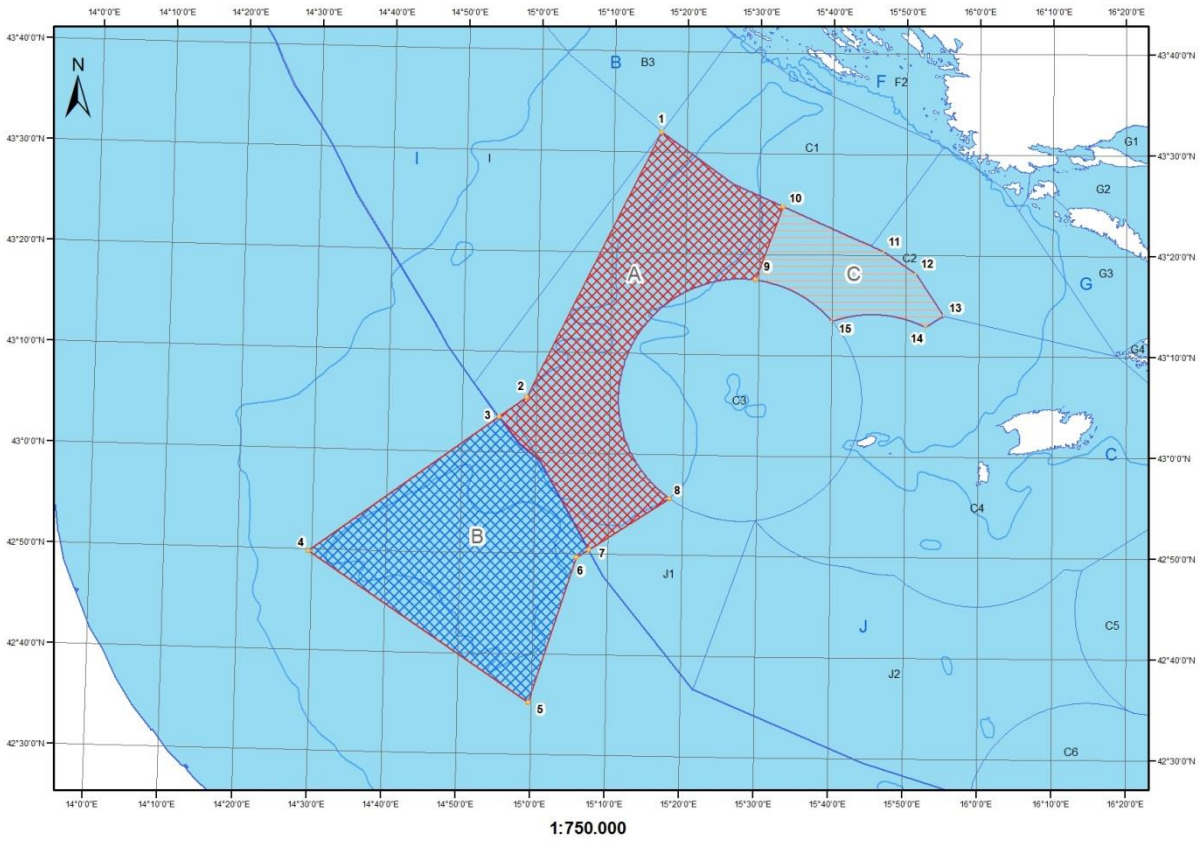
19. This recommendation shall be without prejudice to the adoption of stricter measures by the CPCs for the vessels flying their flag.

20. This recommendation applies until 31 December 2020. The SAC and the Compliance Committee (CoC) shall review its implementation on a yearly basis in order to issue recommendations

where appropriate. Based on SAC advice, the management measures for the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA shall be reviewed in 2020.

Annex 1

Geographical coordinates of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA (Adriatic Sea)



ZONE A		
Point	**Latitude**	**Longitude**
1	43°32,044' N	15°16,501' E
2	43°05,452' N	14°58,658' E
3	43°03,477' N	14°54,982' E
7	42°50,450' N	15°07,431' E
8	42°55,618' N	15°18,194' E
9	43°17,436' N	15°29,496' E
10	43°24,758' N	15°33,215' E

ZONE B		
Point	**Latitude**	**Longitude**
3	43°03,477' N	14°54,982' E
4	42°49,811' N	14°29,550' E
5	42°35,205' N	14°59,611' E
6	42°49,668' N	15°05,802' E
7	42°50,450' N	15°07,431' E

ZONE C		
Point	**Latitude**	**Longitude**
9	43°17,436' N	15°29,496' E
10	43°24,758' N	15°33,215' E
11	43°20,345' N	15°47,012' E
12	43°18,150' N	15°51,362' E
13	43°13,984' N	15°55,232' E
14	43°12,873' N	15°52,761' E
15	43°13,494' N	15°40,040' E

Annex 2

The list referred to in paragraph 14 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- Type of vessel, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT)
- Name and address of owner(s) and operator(s)
- Main gear used to fish in the FRA
- Seasonal period authorized for fishing in the FRA
- Number of fishing days that can be exerted by each vessel
- Designated port

Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

RECALLING that the Bucharest Declaration towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture calls upon Black Sea riparian countries to enhance multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of resources, particularly with regard to scientific advice, sustainable small-scale fisheries, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), capacity-building, as well as actions emanating from a regional plan of action to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Decision GFCM/37/2013/2 on a roadmap to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Black Sea;

RECALLING Decision GFCM/36/2012/1 on guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING that, for turbot in geographical subarea (GSA) 29, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) concluded, at its fifth session (Romania, June 2016) that the stock is overexploited and in overexploitation with some signs of recovery in the European Union (EU) waters and advised to implement a recovery plan;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

NOTING that, for turbot and associated species in GSA 29, the WGBS underlined in 2017 that there is a high level of IUU catches;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting turbot and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and scientific knowledge, and that an appropriate method to this end shall be established;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, scope and definitions

General objectives of the multiannual plan and transitional measures

1. A multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in GSA 29 shall be developed, consistent with the precautionary approach. This plan shall be designed to produce high long-term yields consistent with the MSY and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.

2. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels have been actively fishing turbot in GSA 29 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned, in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

3. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the Black Sea shall be developed in order to ensure that pending scientific advice by the WGBS, the stocks and fisheries are kept at biologically sustainable levels.

4. The multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting turbot shall also pursue the reduction of IUU fishing activities in GSA 29.

5. The CPCs whose vessels have been actively fishing for turbot in GSA 29 agree to implement actions established under Decision GFCM/37/2013/2 on a roadmap to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Black Sea.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan established by this recommendation shall apply in GSA 29 (Black Sea).

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

   a) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

   b) "Vessel actively fishing for turbot" means any vessel equipped with bottom-set gillnets and in possession of a valid fishing authorization for turbot.

   c) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present in GSA 29 and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a

fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

d) "Turbot" means fish pertaining to the species Psetta maxima.

e) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" or "IUU fishing" means the activities mentioned in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

f) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the CPCs in accordance with recommendations GFCM/40/2016//1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

g) "Authorized vessel" means any fishing vessel in possession of a fishing authorization entitling it to carry out specific fishing activities during a specific period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

h) "Bottom-set gillnet" means any net made up of a single piece of net held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed or capable of being fixed by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintaining the gear in place either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

i) "Fishing authorization" means special fishing authorization entitling a vessel to engage in fishing activities for turbot during a specified period in the given area.

PART II

Specific objectives of the multiannual management plan and transitional measures in GSA 29

8. The operational objective of the multiannual management plan shall be to maintain fishing mortality for turbot within agreed precautionary reference points, with a view to achieving or maintaining fishing mortality at MSY level, in accordance with the objectives described in Part I of this recommendation.

9. Based on the advice of the WGBS, the GFCM shall establish the specific objectives of the multiannual management plan, at the latest at its forty-third session.

10. The objective of the transitional measures for turbot in GSA 29 is to start preparing the ground for a future management plan while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific assessment, the biomass level of the stock could drop below biologically sustainable level values with negative consequences also on the economic viability of the fisheries concerned.

11. Pending the identification of target reference points in line with the MSY, the general objectives of the multiannual management plan set out in paragraph 1 shall be attained while maintaining the fishing fleet capacity or fishing effort at the levels authorized and applied in recent years for the exploitation of turbot in GSA 29.

12. For the years 2018–2019, a total allowable catch (TAC) shall be set to 644 tonnes with the following temporary allocation:

Countries	EU	Turkey	Georgia	Ukraine	Russia
Quotas (tonnes)	114	374	5	101	50

13. This shall be without prejudice to the discussions to take place in the context of the working group referred to under paragraph 15 of this recommendation.

14. In case the WGBS advice provided for 2018 does not confirm a continuation of the constructive evolution of fishing mortality towards the restoration of the size of the Black Sea turbot stock, the TAC and quotas referred in paragraph 12 may be revisited by the GFCM.

15. A working group shall be established by the GFCM in 2019, within thirty calendar days following the 2019 WGBS session, in order to:

a) establish a fair and equitable allocation scheme of the TAC of Black Sea turbot, taking into consideration the efforts made by CPCs to manage turbot fisheries and the amount of historical catches, and apply in some cases stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation, also based on socio-economic considerations; and

b) establish the mechanism to manage the TAC, including a reduction mechanism of the TAC, if appropriate.

16. The approach specified under paragraph 12 shall continue to apply until a mutually agreed TAC allocation is adopted through a supplementary recommendation.

17. The WGBS shall, upon the availability of updated data, regularly assess the state of the turbot stock and, in particular, establish the level of current fishing mortality and provide the GFCM with the necessary elements for setting target reference points.

18. The GFCM, on the basis of the WGBS advice, shall review annually the target fishing mortality (F_{target}).

19. Each CPC shall establish, each year, a closure period of at least two months during the spawning season of turbot (i.e. from April to June).

20. Operational objectives in terms of fighting against IUU fishing activities which are relevant for the turbot fisheries shall be developed as defined in part VII of this recommendation.

PART III

Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the multiannual management plan

21. The CPCs shall ensure annually an adequate scientific monitoring of the status of turbot and associated species in GSA 29.

22. The WGBS shall provide, on an annual basis as from 2018, advice on the status of the stock of turbot in GSA 29, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to restore the size of the Black Sea turbot stock at levels which can produce MSY in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraph 1.

23. The WGBS shall assess the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios with the objective of restoring and maintaining the turbot population above levels which can produce the MSY.

24. Based on the WGBS advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

25. Whenever the GFCM, on the basis of advice from the WGBS, finds that the fishing mortality level to be specified as per paragraph 9 is no longer appropriate to achieve the objectives specified in paragraph 1, it shall revise those parameters accordingly. Whenever WGBS advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

26. Where by any reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the WGBS is not in a position to provide an accurate advice on the status of the turbot and its exploitation level, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. These measures shall be based on WGBS advice in accordance with the precautionary approach and take into consideration environmental and socio-economic elements in a way that guarantees the sustainability of the fisheries.

27. In 2018, the WGBS shall evaluate the effectiveness of the measures already applied at the national level and advise on whether these measures could be applicable to the entire GSA 29.

28. For the purpose of providing advice for the development of the multiannual management plan, the WGBS shall organize adequate workshops. For this purpose, the WGBS shall promote scientific cooperation and a harmonized approach among all Black Sea riparian countries.

PART IV
Fleet management measures

29. Vessels authorized to fish turbot in GSA 29 shall be indicated in a special valid fishing authorization for turbot established by the CPCs, which shall specify the technical conditions under which fishing for turbot can be carried out. In the absence of such authorization a vessel shall not catch, retain on board, transship, land, store or sell turbot.

30. The CPCs shall maintain an updated register of those fishing authorizations. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 31 January of each year, the list of active vessels for which such a fishing authorization has been issued for the current year or forthcoming years, through the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) online platform. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 1 of Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3.

31. Authorized vessels shall comply with the obligations established in Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 and provide a detailed report of their fishing activities to national authorities, including as minimum requirements the operating days, the operating area and the total catch of turbot. This information shall be provided to the GFCM Secretariat at least quarterly, by the end of the month subsequent to the quarter to which the data refer, through the DCRF online platform.

32. The CPCs may designate additional spatial/temporal restrictions, with respect to those already established, in which fishing activities may be banned or restricted in order to protect aggregation areas of juveniles of turbot. Where applicable, CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, by 1 January 2018, the list of these areas and the restrictions applied.

33. In addition to the provisions defined for bottom-set gillnets in Recommendations GFCM/37/2013/2 and GFCM/39/2015/3, CPCs shall cooperate to harmonize their legislation regarding the maximum length and height of gillnets in order to achieve common standards as from 2018.

PART V
Management of fishing effort

34. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 31 January 2019, the list of all vessels authorized to fish for turbot.

35. Such list shall contain, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 1 of Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3.

36. Any fishing vessel not included in the list established under paragraph 34 shall not be allowed to fish for, retain on board or land turbot if the vessel is engaged on a fishing trip in GSA 29.

37. The CPCs shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, deletion from and/or any modification of the fishing fleets for turbot, as identified under paragraph 29, at any time such changes may occur.

38. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for turbot and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

39. Vessels authorized to fish for turbot in GSA 29, irrespective of the vessel length overall (LOA), shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year.

40. Each CPC shall ensure to set up adequate mechanisms for the recording of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, for the recording of vessels' catches and fishing effort via both the logbook and remote sensing as well as for the monitoring of fishing vessels activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys, according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

41. The above provisions are without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VI

Specific measures to address IUU fishing activities

42. The CPCs shall ensure that turbot in Black Sea waters is only fished using bottom-set gillnets. It shall be prohibited to carry out fishing activities with passive gear which are not identifiable in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3, Part III. For that purpose, passive gear, including its markers and intermediary buoys, shall permanently display the external registration letters and numbers displayed on the hull of the fishing vessel to which it belongs.

43. The CPCs shall establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels fishing in GSA 29 declare all catches and bycatch of turbot. The obligation to declare catches shall apply irrespective of the volume of the catch and the gear used.

44. Each CPC shall designate landing points in which landings of turbot in GSA 29 shall take place.

45. For each designated port, the port CPC shall specify permitted landing and transshipping times and places. The port CPC shall also ensure inspection coverage during all landing and transshipping times and at all landing and transshipping places.

46. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of turbot fished in GSA 29 at any place other than landing points designated by CPCs, in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3, Part III.

47. The CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November each year, any changes to the list of the designated landing points in which landings of turbot in GSA 29 may take place, through the DCRF online platform.

48. The CPCs shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

49. Part VI is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3.

PART VII
MCS programme

50. All vessels above 12 metres LOA authorized to fish for turbot shall be equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) or any other system of geolocalization allowing control authorities to track their activities.

51. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, all turbot catches shall be indicated in the logbook irrespectively of the live weight of the catch.

52. Upon request of CPCs, with the assistance of the GFCM secretariat and the European Fishery Control Agency (EFCA), a pilot project shall be established in 2018 with a view to establishing a voluntary observation and inspection programme, in order to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures in this recommendation.

53. Such observation and inspection programme shall be based on the results of the pilot project and adopted before the end of 2019. It shall comprise, *inter alia*, the following elements:

a) inspections at sea;

b) procedures for an effective investigation of an alleged violation of the conservation and management measures in this recommendation, and for reporting to the GFCM on the actions taken, including procedures for exchanging information;

c) provisions for appropriate action to be taken when inspections reveal serious violations as well as the expedient and transparent follow-up of such actions in order to uphold the flag State's responsibility within the intended programme;

d) port inspections;

e) monitoring of landings and catches, including statistical follow-up for management purposes;

f) specific monitoring programmes, including boarding and inspection; and

g) observer programmes.

54. A working group shall be established to develop integrated MCS measures, in accordance with this recommendation. The tasks of this working group are defined in annex to this recommendation.

PART VIII
Final provisions

55. This recommendation repeals Recommendation 40/2016/6 on the scientific monitoring, management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29).

Annex

Terms of reference for the Working Group on integrated MCS measures for demersal fisheries targeting turbot in the Black Sea

The working group referred to in paragraph 54, shall:

1) be supported by the GFCM;

2) establish a time schedule for the development of its work, and hold at least one meeting during 2018, before the next meeting of the Compliance Committee (CoC);

3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, the FAO, and other regional fisheries management organizations to participate in its meetings; and

4) report its conclusions and opinions to the CoC.

The mandate of the working group covers the elements as described in Part VII of this recommendation.

Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3 establishing further emergency measures in 2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has considered that the stocks of European anchovy and sardine are distributed in GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) 17 and 18 and has carried out the first joint assessments at its eighteenth session (Cyprus, March 2016);

NOTING that the revision of input data and the benchmark assessment for sardine and European anchovy in GSA 17 and GSA 18 were undertaken in 2015 and that final stock assessment models based on the revised data were provided by the GFCM Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (WGSASP) in November 2015;

CONSIDERING that, at its eighteenth session, the SAC concluded that both European anchovy and sardine stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18 are overexploited and in overexploitation and that it advised once again to decrease fishing mortality;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality is an overall measurement system, which can be adjusted by applying reductions in terms of fishing capacity and/or fishing effort;

NOTING that the acoustic survey data for both small pelagic species, sardine and European anchovy, indicate a declining trend in total biomass;

NOTING that there has been a declining trend in the mean length of sardine in catches for the last eight years and of European anchovy in catches for the last ten years in the western Adriatic Sea;

NOTING that the latest stock assessment of European anchovy has also indicated a declining trend in spawning stock biomass (SSB) since 2005;

NOTING that, since temporal restrictions are considered to have a beneficial effect on fisheries, a closed period during the spawning season of European anchovy and sardine in the Adriatic Sea shall be applied;

NOTING that hydroacoustic surveys have the potential of providing latest biomass estimates and that their results can support management decisions;

CONSIDERING that, due to stock dynamics, it may take several years to observe the effects of the management measures adopted and applied to date on the stock status of small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea but that this delay should not be taken as a justification to postpone action to improve the status of these stocks;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM may consider adopting additional measures including catch limitations;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting sardine and European anchovy in the Adriatic Sea and the need to ensure their sustainability;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraph 2 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic and, notably, paragraphs 2 and 3 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 (southern Adriatic Sea);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 and amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1;

NOTING that, under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, a reduction of fishing effort as well as spatio-temporal closures are being applied in 2015 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18);

NOTING that, under Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1, a reduction of fishing effort was applied for fishing vessels targeting European anchovy in GSA 17 for 2016 and spatio-temporal closures are being applied in 2016 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18;

CONSIDERING the findings of the GFCM Workshop on bioeconomic assessments of management measures (WKMSE) (GFCM headquarters, February 2016), which concluded that the effort limitations and spatio-temporal closures proposed under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 and Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 are not sufficient to bring the stocks back above safe biological limits;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, geographical scope and definitions

1. The general objective of the present recommendation is to ensure that the exploitation levels of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea are at the maximum sustainable yield by 2020.

2. The present recommendation shall apply in GSA 17 and GSA 18 (Adriatic Sea).

3. For the purpose of this recommendation,

a) "European anchovy" means fish pertaining to the *Engraulis encrasicolus* species.

b) "Sardine" means fish pertaining to the *Sardina pilchardus* species.

c) "Small pelagics" means stocks of European anchovy and sardine.

d) "Pelagic trawler" means a fishing vessel operating single or in pair with a pelagic trawl net.

e) "Purse seiner" means a fishing vessel operating with a purse seine net for small pelagic species

PART II
Emergency management measures

Catches

4. In 2017 and 2018, contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall not exceed the level of catches for small pelagics exerted in 2014 as reported in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix and repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1.

5. If this catch limit in 2017 or 2018 is exceeded in any given year, the GFCM shall recommend appropriate management measures.

Fishing effort

6. Notwithstanding the fishing effort established under paragraph 27 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, the CPCs shall reduce their fishing effort for the years 2017 and 2018. Fishing vessels targeting small pelagics shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year, with a maximum of 144 fishing days targeting sardine and a maximum of 144 fishing days targeting European anchovy.

Closures

7. In 2017 and 2018, the CPCs shall apply spatio-temporal closures in view of protecting nursery and spawning areas. Such closures shall cover the entire distribution of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea, for periods of not less than 15 continuous days and up to 30 continuous days. These closures shall take place during the following period:

- for sardine, from 1 October – 31 March, and
- for European anchovy, from 1 April – 30 September

8. In 2017 and 2018, the CPCs shall apply additional closures for vessels over 12 m length overall for not less than 6 months. Such closures shall cover at least 30 percent of the area which has been identified as a nursery area or as an important area for the protection of early age classes of fish (in territorial and inner sea).

9. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2016, of the set of closure dates and areas of application.

Fleet capacity and fleet register

10. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2016, the list of all pelagic trawlers (single or pair trawlers) and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in 2014.

11. The CPCs shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of trawlers and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in terms of gross tonnage (GT), engine power (kW) and number of

vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, does not exceed, in 2017 and 2018, the fleet capacity for small pelagics in 2014.

12. The provision under paragraph 11 shall not apply to the CPCs with a fleet of less than ten purse seiners and/or pelagic trawlers. Such CPCs may increase their fleet capacity for not more than 50 percent in number of vessels and in terms of gross tonnage (GT) and engine power (kW).

PART III
Scientific monitoring

13. The SAC shall suggest alternative solutions to ensure the availability of the hydroacoustic survey results of the previous year not later than 31 January of a given year.

14. A working group on alternative management measures for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea shall be established in accordance with this recommendation, following to the terms of reference defined in the Annex to this recommendation. The working group shall report back to the SAC before its annual session in 2017.

15. The SAC shall assess, in 2017, the relative merits of different management regimes for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea. This task shall include an assessment of the biological, economic, social and market impacts.

16. The SAC shall assess in 2017 whether the impact of the measures adopted under this recommendation will enable achievement of the objective of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1.

17. The SAC shall report back to the GFCM on paragraphs 15 and 16 before the annual session of the GFCM in 2017.

18. If the SAC concludes, in 2017, that European anchovy and sardine are still overexploited, the Commission may adopt more stringent measures for 2018, based on the scientific advice of the SAC. These measures shall aim at achieving the objective set out in paragraph 1.

PART IV
Control measures

19. Notwithstanding the national control programmes established under paragraph 29 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1, the CPCs shall ensure that all vessels above 15 m length overall actively fishing for small pelagic stocks are equipped with an electronic logbook and vessel monitoring system by the end of 2017.

20. In order to facilitate the monitoring of catches, all catches shall be landed, with the exception of those catches which may be discarded in accordance with national legislation.

Annex

Terms of reference for the Working Group on alternative management measures for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea

The working group referred to in paragraph 14 shall:

1) be supported by the GFCM Secretariat;
2) establish a time schedule for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting during 2016, before the next SAC meeting;
3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, FAO, and other regional fishery organizations to participate in its meetings;
4) report its conclusions and opinions to the SAC.

The mandate of the working group will cover an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages as well as an analysis of biological, social, economic and market impacts of different management regimes for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea, including:

a) capacity limitations
b) fishing effort regime
c) spatio-temporal closures
d) technical measures relating to fishing gear
e) catch limitations

These measures should be considered individually as well as in combination.

Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5 establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has concluded, at its eighteenth session (Cyprus, March 2016), that the stocks of European hake are heavily overexploited and, in some cases, well below safe biological limits;

NOTING that many fisheries exploiting European hake in the Mediterranean exert a pressure over juveniles;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective, geographical scope and definitions

1. The general objective of the present recommendation is to protect juvenile European hake in the Mediterranean Sea.

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, “European hake” means fish pertaining to the species *Merluccius merluccius*.

PART II
Minimum conservation reference size

3. The minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the whole area covered by this recommendation is fixed at 20 cm total length.

4. Specimens of European hake shall be measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin.

5. Specimens of European hake smaller than the minimum conservation reference size in total length, as defined in paragraph 3, and measured to the lowest centimetre, shall not be caught, retained on board, transshipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale.

6. Notwithstanding paragraph 5, when, due to unavoidable circumstances, undersized specimens of European hake have been effectively caught, the master of the catching vessel shall record those catches (estimated weight) of undersized specimens.

7. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall establish an adequate mechanism for recording catches of undersized specimens of European hake.

8. Without prejudice to provisions foreseen in paragraph 5 and when a system to avoid discards and an obligation to land all catches have been established by a CPC, except in justified cases where there is a derogation for landing obligations, the master of the fishing vessel shall not be allowed to

discard those catches and shall therefore land all the fish caught, independently of the size of the fish. All quantities of undersized fish landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale or used for direct human consumption.

Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, according to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), states should widely apply the precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of marine living resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, and highlighting besides that the lack of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraph 2 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraphs 2 and 3 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 (southern Adriatic Sea);

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 and amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1;

NOTING that for anchovy in geographical subarea (GSA) 17, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its seventeenth session (FAO headquarters, March 2015) has considered the status of the stock as overexploited and in overexploitation for two consecutive years and that it recently advised to reduce fishing mortality immediately;

NOTING that the latest stock assessment of anchovy indicates a declining trend in spawning stock biomass (SSB) since 2005;

NOTING that for sardine in GSA 17, the SAC has considered the status of the stock as in overexploitation and advised to reduce its fishing mortality;

RECALLING that the SAC has considered that the stocks of anchovy and sardine are distributed in GSA 17 and GSA 18;

NOTING that, due to the instability of the stock assessment model, the SAC recommended a comprehensive revision of the input data, including the reference points under Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1;

CONSIDERING that, pending the revision of input data and reference points, as for 2015, additional measures for 2016 shall be taken to reduce fishing mortality for anchovy and sardine;

NOTING that since temporal restrictions are considered to have a beneficial effect on fisheries, a closed season during the spawning season of anchovy in the Adriatic Sea shall be applied;

NOTING that hydroacoustic surveys have the potential of providing the latest biomass estimates and that their results can support management decisions;

NOTING that, under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, a reduction of the fishing effort as well as spatio-temporal closures are being applied in 2015 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Reduction of fishing mortality in the Adriatic Sea

1. For the year 2016, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), whose vessels have been fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17, shall reduce the fishing effort established under paragraph 27 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1. To this end, by way of derogation from the provisions of paragraph 27, Part VI, for the year 2016, each fishing vessel targeting anchovy shall not exceed 144 fishing days per year.

2. For the year 2016, in order to protect nursery and spawning areas, the CPCs shall apply spatio-temporal closures of no less than 15 continuous days and up to 30 continuous days for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18. These closures shall be designated in waters under their jurisdiction and shall take place between 1 April and 31 August.

3. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, by 30 November 2015, of the closure dates.

4. National control programmes established under paragraph 29 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 shall be adapted accordingly.

Review of the management plan

5. The SAC shall organize, in 2015, a specific technical meeting to review input data and propose revised targets based on fishing mortality at the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level – or using the exploitation rate as a proxy – and SSB, as well as the reference points of the management plan. The SAC shall assist in setting up a joint assessment for both small pelagic stocks covering the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18).

6. For the purpose of paragraph 5, the SAC shall assess the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios with the objective of restoring and maintaining the populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the MSY. To this end, the SAC shall also consult its Subcommittee on Economic and Social Sciences.

7. The SAC shall propose alternatives to make the results of the hydroacoustic surveys of the previous year available during the first month of the year.

8. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM shall review, and if necessary adapt, the content of the management plan in 2017.

Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

REAFFIRMING the GFCM roadmap to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Black Sea, endorsed at the thirty-seventh session of the GFCM (Croatia, May 2013);

REAFFIRMING the grave concerns about the continuation of IUU fishing and its detrimental effects upon fish stocks, marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of legitimate fishers, as well as the increasing need for food security;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnets fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING that for turbot in the geographical subarea (GSA) 29, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) concluded at its seventeenth session (FAO headquarters, March 2015) that the stock was in overfishing and considered as a priority the setting of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing activities together with the adoption of control measures in view of implementing a recovery plan in the near future;

NOTING that for turbot in GSA 29, the SAC also concluded, at its seventeenth session, that the setting of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing activities together with the adoption of control measures should be drafted on the basis of the agreement of the Black Sea riparian states at the fourth meeting of the ad hoc Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) (Georgia, March 2015);

RECOGNIZING that fishing operations carried out in turbot fisheries should be consistent with the sustainable exploitation and conservation of the fish species targeted;

RECOGNIZING that measures that could facilitate the fight against IUU fishing for turbot should be a priority in any future management and/or recovery plan;

AIMING to provide a series of elements for the reduction of IUU fishing;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Scope

1. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall adopt as a priority appropriate control measures to evaluate, prevent, deter and, to the extent possible, eliminate IUU fishing for turbot in the Black Sea.

PART II
Definitions

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" (IUU fishing) means the activities set out in paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

b) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

c) "Turbot" means fish pertaining to the species *Psetta maxima* (synonym: *Scophthalmus maeoticus* [Pallas]).

d) "Bottom-set gillnet" means any net made up of a single piece of net held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed or capable of being fixed by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintaining the gear in place either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

e) "Designated landing point" means ports, or places close to the shore, designated by the CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

f) "Authorized vessel" means a fishing vessel with a fishing authorization entitling it to carry out specific fishing activities during a specific period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions.

g) "Fisheries restricted area" (FRA) means a geographically-defined sea area in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of marine living resources or the protection of marine ecosystems.

PART III
Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea

Section 1: authorized vessels

3. Active vessels operating in GSA 29 targeting turbot shall be authorized to carry out specific fishing activities only insofar as they are indicated in a valid fishing authorization, which shall specify the technical conditions under which those activities could be exerted (see Annex 1).

4. The CPCs shall maintain an updated register of those fishing authorizations and communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 31 January of the year, the list of all vessels using bottom-set gillnets authorized to fish for turbot. For each vessel, the list shall contain the information referred to in Annex 1.

5. Upon request, the CPCs shall report information on the fishing vessels authorized to engage in a fishing activity in a given period. In particular, the CPCs shall report the names of the fishing vessels concerned, their external identification number and the fishing opportunities allocated to each of them.

6. Authorized vessels shall comply with the obligations established in Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnets fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea and provide a

detailed report of their fishing activities, including as minimum requirements: operating days, operating area and total catch of turbot. This information shall be provided to the GFCM Secretariat at least quarterly.

7. The CPCs that require a transitional period to fully implement the provisions of Section 1 shall duly inform the GFCM Secretariat by 31 December 2015. Such information shall also specify the duration of this transitional period, which shall not exceed 24 months from the entry into force of this recommendation. In such case, the deadline for submission foreseen in paragraph 4 shall be adapted accordingly.

Section 2: Marking and identification of bottom-set gillnets

8. The CPCs shall progressively ensure that all bottom-set gillnets operating in turbot fisheries are clearly identified. A database of the common codifications used by all riparian states shall be created.

9. It shall be prohibited to carry out fishing activities with gillnets used in turbot fisheries which are not identifiable.

10. It shall be prohibited to carry out fishing activities with gillnets used in turbot fisheries for which marker and intermediary buoys are not identifiable.

11. Unmarked abandoned gillnets used in turbot fisheries and found at sea shall be collected by the competent authorities in whose exclusive economic zone the net is found.

12. Unmarked abandoned gillnets used in turbot fisheries and found at sea shall either be seized until the owner is duly identified or destroyed if no owner can be identified.

Section 3: Designated landing points

13. Each CPC shall take the necessary measures to designate, where possible, landing points in which landings of turbot in GSA 29 shall take place.

14. For a landing point to be considered as a designated port, the following conditions shall be met: a) established landing and transshipping times and places; and b) full inspection coverage during all landing and transshipping times and at all landing and transshipping places.

15. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November of each year, a list of designated landing points in which landings of turbot in GSA 29 shall take place.

16. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of turbot fished in GSA 29 at any other place than the landing points designated by the CPCs, in accordance with paragraphs 13 and 14.

17. The CPCs shall engage to cooperate in the fight against IUU fishing activities, in particular by sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against organized crime.

PART IV
National plans for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)

18. National MCS plans for the implementation of the provisions of this recommendation shall be established by the CPCs, taking into account the elements listed in Annex 2 and ensuring, *inter alia*, a proper and accurate monitoring and recording of the monthly catches and/or fishing effort deployed.

19. Such national MCS plans shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat, by 31 January of each year. Each year, one month before the GFCM annual session, the results of control activities shall be sent to the GFCM Secretariat for information. These results shall be analysed and discussed annually in a special session of the Compliance Committee (CoC).

20. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the type of sanctions applied when IUU activities are detected as well as global figures for infringements related to IUU activities in turbot fisheries.

PART V
Specific technical measures

21. In 2016 the SAC shall advise on the dimensions of turbot bottom-set gillnets allowed to operate in the fishery (maximum length, maximum height and hanging coefficient). To this end, CPCs shall provide the SAC, prior to the meeting of the WGBS, with the dimensions of gillnets currently used in their fisheries. The WGBS shall analyse this information and propose the maximum dimensions to be used.

22. The SAC and the WGBS shall jointly provide advice for the technical requirements necessary to implement the provisions contained in Part III, Section 2.

PART VI
Development of information strategies and awareness campaigns related to the progressive reduction of IUU fishing in turbot fisheries

23. Communication and awareness-raising plans related to the fight against IUU fishing in turbot fisheries will be established among stakeholders and the general public in order to make the problems of IUU fishing better known.

24. The effective participation of stakeholders, including women and fisheries organizations, shall be supported through access to information and education. Diversification activities by fishers seeking to engage in non-fishing activities shall be encouraged.

25. The GFCM Secretariat shall facilitate cooperation among CPCs, including, when necessary, by ensuring that a scientific contribution from the SAC is obtained.

Annex 1

The list referred to in paragraph 3, Section 1 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number (code assigned by CPCs)
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate Y/N)
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear used for turbot and fleet segment allocation in the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)
- Time period authorized for fishing with gillnet or any other gear likely to fish turbot (if any of such authorization)

Annex 2

Guidelines for the development of specific monitoring, control and surveillance plans for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea

Specific monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) shall clearly define the following:

a) Means of control

Description of human, technical and financial means specifically available for the implementation of the plans.

b) Inspection strategy (including inspection protocols)

Inspection and surveillance of fishing activities shall concentrate on fishing vessels likely to catch turbot and associated species. In addition, action plans for the control of markets and transport shall be included.

Definition of inspection tasks and procedures.

Each CPC shall specify and describe which sampling strategy will be applied to verify the weighing of catches at first sale as well as the sampling strategy for vessels that are not subject to logbook/landing declaration rules.

c) Guidelines

Explanatory guidelines for inspectors, producer organizations and fishers regarding the set of rules in place for fisheries likely to catch turbot:

- rules for the completion of various documents including inspection reports, fishing logbooks, transshipment declarations, landing and take-over declarations, transport documents and sales notes;
- technical measures in force, including mesh size and/or mesh dimensions, minimum catch size, temporary restrictions, etc.;
- sampling strategies; and
- cross-check mechanisms.

d) Training of inspectors

National inspectors shall receive all information on authorized vessels, fishing gears and regulations as well as adequate trainings to specifically achieve the objectives of the MCS plan related to turbot. Minimum training requirements are those specified in Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/4 on management measures for piked dogfish in the Black Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application, including the Black Sea;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that, for piked dogfish in geographical subarea (GSA) 29 (Black Sea), the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has concluded at its seventeenth session (FAO headquarters, March 2015) that the stock of piked dogfish is chronically depleted and considered as a priority the setting of measures to implement a recovery plan;

RECOGNIZING that fishing operations shall be consistent with the sustainable exploitation and conservation of the fish species caught;

AIMING to provide a series of management measures for the recovery of the depleted stock of piked dogfish;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, scope and definitions

General objectives

1. Management measures for fisheries exploiting piked dogfish and/or having piked dogfish as significant bycatch in GSA 29 shall be developed, in line with the precautionary approach, with a view to providing high long-term yields consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and to guaranteeing a low risk of stock collapse while ensuring sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.

2. The conservation objective shall be to achieve fishing mortality at MSY level not later than 2020.

3. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels have been actively fishing, directly or indirectly, piked dogfish in GSA 29 agree to implement common measures to achieve the objectives of this recommendation.

Scope

4. The CPCs shall adopt appropriate measures to ensure that GFCM has the necessary data to study and evaluate the level of catches of piked dogfish in the Black Sea.

Definitions

5. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Black Sea" means GSA 29 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

b) "Piked dogfish" (synonym: spiny dogfish) means shark pertaining to the species *Squalus acanthias*.

c) "Bottom-set gillnet" means any net made up of a single piece of net, held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed, or capable of being fixed, by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintaining the gear in place, either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

d) "Trawl nets" means nets which are actively towed by the main boat engine and consisting of a cone- or pyramid-shaped body (as a trawl body), closed at the back by a codend and which can extend at the opening by the wings or can be mounted on a rigid frame. Horizontal opening is either obtained by otter boards or provided by a beam or frame of variable shape and size. Such nets can be towed either on the bottom (bottom trawl net) or in mid-water (pelagic trawl net).

e) "Fisheries restricted area" (FRA) means a geographically-defined sea area in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted, in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of marine living resources or the protection of marine ecosystems.

PART II
Management measures

Section 1: Restrictions to catch piked dogfish

6. Specimens of piked dogfish smaller than 90 cm shall not be retained on board, transshipped, landed, stored, sold, displayed nor offered for sale. When accidentally caught, such specimens shall be promptly released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

7. Without prejudice to the provisions foreseen in paragraph 6, and when a system to avoid discards and the obligation to land all catches have been established by a CPC, the master of the fishing vessel shall not be allowed to discard those catches, and shall therefore land the fish caught independently of the size of the fish caught, in line with the provisions stipulated by such CPC. All quantities landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale nor used for human consumption.

8. The CPCs implementing a landing obligation scheme shall notify its content and characteristics to the GFCM Secretariat, prior to the subsequent GFCM annual session, with a view to informing the other parties.

Section 2: Fisheries restricted areas and seasons

9. The CPCs shall establish a database of FRAs and closed seasons containing detailed information on regulations in place in all riparian states.

10. In addition to the restrictions established by Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application, regarding the reduction of coastal trawl net fishing to enhance the protection of coastal sharks, a minimum target percentage of fishing grounds to be covered by protective measures shall be identified by each CPC.

PART III
Monitoring, data collection and research

11. The CPCs shall ensure that:

a) information on fishing activities, catch data, incidental catch, release and/or discarding events for piked dogfish are recorded by the ship-owner in the logbook or equivalent document, in line with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

b) this information is reported to the national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat within the annual national reporting to relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations and in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF);

c) any additional measure is taken to improve data collection for the purpose of the scientific monitoring of species.

12. The CPCs shall, individually and collectively, engage in capacity-building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on piked dogfish biology, including population dynamics, migrations, the identification of spawning and nursery areas, survival ratios, and any other characteristic that could effectively support the implementation of this recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies, notably the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution.

13. By 2018, the SAC shall evaluate the effectiveness of the measures adopted under this recommendation, advise on the status of the stock and define target reference points for the achievement of MSY for piked dogfish in the Black Sea.

Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraph 2 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraphs 2 and 3 therein;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in the geographical subarea 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 (southern Adriatic Sea);

NOTING that for anchovy in GSA 17, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recently considered the status of the stock as overexploited and advised to decrease fishing mortality;

NOTING that, following the latest SAC stock assessment, the reference points within Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 need to be revised;

CONSIDERING that, pending the revision of the reference points, precautionary measures for 2015 have to be taken to reduce fishing mortality for anchovy;

NOTING that, as temporal restrictions are considered to have a beneficial effect on fisheries, a closed season during the spawning season of anchovy, which usually takes place from April to August, shall be applied;

CONSIDERING that it is appropriate to revise the definition of “fishing day”;

CONSIDERING that it is appropriate to set a maximum number of fishing days per month;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Modification of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1

1. The definition in paragraph 7 a), Part I, shall be modified as follows:

   “Vessels actively fishing for small pelagic stocks means any vessels equipped with either trawl nets, purse seiners or other types of surrounding nets where the total catch of small pelagic stocks of sardine and anchovy account for at least 50 percent of the catch in live weight.”

2. The definition in paragraph 7 b), Part I, shall be modified as follows:

   “Fishing day means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 and **is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products**.”

3. Paragraph 27, Part VI, shall be modified as follows:

"Trawlers and purse seiners for small pelagic stocks as identified above in paragraph 22, second sub-paragraph, irrespective of the vessel's length overall, shall not operate for more than **20 fishing days per month** and shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year."

Precautionary and emergency measures for 2015

4. For the year 2015, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels have been fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 shall reduce the fishing effort established under paragraph 27, Part VI, of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1. To this end, by derogation from the provisions of paragraph 27, Part VI, for the year 2015, each fishing vessel targeting anchovy shall not exceed 144 fishing days per year.

5. For the year 2015, in order to protect nursery and spawning areas, CPCs shall apply spatio-temporal closures of no less than 15 continuous days and up to 30 continuous days for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17. These closures shall be designated in waters under their jurisdiction and shall take place between 1 April and 31 August.

6. The CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, by 30 November 2014, their closure dates and areas.

7. National control programmes established under paragraph 29, Part VII, of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 shall be adapted accordingly.

Review of the management plan

8. The SAC shall organize a specific intersessional meeting in 2014 to review the reference points of the management plan and to evaluate the measures applied by CPCs, including the closures to be applied by CPCs. The SAC shall support the identification of other areas that are relevant for temporal closures, either within or outside national waters.

9. For the purpose of paragraph 8, the SAC shall take into consideration socio-economic elements and consult, where necessary, its Subcommittee on Economic and Social Sciences.

10. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM shall review, and if necessary adapt, the content of the management plan in 2015.

Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in geographical subarea 18 (southern Adriatic Sea)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraph 2 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraphs 2 and 3 therein;

RECALLING the Guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area of application, agreed during its thirty-sixth session (Morocco, May 2012);

NOTING that, for anchovy and sardine in geographical subarea (GSA) 17 (northern Adriatic Sea), the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recurrently advised not to increase the fishing effort and the fishing mortality although the fishery is considered sustainable;

NOTING the strong changes that occurred in 2010 concerning the assessment of the status of the small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 which, with a view to drawing the attention of scientists, call for the setting up of an agreed multiannual management system at the multilateral level;

NOTING that, for anchovy and sardine stocks in GSA 18 (southern Adriatic Sea), the SAC is not yet in a position to provide a formal assessment;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING that the small pelagic fishery is multispecies and that management decisions should therefore be taken considering at least both sardine and anchovy;

CONSIDERING that small pelagic stocks play a fundamental ecological role in transmitting biomass and energy from short trophic webs towards higher trophic levels;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method to this end shall be established;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objectives, scope and definitions

General objectives of the multiannual plan

1. A multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting the small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 shall be developed, consistent with the precautionary approach. It shall be designed to provide high

long-term yields consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and to guarantee a low risk of stock collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.

2. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels have been actively fishing small pelagic stocks including, *inter alia*, sardine and anchovy in GSA 17 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

3. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the fisheries exploiting the small pelagic stocks in GSA 18 shall be developed in order to ensure that, pending formal scientific advice by the SAC, the stocks and fisheries are kept out of undesirable status.

4. The CPCs whose vessels have been actively fishing for the small pelagic stocks including, *inter alia*, sardine and anchovy in GSA 18 agree to implement such transitional management measures for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives set by this recommendation.

Geographical scope

5. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply to GSA 17 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2, which lies northward to the straight line connecting the point of 41° 55' N and 15° 08' E on the Italian coastline and the terrestrial border between Croatia and Montenegro.

6. The set of transitional measures provided by the present recommendation shall apply to GSA 18 as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 which lies from the coastlines 41º 55' N and 15º 08' E (Croatia-Montenegro border) and 40º 04' N and 18º 29' (Albania-Greece border).

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Vessel actively fishing for small pelagic stocks" means any vessel equipped with either trawl nets, purse seiners or other types of surrounding nets where the total catch of small pelagic stocks of sardine and anchovy account for at least 50 percent of the catch in live weight.

b) "Fishing day" means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products.

PART II
Specific objectives of the multiannual management plan for GSA 17 and of the transitional measures for GSA 18

8. Pending the identification of target reference points in line with the MSY, the general objectives of the plan set out in paragraph 1 above shall be attained while maintaining:

a) the exploitation rate E (=F/Z) at less than 0.4 per year on appropriate age groups both for anchovy and sardine stocks, while considering that the average natural mortality over the same age groups is of 0.81 for anchovy and 0.76 for sardine.

b) precautionary mid-year spawning stock biomass (SSB) levels, estimated in a manner consistent with the same methodology, above 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy (hereinafter SSBpa).

c) the levels of fishing fleet capacity and fishing effort at the levels authorized and exerted in 2011 for the exploitation of small pelagic stocks in GSA 17.

9. In the event that the mid-year SSB level falls below 179 000 tonnes for anchovy or 78 000 tonnes for sardine (hereinafter SSBlim), the procedure under paragraph 16 e) shall apply.

10. The objective of the transitional measures for the small pelagic fishery in GSA 18 is to start preparing the ground for a future management plan while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific assessment, the biomass level of the stock could drop below undesirable values with negative consequences also on the economic viability of the fisheries concerned.

PART III
Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan

11. The CPCs shall ensure adequate annual scientific monitoring of the status of small pelagic stocks in GSAs 17 and 18, in particular that of sardine and anchovy as well as of the other fisheries concerned.

12. SAC shall provide advice on an annual basis on the status of small pelagic stocks (sardine and anchovy) in GSA 17, including catch forecasts in line with the precautionary approach and the MSY, and in GSA 18.

13. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the multiannual management plan.

14. Whenever the GFCM, on the basis of the advice provided by the SAC, finds that the fishing mortality or the exploitation rates and associated SSB levels, specified in paragraph 8, are no longer appropriate to achieve the objectives indicated in paragraph 1 above, it shall revise those exploitation rates and/or biomass levels accordingly.

15. When the SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to ensure that those objectives are met.

PART IV
Management measures

16. a) When the SAC considers that the mid-year SSB levels will continue to be equal to or greater than 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy in the subsequent year and the exploitation rate is lower than 0.4, the fishing effort for small pelagic species, both in terms of capacity and fishing activity, shall be maintained at the level of 2011.

b) When the SAC considers that the mid-year SSB levels will continue to be equal to or greater than 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy in the subsequent year and the exploitation rate is higher than 0.4, then GFCM shall decide on the modalities to ensure that there is an adequate adaptation of the fishing effort with respect to the fishing effort exerted in the previous year, either in terms of capacity and/or fishing activity, for small pelagic species.

c) When the SAC considers that the size of the stock is below the precautionary mid-year SSB levels of 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy and above or equal to the biomass limit reference point, as set in paragraph 9 above, the GFCM shall decide on the modalities to ensure that the fishing effort exerted the previous year, either in terms of capacity and/or fishing activity, is adapted according to the highest ratio, among the two species, of the difference between the precautionary and the current biomass levels with respect to the difference between the precautionary biomass level and the minimum biomass acceptable level (SSBpa-SSBcurr)/(SSBpa-SSBlim).

d) When the SAC considers that the size of the stock of one of the two species (either anchovy or sardine) is above the biomass threshold reference point (SSBpa) while the current size of the stock of the other species is between the biomass limit reference point (SSBlim) and the biomass threshold reference point (SSBpa), the GFCM shall decide on the modalities to ensure that the

fishing effort exerted the previous year by small pelagic fishing fleets, either in terms of capacity and/or fishing activity, shall:

i. remain unchanged if the stock size is greater than halfway between the SSBlim and SSBpa

or

ii. be adapted according to the difference between the precautionary and the current biomass levels with respect to the difference between the precautionary biomass level and the minimum biomass acceptable level (SSBpa-SSBcurr)/(SSBpa-SSBlim).

e) When the SAC considers that the size of the stock of one of the two species (either anchovy or sardine) is above the biomass threshold reference point (SSBpa) while the size of the stock of the other species is below the biomass limit reference point (SSBlim), the GFCM shall decide on the emergency measures to be taken in order to ensure a recovery of the stock, including the closure of the fishery. Such decision shall take into account the evaluation by the SAC of the different alternative management scenarios as well as the market and socio-economic consequences that these scenarios could imply.

f) When, for whatever reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide an accurate advice on the status of small pelagic stocks and on the exploitation levels, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to take in order to ensure sustainability of the fishery. These measures shall be based on SAC recommendations, taking into consideration the socio-economic elements pertaining to the relevant fishery. The revocation of these measures shall be subject to the availability of appropriate scientific advice.

17. As from 2015 and based on the assessment made by the SAC on the impact of management measures referred to under paragraph 16 a) to f), the GFCM may consider adopting additional measures when necessary, including on catch limitations, to achieve the objectives of this plan for small pelagic fisheries in GSAs 17 and 18.

PART V
Technical conservation measures

18. Fishing for fry of small pelagic stocks shall be prohibited with all types of fishing gear in GSA 17 and GSA 18.

19. Anchovy and sardine smaller than the minimum conservation size in total length, as reported below, shall not be caught, retained on board, transshipped, transferred, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale:

Anchovy	9 cm
Sardine	11 cm

The minimum conservation size in total length may be converted into 110 specimens per kg of anchovy and 55 specimens per kg of sardine. Specimens which are smaller than the minimum conservation size are hereafter named “undersized specimens”.

20. The areas of aggregation of anchovy and sardine juveniles in their first year of life shall be protected from fishing activities with fishing gear suitable to catch them. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the areas and period protected under this scope by making reference to the GFCM statistical grids as established by Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1.

21. Notwithstanding paragraph 19, when, due to unavoidable circumstances, undersized specimens of anchovy and/or sardine are effectively caught, the master of the catching vessel shall

record those catches of undersized specimens (estimated weight and number) in a specific section of the logbook. Without prejudice to the provisions foreseen in paragraph 19 and when a system to avoid discards and an obligation to land all catches is established by a CPC, the master of the fishing vessel shall not be allowed to discard those catches and shall therefore land the fish caught, independently of the size of the fish caught, in line with the provisions stipulated by the CPC. All quantities landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale or used for human consumption. The CPCs implementing a landing obligation scheme shall notify its content and characteristics to the GFCM Secretariat in advance of the subsequent GFCM annual session with a view to informing the other parties.

PART VI
Fishing effort and fish capacity control

22. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2013, the list of all trawlers (single and pair trawlers), purse seiners and surrounding nets without purse line authorized to fish for small pelagic stocks and registered in harbours located in GSAs 17 and 18 or operating in GSA 17 and/or 18 although registered in harbours located in other GSAs on 31 October 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the reference fishing capacity for small pelagic stocks). Trawlers and purse seiners are classified as fishing actively for small pelagic stocks when sardine and/or anchovy account for at least 50 percent of the catch in live weight. For each vessel, the list shall contain the information referred to in Annex 1.

23. Any fishing vessel not included in the list established under paragraph 22 above shall not be allowed to fish for, or retain on board or land any quantity greater than 20 percent of anchovy and/or sardine if the vessel is engaged on a fishing trip in GSA 17 and/or GSA 18.

24. The CPCs shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, any deletion from and/or any modification of the fishing fleets, as identified under paragraph 22 above, authorized to operate for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and/or GSA 18, whenever such changes occur.

25. The GFCM Secretariat shall keep the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 up-to-date and make it available on the GFCM website, in line with the confidentiality requirements of the CPCs.

26. The CPCs shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of trawlers and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17, in terms of gross tonnage (GT) and in engine power (kW), as recorded both in the national and in the GFCM fleet registers, never exceed the reference fishing capacity for small pelagic stocks as established under paragraph 22 above.

27. Trawlers and purse seiners fishing for small pelagic stocks as identified in paragraph 22 second sub-paragraph above, irrespective of the length overall of the vessels, shall not operate for more than 20 fishing days per month and shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year.

28. Each CPC shall ensure to set up adequate mechanisms in terms of recording each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, recording the catches and fishing effort of the vessels via both the logbook and the remote sensing and monitoring of the activities and landings of the fishing vessels through catch and effort sampling surveys, according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

The above sub-paragraph is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART VII
National programmes of control, monitoring and surveillance

29. National control programmes for the implementation of the provisions of this recommendation shall be established by the concerned CPCs through specific plans. These plans shall contain the elements listed in Annex 2 and ensure, *inter alia*, a proper and accurate monitoring and

recording of the monthly catches and fishing effort deployed so that mechanisms are set up at the national level to avoid any overshooting of the fishing effort.

30. Those national control programmes and plans shall be communicated each year to the GFCM Secretariat, during the last quarter of the previous year and not later than 30 October of each year. In case the GFCM finds a serious fault in the plan submitted by a CPC and cannot endorse it, the GFCM shall decide by mail vote, by 15 December, on the suspension of small pelagic fisheries for the CPC concerned in the subsequent year. The GFCM Compliance Committee shall adopt specific rules and procedures to prepare the necessary examination.

31. The CPCs that do not submit the plan by the deadline specified in paragraph 30 above, are not allowed to carry out small pelagic fisheries operations in the area until the plan is submitted and endorsed by the GFCM.

Annex 1

The list referred to in Part VI, paragraph 22 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- Vessel name
- National registration number (code assigned by CPCs)
- Vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate Y/N)
- Vessel type, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s) and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear used for small pelagic species and fleet segment allocation
- Time period authorized for fishing with pelagic trawlers or purse seiners for small pelagic species (if any of such authorization)

Annex 2

Guidelines for the preparation of specific monitoring and control plans for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea

Specific monitoring and control plans shall clearly define the following:

a) Means of control

Description of human, technical and financial means specifically available for the implementation of the plans. Particular attention shall be given to the description of the patrol vessels, including details on the organizations managing them as well as their spatial and temporal autonomy and on-board facilities (number of beds, etc.).

b) Annual fishing plans

The details of any system in place for national monitoring and control of the fishing plan. The methodology to ensure the respect of the rules to record catches (completion/submission of logbooks, landing declarations and sales notes) and the mechanisms established to cross-check and verify information received from different sources.

c) Sampling methodologies

Each country shall specify and describe which sampling strategy will be applied to verify the weighing of catches at first sale as well as the sampling strategy for vessels not subject to logbook/landing declaration rules.

d) Inspection protocols

Define inspection tasks and procedures in accordance with inspections and proceedings to ensure, in particular, the continuity of evidences observed during inspections.

e) Guidelines

Explanatory guidelines for inspectors, producers organizations and fishers, regarding the set of rules in place for the small pelagic fishery:

- rules for the completion of various documents, including inspection reports, fishing logbooks, transshipment declarations, landing and take-over declarations, transport documents, sales notes;
- technical measures in force, including mesh size and/or mesh dimensions, minimum catching size, temporary restrictions;
- sampling strategies; and
- cross-check mechanisms.

f) Inspection benchmarks

Objective

Each country shall set specific inspection benchmarks in accordance with risk-based methodologies.

Strategy

Inspection and surveillance of fishing activities shall focus on fishing vessels likely to catch small pelagic species. In addition to the specific benchmarks defined, random inspections of transport and marketing of this species shall be used as a complementary cross-check mechanism to test the effectiveness of inspection and surveillance. Moreover the strategies and action plans for the control of markets and transport shall be included.

Priorities

When defining risks, different gear types shall be subject to different levels of prioritisation, depending on the extent to which the fleets are affected by fishing opportunity limits. For that reason, each country shall set specific priorities.

Target benchmarks

The CPCs shall implement their inspection schedules taking into account risk-based methodologies and defining specific targets. Minimum benchmarks are defined below:

- level of inspection in ports;
- as a general rule, the accuracy to be achieved should be at least equivalent to what would be obtained by a simple random sampling method, where inspections shall cover 20 percent of all landings of small pelagic species by weight in the country;
- level of inspection of marketing operations;
- inspection of 5 percent of the quantities of small pelagic species offered at first sale; and
- level of inspection at sea.

Flexible benchmark: to be set after a detailed analysis of the fishing activity in each area by analysing both vessel monitoring system tracks and aerial surveillance results. Benchmarks at sea shall refer to the number of patrol days at sea in the management areas.

g) Joint operations

Concerned states shall define together joint actions at sea and ashore to fight illegal and unrecorded catches. Those joint actions shall be defined in accordance with control and inspection criteria and priorities agreed between them.

Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries exploiting turbot and for the conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECOGNIZING that some fishing operations carried out in the GFCM area of application can affect marine mammals adversely and that there is a need to implement measures to mitigate these adverse effects;

RECOGNIZING that these fishing operations shall be consistent with the sustainable exploitation and conservation of the fish species targeted;

AIMING to improve knowledge about the impact that certain fisheries have on marine mammals;

AIMING to reduce the incidental catch of marine mammals in certain fisheries;

TAKING into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) regarding the need to endorse measures for the reduction of marine mammals bycatch;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Scope

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall adopt fisheries management measures in the Black Sea region to ensure the adequate conservation of turbot.

2. The CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures to study, monitor, prevent, reduce and, to the extent possible, eliminate incidental catch of cetaceans during fishing operations.

PART II
Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

   a) “Black Sea” means the geographical subarea (GSA) 29, as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

   b) “Turbot” means fish pertaining to the species *Psetta maxima*.

   c) “Piked dogfish” means shark pertaining to the species *Squalus acanthias.*

   d) “Bottom-set gillnet” means any net made up of a single piece of net held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed or capable of being fixed by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintain the gear in place either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

e) "Mesh size" means: i) for knotted netting: the longest distance between two opposite knots in the same mesh when fully extended (stretched mesh); and ii) for knotless netting: the inside distance between the opposite joints in the same mesh when fully extended (stretched mesh) along its longest possible axis.

PART III

Fisheries management measures related to turbot in the Black Sea

4. The CPCs shall ensure that turbot in Black Sea waters is exclusively fished using bottom-set gillnets and that the following conditions are met:

- Mesh size is greater or equal to 40 mm.

The mesh size of the net shall be determined as the mean value of a series of 20 selected meshes; in case of different mesh sizes in the fishing net, the meshes shall be selected from the part of the fishing net having the smallest meshes.

Meshes shall be measured only when wet and unfrozen; meshes that have been broken or have been repaired shall not be included.

- Turbot of a size less than 45 cm, measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin (total length), shall not be caught.

PART IV

Fisheries management measures for the mitigation of cetacean bycatch

5. In order to mitigate the impact of bottom-set gillnet fisheries on cetacean populations, CPCs shall ensure that monofilament or twine diameter shall not exceed 0.5 mm. Monofilament or twines shall be assessed when unfrozen. Monofilament or twines within a mesh that are broken or have been repaired shall not be selected.

6. The CPCs shall set up adequate monitoring in order to collect reliable information on the impact that bottom-set gillnets targeting piked dogfish have on cetaceans populations in the Black Sea.

Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2 on the mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

CONSIDERING that the incidental catch of cetacean species in relation to fishing activities may seriously affect cetacean populations in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING that some fishing operations carried out in the GFCM area of application, including the risk of unaccounted catches of cetaceans due to the loss of gear at sea (so called “ghost fishing”), can adversely affect cetaceans and that there is a need to better understand the phenomenon to conceive and implement measures to mitigate these adverse effects;

RECALLING the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) whose objectives include the mitigation of negative impacts between cetaceans and fishing activities;

RECALLING the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of several cetacean species occurring in the convention area therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/3 prohibiting the use of driftnets for fisheries of large pelagic species;

AIMING to reduce the bycatch of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application, thus contributing to improve the conservation status of these animals, in line with an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) on the need to endorse measures for the reduction of the bycatch of cetaceans;

RECOGNIZING, also, the need to collect more data and technical information in order to fully assess the advantages and risks associated with the possible adoption of other types of measures modifying the characteristics of fishing gear, as well as any other potential impact on fishing activities;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall take actions to study, monitor, prevent, mitigate and, to the extent possible, eliminate incidental catch of cetaceans during fishing operations.

2. For the purpose of mitigating the bycatch of cetaceans during fishing operations, CPCs shall:

   a) prohibit gillnet fisheries using monofilament greater than 0.5 mm; and

b) require vessels flying their flag to promptly release alive/unharmed, to the extent practicable, cetaceans that have been incidentally caught and brought alongside the vessel.

3. The CPCs shall collect and forward to the GFCM Secretariat, through their national reporting to relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations and in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), information on incidental catch rates of cetaceans, taking into account, among other, relevant information on the fisheries concerned, the characteristics of the type of gear, times, locations (either by geographical subarea [GSA] or by GFCM statistical rectangles) and affected cetacean species.

4. The SAC, in coordination with the GFCM Secretariat and relevant partner organizations, shall compile all available data and other relevant information from commercial fisheries and scientific literature with a view to assessing, from a scientific, environmental and socio-economic perspective, the conservation benefits, feasibility, alternative solutions and potential impacts of measures such as:

a) restricting/prohibiting the use of stainless steel hooks and metallic branch lines (snoods) in bottom and demersal longlines fishing;

b) limiting the maximum dimensions, both in terms of drop and length overall (LOA), of bottom-set nets towards ranges of common values considered adequate at the subregional level to tackle the problem of incidental catch of cetaceans;

c) limiting the soaking time for bottom-set net fishing, including the implementation of time-data logger, taking also into consideration the subregional specificities of fisheries; and

d) assessing the impact of using bottom-set gillnets with twine diameter equal or smaller than 0.5 mm on the fisheries, from a biological and socio-economic point of view.

5. The SAC, in coordination with the GFCM Secretariat and relevant partner organizations, shall assess the feasibility of other possible mitigation measures, such as the use of pingers and acoustically reflective nets to reduce the interactions of cetaceans with fisheries.

6. The SAC shall report back to the GFCM in 2015, in time for its thirty-ninth session.

7. Taking into account the possible technical interactions between different fishing gear in fisheries, the GFCM Secretariat shall coordinate, whenever appropriate, with the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), with a view to properly addressing the items identified in paragraph 4.

8. Upon receipt of advice from the SAC, the GFCM shall consider, if appropriate, the adoption of further measures to mitigate incidental catches of cetaceans in the fisheries concerned.

9. The provisions of this recommendation are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that could be adopted by CPCs, in particular for what concerns measures in paragraph 2 a) above.

Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECALLING the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and the Management of Sharks;

RECALLING the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of some shark species in either Annex II or Annex III of its Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol);

NOTING the importance of harmonizing conservation and management measures with other international conventions for the protection of these species;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and, in particular, the need for species identification and the need to ensure better conservation status of sharks, including the protection of coastal areas from the most active fishing gear;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Scope and definitions

Scope

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall ensure that sharks are kept on board, transshipped, landed and marketed at first sale in a way that species are recognizable and identifiable and catches, incidental catches and, whenever appropriate, releases by species can be monitored and recorded.

2. The CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures to ensure adequate conservation status to sharks.

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

   a) “Shark” means any species of the taxon Elasmobranchii.

   b) “Shark fins” means any fins of sharks including caudal fins, but excluding the pectoral fins of rays, which are a constituent part of ray wings.

   c) “Finning” means the removal of fins at sea and discarding of carcasses.

d) "Trawl nets" means nets which are actively towed by the main boat engine and consisting of a cone- or pyramid-shaped body (as a trawl body) closed at the back by a codend and which can extend at the opening by the wings or can be mounted on a rigid frame. Horizontal opening is either obtained by otter boards or provided by a beam or frame of variable shape and size. Such nets can be towed either on the bottom (bottom trawl net) or in midwater (pelagic trawl net).

PART II
Fisheries management measures

4. The CPCs shall ensure that:

a) finning is prohibited;

b) beheading and skinning of specimens on board and before landing are prohibited. Beheaded and skinned sharks cannot be marketed at first sale markets after landing; and

c) it is prohibited to purchase, offer for sale or sell shark fins which have been removed, retained on board, transshipped or landed in contravention of this recommendation.

5. In relation to the reduction of trawl fishing in coastal areas to enhance the protection of coastal sharks:

a) the CPCs shall ensure that fishing activities carried out with trawl nets are prohibited within 3 nautical miles off the coast, provided that the 50 metre isobath is not reached, or within the 50 metre isobath where that depth is reached at a shorter distance from the coast.

b) Specific and spatially limited derogations may be granted by the CPCs on condition that it affects a limited number of vessels and provided that such derogations:

i. are justified by particular geographical constraints, such as the limited size of continental shelf along the entire coastline of a CPC or the limited extent of trawlable fishing grounds due to different causes; and/or

ii. concern small trawl vessels of less than or equal to 12 metres length overall and engine power of less than or equal to 85 kW traditionally carried out in coastal areas; or

iii. concern a limited number of vessels during a seasonal fishing campaign; and

iv. have no significant impact on the marine environment.

c) The CPCs shall inform the GFCM Secretariat on the modalities of applying the derogation under point b) not later than 31 March 2013. This notification shall include:

i. a list of authorized trawl fishing vessels with their characteristics;

ii. zones identified by geographic coordinates, both on land and at sea, and by GFCM statistical rectangles as defined in Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

iii. measures taken to monitor and mitigate impact on marine environment.

d) The CPCs shall establish a specific monitoring plan for the trawl fisheries operating under derogation, as stipulated under point b).

e) These provisions are without prejudice to more detailed or stricter rules implemented by CPCs.

Elasmobranch species under Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) and Annex III (list of species whose exploitation is regulated) of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention

6. The CPCs shall ensure a high protection from fishing activities to elasmobranch species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention, which must be released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

7. Specimens of shark species as listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol cannot be retained on board, transshipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale.

8. The CPCs shall ensure that tope sharks (*Galeorhinus galeus*) caught with bottom-set gillnets, longlines and in tuna traps shall be promptly released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

PART III
Monitoring, data collection and research

9. The CPCs shall ensure that:

a) information on fishing activities, catch data, incidental catches, release and/or discarding events for shark species listed either in Annex II or Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol, is recorded by the ship owners in the logbook or equivalent document, in line with the requirements of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1;

b) this information is reported to the national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat within the annual national reporting to relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations and in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF); and

c) any other additional measures are taken to improve data collection in view of the scientific monitoring of the species.

10. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs shall, individually and collectively, engage in capacity-building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on sharks and shark fisheries and to support the effective implementation of this recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies.

11. The provisions referred to in paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are without prejudice to stricter rules implemented by CPCs.

Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/3 on reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in fisheries in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and particularly its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

TAKING into account the International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-seabirds) adopted by the FAO;

CONSIDERING that some seabird species are listed under Annex II on endangered and threatened species of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), and that a regional action plan has been implemented by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA);

CONSIDERING the need to develop a common regional strategy to understand and possibly reduce the effect of fisheries on seabirds, including on the basis of information collected through unified protocols;

RECOGNIZING that the longline fisheries are mainly responsible for seabird bycatch in the Mediterranean and that some mitigation measures should be developed to reduce seabird bycatch;

HAVING regard to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Recommendation 07-07 on reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries;

CONSIDERING that synergies on issues of reciprocal interest shall be sought between ICCAT and the GFCM;

TAKING into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) on incidental catch of seabirds;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) should develop mechanisms to ensure that incidental catch of seabirds in fishing activities is monitored, recorded and kept to the lowest level as possible, in particular for species under Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.

2. The SAC and the GFCM Secretariat shall assist in developing mechanisms to enable CPCs to monitor and record data on seabirds and fishing interactions, including regular reporting to the GFCM Secretariat, either within the national annual reports to the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies or in accordance with relevant data reporting requirements of relevant GFCM recommendations, in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF).

3. Any event of incidental catch and release shall be recorded by the vessel owner/master in the logbook (or any equivalent document developed by a CPC to this specific end) and reported to national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat.

4. The SAC shall evaluate, on the basis of available information, and in close cooperation with relevant international scientific committees, the risk of seabird incidental catch and mortality in different types of Mediterranean fisheries, taking into account also areas and seasons, and to compare the effects of bycatch among them. In addition, the SAC shall advise on the most adequate mitigation measures, also in comparison with the relative effect caused by anthropic disturbances other than fishing activity.

5. The SAC, in close cooperation with scientific committees of other international organizations, and in line with the FAO IPOA-Seabirds, shall advise on the technical details, feasibility, likely effectiveness and side effects, in particular, with regard to the following options for the mitigation of seabirds bycatch in the Mediterranean fisheries:

a) setting of demersal and/or pelagic longlines only at night (one hour after dusk and one hour before dawn);

b) prohibition to set demersal and/or pelagic longlines one hour after dawn till noon;

c) use of bird-scaring lines and wrap scares, in case of longlines setting during the day;

d) setting of a minimum bait weight;

e) use of thawed baits conditioning only instead of frozen baits;

f) ensuring that discards and excess baits are not rejected at sea during setting or hauling operations; and

g) setting of a minimum distance to set bottom-set nets from seabirds breeding areas.

6. The SAC shall provide, also on the basis of the work done under the relevant international scientific committees and in line with the FAO IPOA-Seabirds, a unified protocol for the collection of information on seabirds incidental catch in fishing activities with high risk of interaction with seabirds in the Mediterranean.

7. The GFCM shall, upon reception of SAC advice, consider adopting additional measures for the mitigation of incidental catch of seabirds, whenever it is considered to endanger the survival of seabird populations, while taking into account the socio-economic impact on fisheries.

Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/4 on the incidental bycatch of sea turtles in fisheries in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and particularly its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

CONSIDERING that Mediterranean sea turtles are listed in Annex II on endangered and threatened species of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and that a regional action plan has been implemented by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA);

HAVING regard to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Recommendation 10-09 on the bycatch of sea turtles in ICCAT fisheries;

RECOGNIZING that also some other types of fishing operations carried out in the GFCM area of application can adversely affect sea turtles and that there is a need for implementing measures to mitigate these adverse effects;

NOTING the importance of harmonizing conservation and management measures with other organizations responsible for managing international fisheries;

EMPHASIZING the need to improve the collection of scientific data regarding all sources of mortality for sea turtle populations including but not limited to data from fisheries within the GFCM area of application;

TAKING into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) on the use of de-hooking devices by longliners;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall ensure the implementation of fisheries management measures that strongly mitigate or eliminate the risk of incidental catch of sea turtles in fishing operations and/or the mortality associated with those incidental catches.

2. Specimens of sea turtles accidentally caught in fishing gear shall be safely handled and released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible.

3. Any kind of vessels of CPCs shall be prohibited to take on board, transship and land sea turtles, unless otherwise required to rescue and to secure assistance for the recovery of harmed and comatose animals and provided that the competent national authorities concerned have been duly and officially informed in advance.

4. The SAC shall provide, in 2011, information useful for fishers on the procedure to identify comatose turtles and release them when they are safe.

5. Any event of incidental catch as well as release or discard shall be recorded by the ship owner/master in the logbook (or any other equivalent document developed by a CPC to this specific end) and reported to national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat within the annual national reports to the SAC.

6. The CPCs shall ensure that incidental catch of sea turtles in fishing activities is monitored and recorded. To this end, the SAC annual national reports shall contain information on the interactions of the fishing fleets with sea turtles in GFCM fisheries by gear type and characteristics: times, soak duration, depths, locations, target species, sea turtle species and disposition status of sea turtle specimen(s) (i.e. discarded dead or released alive).

7. The CPCs are strongly encouraged to facilitate cooperation between scientists and fishers to collect this information.

8. The CPCs shall require, that:

a) to the extent practicable, fishing vessels using purse seines for small pelagic species in the GFCM area of application avoid encircling sea turtles and release encircled or incidentally entangled sea turtles; and

b) to the extent practicable, fishing vessels using surrounding nets without purse line for pelagic species, including on fish aggregating devices, avoid encircling sea turtles and release encircled or incidentally entangled sea turtles.

9. With a view to meeting the requirements of paragraph 2, fishing vessels using longlines and bottom-set nets in the GFCM area of application shall carry on board safe handling, disentanglement and release equipment, capable of releasing sea turtles unharmed and in a manner that maximizes the probability of their survival.

10. The GFCM Secretariat shall compile, not later than 2013, the data collected under paragraph 4 as well as, in close cooperation with ICCAT and other appropriate international bodies, the available information from the scientific literature and other relevant sea turtle bycatch mitigation information, and report it to the SAC for its consideration.

11. The SAC shall provide advice, if possible in 2013 and not later than 2014, on the characteristics of devices, fishing gear and fishing operations or other approaches to mitigate/eliminate sea turtle bycatch and to release them alive.

12. The SAC shall identify current gaps in scientific knowledge and experiments, including socio-economic aspects, with a view to overcoming them and obtaining more robust and implementable results. If necessary, the SAC shall provide the protocol and the sampling design to carry out these additional studies under the responsibility of the CPCs.

13. Guidelines shall be produced by the SAC in 2012, then published, widely distributed and made available on the GFCM website in order to mitigate sea turtle bycatch, including information on already existing kits for de-hooking turtles and the provision of training materials on the use of this equipment.

14. Upon receipt of advice from the SAC, the GFCM shall consider, if necessary, additional measures to mitigate sea turtle bycatch in fisheries which have been considered most relevant

15. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs shall, individually and collectively, engage in capacity-building efforts and other cooperative activities to support the effective implementation of the present recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies.

Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/5 on fisheries measures for the conservation of the Mediterranean monk seal in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and particularly its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

CONSIDERING that the Mediterranean monk seal is listed under Annex II on endangered and threatened species of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), and that a regional management plan has been implemented by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected (RAC/SPA);

RECOGNIZING that some fishing operations carried out in the GFCM area of application can adversely affect the Mediterranean monk seal (hereafter referred to as "monk seal") and there is a need to implement measures to mitigate these adverse effects;

AIMING to reduce the incidental catch of monk seal in certain fisheries;

TAKING into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) on the need to endorse measures for the reduction of bycatch of monk seal;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall ensure the implementation of fisheries management measures that strongly mitigate the risk of incidental catch of monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) during fishing operations.

2. Fishing vessels of CPCs shall be prohibited to take on board, transship and land monk seals in the GFCM area of application unless otherwise required to rescue and to secure assistance for the recovery of harmed individual animals and provided that the competent national authorities concerned have been duly and officially informed in advance.

3. Specimens of monk seal accidentally caught in fishing gear shall be released unharmed and alive. Should the animal be already dead, the carcass shall be landed and national authorities notified at the latest upon arrival at port.

4. Any event of incidental catch and release shall be recorded by the vessel owner/master in the logbook (or any other equivalent document developed by a CPC to this specific end) and reported to the respective national authorities for notification to the GFCM Secretariat.

5. The CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures based on scientific studies under their responsibility and designed, whenever appropriate, in line with SAC scientific advice, in order to have very low and close to 0 risk of monk seal incidental catch and mortality in fishing activities/operations.

6. The CPCs shall provide to the GFCM Secretariat, to the best extent possible, the related maps and geographical positions identifying the location of already known, past and current monk seal caves, together with information on fishing fleets using bottom-set nets registered in the ports close to the caves locations within a maximum range of 20 nautical miles. The preliminary maps and lists of geographical positions shall be established for the first time by December 2011 and notified to the GFCM Secretariat not later than 31 January 2012.

7. With a view to ensuring that the information provided by the CPCs on maps and geographic positions of monk seal caves is not detrimental to the monk seal survival, such information is transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat and treated in a restricted manner, in line with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that this information is only available to carry out scientific and conservation work as required by the GFCM or by the CPC providing the original data.

8. Technical and scientific information on measures adopted under paragraph 5 shall be notified to the GFCM Secretariat within the annual national reports to the SAC.

9. The SAC, in close cooperation with scientific bodies including committees of other multilateral organizations, partners of the GFCM, shall provide, not later than February 2012, a protocol and a sampling design to carry out, whenever appropriate, new studies as referred to in paragraph 5, as well as to set a work programme with a view to evaluating the soundness of measures taken and, if necessary, to advise on additional measures including the socio-economic impact.

10. As appropriate, CPCs should, individually and collectively, engage in capacity-building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on monk seals and to support the effective implementation of this recommendation, including entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies and promoting participatory programmes with relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/2 on the minimum mesh size in the codend of demersal trawl nets

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deep-water species and the establishment of a fisheries restricted area below 1000 m and, notably, paragraph 1 therein;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) considers that several stocks are overexploited, some with a high risk of collapse, and that sustainable management requires that measures aimed at limiting the capture of juveniles are implemented;

REAFFIRMING its commitment to further improving the gear selectivity of demersal trawl fisheries beyond what can be achieved by a 40 mm diamond mesh size with a view to ensuring a better protection of juveniles of several species as well as to reducing discarding practices in a multispecies context;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/31/2007/3 on the voluntary implementation of 40 mm square mesh size in codend of trawl nets exploiting demersal resources;

CONSIDERING the recurrent advice on implementing a minimum 40 mm square mesh in the codend of demersal trawl fisheries exploiting several demersal stocks, as also given at the eleventh session of the SAC (Morocco, December 2008);

NOTING that the stock assessment conducted by the SAC only concerns specific geographical subareas (GSAs) corresponding to the data supplied by certain contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) and that the assessed stocks may be shared with adjacent GSAs;

CONSIDERING that, in the absence of any scientific information on the status of fisheries and of the exploited resources, a more cautious approach is needed and that suitable information coming from adjacent areas could be used for proper and precautionary management of fisheries;

NOTING that the SAC advises to apply the precautionary approach and calls for the immediate implementation of a minimum 40 mm square mesh in demersal trawl vessels operating outside territorial waters as from 2009;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/31/2007/1 authorizing derogation to use codend mesh size smaller than 40 mm to operate in certain local and seasonal demersal trawl fisheries exploiting not-shared demersal stocks;

RECOGNIZING that, from a social and economic point of view, and unless otherwise requested by conservation needs, it is necessary to ensure gradual changes in the exploitation pattern of fisheries;

ADOPTS, in conformity Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The CPCs shall adopt and implement a minimum 40 mm square mesh codend or a diamond mesh size of at least 50 mm, of acknowledged equivalent or higher size selectivity, for all trawling activities exploiting demersal stocks when operating in the GFCM area of application.

2. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, every three months, the list of fishing vessels equipped with a trawl codend mesh size, as stipulated in paragraph 1 above, and their percentage out of the whole national demersal trawl fleet.

3. The list of vessels referred to in paragraph 2 above shall contain the following information for each vessel:

- vessel name;
- national registration number;
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- previous name (if any);
- previous flag (if any);
- previous details of deletion from other registers (if any);
- International radio call sign (if any);
- type of vessel, length overall (LOA) and gross tonnage (GT);
- name and address of owner(s) and operator(s);
- main gear used; and
- time period authorized for fishing with demersal trawl gear.

4. Each CPC shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, any deletion from and/or any modification of the demersal trawl fleet referred to in paragraph 2 above, at any time such changes occur.

5. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain such a list of demersal trawl fishing vessels and take any measure to ensure publicity of the list, including through electronic means, and placing it on the GFCM website, in a manner consistent with confidentiality requirements noted CPCs.

6. On the basis of the outcome of selectivity experimental trials which will be carried out at the regional or national level in the GFCM area of application, in line with Resolution GFCM/31/2007/3 and on the basis of SAC advice, the measures referred to in paragraph 1 shall be implemented accordingly for the fisheries concerned.

Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

CONSIDERING that, in the advice for 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) considered that certain stocks were overexploited, some with a high risk of recruitment overfishing, and that sustainable management required measures aimed at controlling or reducing the fishing effort;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species, which urges the control of fishing effort and the improvement of the exploitation pattern of demersal fisheries, as well as limiting catches of juveniles of small pelagic species;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Management of fishing effort for certain demersal fisheries

1. The GFCM shall develop a management programme of the fishing effort concerning demersal trawling fisheries exploiting, *inter alia*, the following species: European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), blue and red shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), striped mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*), giant red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*) and Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*) in the following geographical subareas (GSAs): northern and southern Alboran Sea (GSA 1 and GSA 3), northern Spain (GSA 6), Balearic Islands (GSA 5), Gulf of Lion (GSA 7), Corsica (GSA 8), Ligurian Sea and northern Tyrrhenian Sea (GSA 9), southern and central Tyrrhenian Sea (GSA 10), Sardinia (GSA 11), southern Sicily (GSA 16), northern Adriatic Sea (GSA 17), southern Adriatic Sea (GSA 18), western Ionian Sea (GSA 19), eastern Ionian Sea (GSA 20), Aegean Sea (GSA 22), as well as in the adjacent subareas, if relevant.

Management of fishing effort for certain small pelagic fisheries

2. The GFCM shall develop a management programme of the fishing effort concerning pelagic trawling and purse seines in the pelagic fisheries exploiting, *inter alia*, the following species: anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) and sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in particular in the following GSAs: Northern and Southern Alboran Sea (GSAs 1 et 3), Northern Spain (GSA 6), Gulf of Lion (GSA 7), northern Adriatic Sea (GSA 17), southern Sicily (GSA 16) and Aegean Sea (GSA 22), as well as in the adjacent subareas, if relevant.

3. In order to develop the management programmes of the fishing effort referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, the SAC shall identify in 2006:

- the reference year;
- the operational units; and
- the parameters to measure the fishing effort both in terms of capacity and fishing activity and, if relevant, number and dimension of fishing gear.

The SAC shall transmit to the Commission in 2006 the results of this identification.

Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) recommends that fisheries exploiting common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) and using fish aggregating devices (FADs), could operate in all GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) only between 15 August and 31 December of each year;

NOTING that the SAC has considered that this type of measure can significantly contribute to the reduction of the catches of small specimen of common dolphinfish and contribute to the sustainability of this stock;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. In order to protect the common dolphinfish, in particular small fish, exploited by fleets flying the flag of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), common dolphinfish fisheries using FADs shall be prohibited from 1 January to 14 August of each year, in all GSAs. By way of derogation, if a CPC can demonstrate that, due to bad weather, fishers of this CPC were unable to utilise their normal fishing days (notified in advance to the GFCM Executive Secretary), then the CPC can carry over days lost by this fleet in FAD fisheries until 31 January of the following year. The CPC shall notify these measures to the GFCM Executive Secretary, who will circulate the information to all the CPCs.

2. Each CPC involved in the fishery referred to in paragraph 1 shall take the necessary measures to ensure the respect of the measure referred to in paragraph 1.

3. Each CPC shall adopt the necessary measures to ensure the reporting of their total landings and transshipments of common dolphinfish carried out by vessels that fly their flag. Each CPC shall also expand, or maintain, an appropriate system of collection and treatment of fisheries catch and effort data.

4. The GFCM requests the SAC to analyse, for the first time in 2010, the impact of this measure on the stocks and to recommend any change that may be deemed necessary to improve its effectiveness, in order to evaluate possible modifications to the closure and/or propose additional management measures.

5. The CPCs involved in the fishery referred to in paragraph 1 shall submit their national data (as specified in the Annex to this Recommendation) to the GFCM Secretariat not later than 31 July of each calendar year. Such transmission shall be done in accordance with appropriate data submission standards and protocols set by the GFCM Secretariat and address the timeframe of the year preceding the submission.

Annex

The data variables below are those requested to be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat following the guidance as defined by the SAC in the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) manual, including fields definition.

DATA FIELDS	MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS*
Country	X	P
Reference year	X	P
Fishing period	X	P
Geographical subarea (GSA)	X	P
Total landing	X	P
Number of vessels	X	P
Total GT of vessels		P
Length range of vessels (m)		P
Average length of vessels (m)		P
Total number of FADs		S
Total number of fishing trips		S
Number of FADs targeted per fishing trip		S
Number of FADs visited per fishing trip		S
Average size of fish caught during the fishing season		S
Total transshipments		S
System of collection and treatment of catch and effort data		S

* In line with the GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures, the “data confidentiality status” identifies the access-level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: Public (P), Semi-private (S), Private (R**).**

Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/3 on the establishment of fisheries restricted areas to protect deep-sea sensitive habitats

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

RECALLING Resolution 59/25 of the United Nations General Assembly and in particular paragraphs 66 and 67 calling upon the regional fisheries management organizations to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures in order to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deep-water species and the establishment of a fisheries restricted area below 1000 m;

CONSIDERING that the integration of environmental concerns in fisheries management is a way to protect the structure and functioning of marine ecosystems which are in turn fundamental to the overall production of the seas, including the exploited resources, and to the benefit of sustainable fisheries;

CONSIDERING that also human activities other than fisheries should care for the structure and functioning of the marine ecosystems to the benefit of healthy environment and sustainable fisheries;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) recommends to ban bottom trawling activity in the deep-water coral reefs located in international waters (referred to as Lophelia reef off Capo Santa Maria di Leuca) in order to protect coral;

NOTING that the SAC has indicated that the area referred to as "the Nile Delta area cold hydrocarbon seeps" is characterized by an exceptional concentration of cold hydrocarbon seeps which have favoured the development of a unique living community and recommends that the area should be given a full protection status by avoiding demersal fishing practices;

NOTING that the SAC recommends to ban trawling activities in the area referred to as "the Eratosthenes Seamount" located in the eastern Mediterranean between the Levantine platform to the south and the Cyprus margin to the north, near the subduction zone of the African plate, in order to protect the deep-sea sensitive habitats;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Fishing with towed dredges and bottom trawl nets shall be prohibited in the areas bounded by lines joining the following coordinates:

a) Deep-sea fisheries restricted area "Lophelia reef off Capo Santa Maria di Leuca"

39º 27.72' N, 18º 10.74' E

39º 27.80' N, 18º 26.68' E

39º 11.16' N, 18º 04.28' E

39º 11.16' N, 18º 32.58' E

b) Deep-Sea fisheries restricted area "the Nile delta area cold hydrocarbon seeps"

31° 30.00' N, 33° 10.00' E

31° 30.00’ N, 34° 00.00’ E

32° 00.00’ N, 34° 00.00’ E

32° 00.00’ N, 33° 10.00’ E

c) Deep-sea fisheries restricted area “the Eratosthenes seamount”

33° 00.00’ N, 32° 00.00’ E

33° 00.00’ N, 33° 00.00’ E

34° 00.00’ N, 33° 00.00’ E

34° 00.00’ N, 32° 00.00’ E

2. For the same areas, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall call the attention of the relevant authorities in order to protect these areas from the impact of any other activity jeopardizing the conservation of the features that characterize these particular habitats.

Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deep-water species and the establishment of a fisheries restricted area below 1000 m

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration) and in particular, paragraph 4, third indent;

RECALLING that effective management measures aim to curb the decline in stocks identified in the scientific advice and to improve the exploitation pattern in the fisheries;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary approach to fishery management therein, in particular in relation to the development of new fisheries;

CONSIDERING that, in the absence of any scientific information on the status of fisheries and of the exploited resources, a more cautious approach is needed and that suitable information coming from adjacent areas could be used for proper and precautionary management of fisheries;

NOTING that the selectivity of codend mesh sizes currently in use in the various demersal trawl fisheries is not suitable to ensure adequate protection for juveniles of several species as well as to reduce discarding practices;

CONSIDERING also that, in the advice for 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) considered that certain stocks were overexploited, some with a high risk of collapse, and that sustainable management required that measures aimed at limiting the capture of juveniles be implemented;

NOTING that the stock assessment conducted by the SAC only concerns specific geographical subareas (GSAs) corresponding to the data supplied by certain contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) and that the assessed stocks may be shared with adjacent GSAs;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species, which urges the control of fishing effort and the improvement of the exploitation pattern of demersal fisheries, as well as limiting catches of juveniles of small pelagic species;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Demersal fisheries

1. CPC shall adopt measures aimed at increasing the selectivity of demersal trawl nets, notably by the immediate implementation of, at least, a 40 mm mesh size opening for the whole demersal trawl codend. The CPCs are invited to explore and implement additional measures in order to improve further the selectivity.

Deep-water fisheries

2. The CPCs shall prohibit the use of towed dredges and trawl nets at depths beyond 1 000 m.

General aspects

3. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Executive Secretary, each year, one month prior to the GFCM annual session, with a report on the implementation of the management measures adopted.

4. The SAC shall evaluate the impact of the implementation of the management measures and recommend to the GFCM, if necessary, either possible adjustments or new additional measures.

Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/3 prohibiting the use of driftnets for fisheries of large pelagic species

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. In order to protect small swordfish, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall take the necessary measures to reduce the mortality of juvenile swordfish in the whole Mediterranean.

2. The CPCs shall take the necessary technical measures for their longline fisheries to ensure compliance with such objective.

3. The CPCs shall prohibit the use of driftnets for fisheries of large pelagic species in the Mediterranean Sea.

Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that effective management measures aim to curb the decline in stocks targeted by scientific advice and to improve their exploitation;

NOTING that the wide diversity of fishing fleets and gear used in the area of application of the GFCM makes it essential to establish a general regulatory framework that permits the formulation and application of national regulations adapted to individual cases, in an effort to achieve the maximum effectiveness of sustainable management of marine living resources;

CONSIDERING the advice on demersal and small pelagic species given by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its fifth session (FAO headquarters, July 2002);

CONSIDERING that, in its advice of 2002, the SAC estimated that certain stocks were overexploited and that sustainable management measures should therefore be put into effect for the fisheries concerned;

CONSIDERING that contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) should therefore implement measures aimed at gradually adjusting fishing effort and reducing the capture of juveniles;

NOTING that the stock assessments conducted by the SAC only concern specific GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) corresponding to the data supplied by CPCs and that the assessed stocks may be shared with adjacent GSAs, and all the CPCs concerned should ensure that the stocks are managed according to the following provisions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The CPCs in the GSAs concerned shall be encouraged to adopt measures aimed at adjusting the fishing effort for selected demersal species (*Merluccius merluccius*, *Aristeus antennatus*, *Mullus barbatus*) and to rationalize their exploitation on the basis of the advice of the SAC.

2. The CPCs in the GSAs concerned shall be encouraged to take measures aimed at minimizing the capture of small pelagic species below the size needed to maintain recruitment stock at a level compatible with sustainable resource exploitation.

1.2 Recommendations on monitoring, control and surveillance

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/13 on the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Rule XVII paragraph 1 b) of the GFCM Rules of Procedure, according to which contracting parties and relevant non-contracting parties have the obligation to provide information on catches and other relevant data to enable the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) to carry out its duties;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/17 on information contained in the GFCM record of authorized vessels over 15 metres in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 and repealing Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/18;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

NOTING the conclusions of the fifteen session of the Compliance Committee and the Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, including a session on the clarification process (Cyprus, May 2022);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1

Paragraph 4 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 shall be added as follows:

"4. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall ensure that, without prejudice to the minimum specifications and information set out in Annex 1, the masters of fishing vessels over 15 m in length overall authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application and registered in the GFCM record of vessels record the following information separately in their logbook for each reported catch or incidental catch (FAO 3-alpha codes shall be used):

- any event of incidental catch and release of seabirds;
- any event of incidental catch and release of sea turtles;
- any event of incidental catch and release of monk seals;
- any event of incidental catch and release of cetaceans; and
- any event of incidental catch and, where required, release of sharks and rays pertaining to the species listed in Annex II or Annex III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention).

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/14 on the regulation of transshipment in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

TAKING ACCOUNT of the need to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing activities because they undermine the effectiveness of the conservation and management measures already adopted by the GFCM;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, particularly its Output 2.4 "Coordination to address illegal practices in the fishery sector bolstered";

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that transshipments at sea escape any proper control by flag or coastal states and represent a common way for operators carrying out IUU fishing to dissimulate the illegal nature of their catches;

NOTING the conclusions of the fifteenth session of the Compliance Committee and the Working Group on illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, including a session on the clarification process (Cyprus, May 2022);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General principles, scope and definitions

General principles

1. This Recommendation establishes the general principles and procedures regarding transshipment operations in the GFCM area of application.

2. Transshipments at sea shall be prohibited, except in cases of force majeure legally detected by a control authority within the GFCM area of application. They shall be allowed only in authorized ports and be subject to an authorization and to the conditions laid down in this recommendation.

3. Each contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) shall, in its capacity as a port state, fully apply Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application.

4. With reference to paragraph 3, CPCs shall monitor vessels that are not flying their own flags and are seeking access to their ports in order to verify that such vessels have not been engaged in fishing-related activities in contravention with any GFCM conservation measure.

5. Transshipment shall not take place if any of the vessels involved are included in the a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application, established in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/19 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, repealing Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8.

6. Transshipment shall be allowed only in designated ports and landing points or in places close to the shore designated by CPCs in accordance with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1.

7. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall report to the GFCM Secretariat, by 30 April every year, the list of ports, landing points and places close to the shore where the transshipment operations referred to in paragraph 6 are allowed.

Scope

8. For the purpose of this recommendation, relocation, pair trawling activities and fishing operations involving joint action (joint fishing operations) by two or more fishing vessels from CPCs shall not be considered as transshipment.

9. This recommendation is without prejudice to additional requirements applicable to transshipment at sea or in port found in other GFCM recommendations.

10. The provisions of this recommendation shall not affect more detailed or stricter obligations on transshipment procedures adopted and implemented by CPCs.

Definitions

11. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

a) "Transshipment" means the transfer from the donor vessel to the receiving vessel of all or any fisheries products.

b) "Receiving vessel" means any vessel that takes on board catches and/or fisheries products discharged by the donor vessel.

c) "Donor vessel" means any fishing vessel that discharges its catches and/or fisheries products to another vessel, namely the receiving vessel.

d) "Carrier vessel" means a vessel used for the transport of fisheries products– this vessel can transport frozen fisheries products (reefer).

e) "Fisheries products" means products resulting from any fishing activity or products derived therefrom.

f) "Authorized ports" means ports designated by CPCs according to Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transhipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transhipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

PART II
Transshipment operations at port

12. A transshipment operation shall be allowed only when it is subject to an authorization by both the flag and coastal CPCs.

13. The authorization referred to in paragraph 12 shall be issued when the flag CPC has verified that the activities carried out by the vessels taking part in the transshipment are in line with GFCM management and conservation measures and that the concerned fishing vessels have not been engaged in IUU fishing activities.

14. If the transshipment operation is interrupted, permission may be required from the coastal CPC before the transshipment operation is resumed.

Donor vessel

15. The master of the donor fishing vessel shall notify the port state authorities of the identification of the receiving vessel, as well as the date, time and port where the transshipment will take place, at least 48 hours in advance of the transshipment operation.

16. The identification referred to in paragraph 15 shall contain, at least, the name of the vessel, International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, vessel registration number, external mark, port of registry and flag of the fishing vessel.

17. The authorization referred to in paragraph 12 must be kept on board and made available during an inspection or control procedure.

18. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, in order to grant a prior authorization to a fishing vessel flying their flag before transshipping, shall require the master of the donor fishing vessel issuing the request to transmit the following information:

a) species (FAO 3-alpha identifier) and product form;

b) catches on board to be transshipped, in kg live-weight, kg processed weight and/or number of individuals when pertinent;

c) geographic location of the catches (as recorded in the logbook);

d) place and date where the transshipment is foreseen; and

e) information regarding the receiving vessel, name, registration number, IMO number and flag.

Receiving vessel

19. The captain of the receiving vessel shall complete and transmit to the port CPC authorities information about the catches and fisheries products on board no later than 24 hours before starting the transshipment. Catches should be reported by indicating species and weight or number of individuals where relevant.

20. The master of the receiving vessel shall, 48 hours before landing, transmit a GFCM transshipment declaration to the competent authorities of the state where the landing is to take place.

PART III
GFCM transshipment declarations

21. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall require that the masters of fishing vessels over 15 m in length overall flying their flags that are involved in a transshipment operation complete a GFCM transshipment declaration in accordance with the annex, indicating specifically all quantities of each species transshipped or received above 50 kg of live-weight equivalent and/or the number of individuals, when relevant.

22. The GFCM transshipment declaration referred to in paragraph 21 shall contain at least:

a) the external identification number and the name of both the donor and the receiving fishing vessels;

b) the FAO alpha-3 code of each species and the relevant geographical area in which the catches were taken;

c) the estimated quantities of each species in kg in product weight, broken down by type of product presentation, or, where appropriate, the number of individuals, including the quantities or individuals below the applicable minimum conservation reference size, as a separate entry;

d) the port of destination of the receiving fishing vessel; and

e) the designated port of transshipment.

23. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall require that the masters of both the donor and receiving fishing vessels submit a GFCM transshipment declaration, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after transshipment to the following authorities:

a) their flag CPC; and

b) if the transshipment has taken place in a port of another CPC, the competent authorities of the port CPC concerned.

24. The GFCM transshipment declarations must be signed by the master of the receiving vessel and the master of the donor vessel.

25. The master of both vessels shall each be responsible for the accuracy of the data recorded in their GFCM transshipment declaration.

26. A copy of the GFCM transshipment declaration shall be retained on board of each vessel until all catches and products have been landed.

PART IV
Monitoring and control measures

27. The permitted margin of tolerance in estimates recorded in GFCM transshipment declarations of the quantities in kg live-weight of fish transshipped or received shall be 10 percent for all species.

28. The port CPC and the landing CPC shall review the information received, including in cooperation with the flag CPC of the fishing vessel as necessary, to determine consistency between the reported catches, transshipments and landings of each vessel. This verification shall be carried out so that the vessel suffers the minimum interference and inconvenience and degradation of the fish is avoided.

29. All donor and receiver vessels authorized to conduct transshipment should be required to have on board and use an operational vessel monitoring system in line with the minimum standards referred to in Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application.

PART V
Reporting

30. Each year, CPCs shall report to the GFCM Secretariat any relevant information about the implementation of this recommendation by 30 April (e.g. number of transshipments authorized, number of vessels involved, quantities of fishery products transshipped).

31. Each year, the GFCM Secretariat shall present a report on the implementation of this recommendation to the Compliance Committee, which shall, *inter alia*, review compliance with this recommendation.

PART VI
Final provision

32. The provisions contained in this recommendation shall be applied without prejudice to stricter rules enforced by CPCs.

Annex

Information to be included in a GFCM transshipment declaration

Information	Donor vessel	Receiving vessel
1. Vessel name		
2. Flag state		
3. Vessel type (International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels)		
4. IMO number, if eligible		
5. External ID, if available		
6. Registration ID, if different from external ID		
7. International radio call sign, if available		
8. Maritime mobile service identity (MMSI) number, if available		
9. Vessel owner/company information		
Name		
Address		
Contact information (email address and phone number)		
10. Vessel contact information		
Name of master		
Nationality		
Phone number		
Email address		
11. Transshipment authorization identifier, if any		
12. Transshipment authorization issuing body		
13. Transshipment authorization period of validity		
14. Time and date of the transshipment		
Start (hour/day/month/year)		
End (hour/day/month/year)		

Information	Donor vessel	Receiving vessel
15. Transshipment location port/position at sea (latitude/longitude)		
16. Quantities onboard prior to transshipment	**Donor vessel**	**Receiving vessel**
Catch area(s)		
Species (FAO/ASFIS codes)		
Product form (preservation and presentation type)		
Quantity (weight)		
17. Transshipped fish	**Donor vessel**	**Receiving vessel**
Catch area(s)		
Species (FAO/ASFIS codes)		
Product form (preservation and presentation type)		
Quantity (weight)		
18. Signature	**Donor vessel**	**Receiving vessel**
Master´s signature		

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/15 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), amending Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 and repealing Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/6

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to16);

NOTING the adoption of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 on a multiannual management plan for the sustainable exploitation of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/12 and GFCM/42/2018/5;

NOTING the adoption of 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 (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/7 and GFCM/43/2019/6;

CONSIDERING that it is appropriate to align the duration of the international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily to the provisions of Recommendations GFCM/45/2022/4 and Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/5;

CONSIDERING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.3 “Monitoring, control and surveillance centralized at the regional level” and its action plan that foresees agreeing upon common procedures for the exchange of inspectors and inspection reports, and promoting the conclusion of agreements among contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) for the deployment of joint surveillance and inspection schemes at the regional and subregional levels;

RECALLING that Resolution GFCM/44/2021/11 on the follow-up of the second GFCM performance review calls for establishing new and implementing current international joint inspection schemes to ensure adequate monitoring;

NOTING the recommendation from the fifteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) and the Working Group on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing , including a session on the clarification

process (Cyprus, May 2022) to further the execution of joint inspection schemes in the context of subregional multiannual management plans;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8

1. Paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 shall be modified as follows:

"This recommendation establishes an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme (hereafter "the scheme"), the scope of which is limited to the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 and Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/5, which cover inspection and surveillance activities outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16)."

2. Paragraph 14 of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 shall be modified as follows:

"Inspectors shall limit their enquiries to ascertaining the observance of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 and Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/5 in relation to the flag state of the vessel concerned. In completing the inspection, inspectors may ask the master of the fishing vessel for any assistance they may need. Inspectors shall draw up a report of the inspection using the form contained in Annex 4."

3. Paragraph 18 of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 shall be modified as follows:

"For the purpose of these procedures, an infringement means the following violations observed under the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/4 and Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/5:

a) fishing without a valid license, permit or authorization issued by the flag CPC;

b) failing to maintain sufficient records of catch and catch-related data in accordance with GFCM data reporting requirements, or significantly misreporting such catch and/or catch-related data;

c) fishing in a closed area;

d) fishing during a closed season;

e) using prohibited fishing gear;

f) falsifying or intentionally concealing the markings, identity or registration of a fishing vessel;

g) concealing, tampering with or disposing of evidence relating to the investigation of a violation;

h) committing multiple violations, which, taken together, constitute a serious disregard of applicable measures;

i) obstructing, intimidating, interfering with or otherwise preventing authorized inspectors from performing duties; and

j) interfering with the satellite monitoring system and/or operating without a vessel monitoring system (VMS). "

4. Paragraph 24 of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 shall be modified as follows:

"The authorities of CPCs shall consider and act on inspection reports (Annex 4), sighting information sheets, as provided in the annex of Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/21, and statements resulting from documentary inspections of foreign inspectors under these arrangements on a similar basis as the reports of national inspectors established in accordance with their national legislation."

5. Paragraph 26 of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 shall be modified as follows:

"This recommendation shall be implemented at least until the end of 2030."

6. Annex 5 of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 shall be deleted.

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/16 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19 to 21)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards, as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that, in giving effect of the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING the recommendation from the fifteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) and the Working Group on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing , including a session on the clarification process (Cyprus, May 2022) to further the execution of joint inspection schemes in the context of subregional multiannual management plans;

NOTING 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 (geographical subareas 19 to 21), repealing Recommendations GFCM/44/2021/8 and GFCM/42/2018/4;

CONSIDERING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.3 “Monitoring, control and surveillance centralized at the regional level” and its action plan that foresees agreeing upon common procedures for the exchange of inspectors and inspection reports, and promoting the conclusion of agreements among contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) for the deployment of joint surveillance and inspection schemes at the regional and subregional levels;

RECALLING that Resolution GFCM/44/2021/11 on the follow-up of the second GFCM performance review calls for establishing new and implementing current international joint inspection schemes to ensure adequate monitoring;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Scope and general principles

1. This recommendation establishes an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme (hereafter “the scheme”), the scope of which is limited to the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/6, which cover inspection and surveillance activities outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19 to 21).

2. Each CPC decides to participate in inspections on a voluntary basis. Inspections shall be carried out by inspectors designated by the CPCs. Each CPC shall, no later than 1 December of each year,

report to the GFCM Secretariat the list of the names of inspectors authorized to perform inspection and surveillance in the GFCM area of application. The full list of inspectors shall be published and maintained by the GFCM Secretariat on its secured and password-protected online portal.

3. Inspectors shall carry appropriate identity documentation issued by the authorities of the flag state, which shall follow the template provided in Annex 1.

4. The names of the vessels and aircrafts used for inspection and surveillance shall be reported by participating CPCs to the GFCM Secretariat by 15 December of the previous year or as soon as possible before the commencement of inspection activities. The GFCM Secretariat shall make available to all CPCs information related to designated inspection vessels and aircrafts, including by posting it on a password-protected online portal.

5. Vessels carrying out boarding and inspection duties in accordance with the scheme shall fly a special flag or pennant, as described in Annex 2, approved by the GFCM and issued by the GFCM Secretariat.

6. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that the information referred to above is automatically made available to all CPCs.

7. A CPC may, by mutual agreement with another CPC, deploy inspectors it has assigned to the scheme to an inspection platform of this other CPC. It shall notify the GFCM Secretariat in advance of such deployment.

8. Each CPC shall ensure that every inspection platform entitled to fly its flag operating in the GFCM area of application maintains secure contact, in a daily manner where possible, with every other inspection platform operating in the GFCM area of application, in order to exchange information necessary to coordinate their activities.

9. Each CPC with an inspection presence in the GFCM area of application shall seek to ensure that its inspectors treat vessels operating in the GFCM area of application on an equal footing by avoiding a disproportionate number of inspections of vessels entitled to fly the flag of any other CPC.

10. Each CPC with an inspection or surveillance presence in the GFCM area of application shall provide to each inspection platform, upon its entry into the GFCM area of application, a list of sightings, boardings and inspections it has conducted over the previous ten-day period, including dates, coordinates and any other relevant information.

PART II
Conduct of inspections

11. Each CPC with an inspection presence shall ensure that its inspectors:

a) notify the fishing vessel, prior to boarding, of the name of the inspection vessel;

b) display on the inspection vessel and boarding vessel the pennant described in Annex 2;

c) ensure that, during boarding, the inspection vessel remains at a safe distance from fishing vessels;

d) do not require the fishing vessel to stop or manoeuvre when towing, shooting or hauling fishing gear; and

e) limit each inspection team to a maximum of three inspectors.

12. Upon boarding the vessel, inspectors shall produce the identity card as described in Annex 1 to the master of the fishing vessel. Inspections shall be conducted in one of the official languages of the GFCM and, where possible, in the language spoken by the master of the fishing vessel.

13. Inspectors shall conduct inspections in accordance with international regulations, procedures and practices relating to the safety of the vessel being inspected and its crew, minimize interference

with fishing activities or stowage of products and, to the extent practicable, avoid actions that would adversely affect the quality of the catch on board.

14. Inspectors shall limit their enquiries to ascertaining the observance of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/6 in relation to the flag state of the vessel concerned. In conducting the inspection, inspectors may ask the master of the fishing vessel for any assistance they may need. Inspectors shall draw up a report of the inspection using the form provided in Annex 4.

15. Inspectors shall sign the inspection report in the presence of the master of the vessel, who shall sign the report too and shall be entitled to add any observations to it which he or she may think suitable.

16. Copies of the report shall be given to the master of the vessel and to the government of the inspection party, which shall transmit copies to the appropriate authorities of the flag state of the inspected vessel and to the GFCM Secretariat.

17. The size of the inspection party and the duration of the inspection shall be determined by the commanding officer of the inspection vessel, taking into account relevant circumstances. In general, the inspection party should complete its tasks in the shortest possible time.

18. For the purpose of these procedures, an infringement means the following violations observed under the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/6:

a) fishing without a valid licence, permit or authorization issued by the flag CPC;

b) failing to maintain sufficient records of catch and catch-related data in accordance with GFCM data reporting requirements, or significantly misreporting such catch and/or catch-related data;

c) fishing in a closed area;

d) fishing during a closed season;

e) using prohibited fishing gear;

f) falsifying or intentionally concealing the markings, identity or registration of a fishing vessel;

g) concealing, tampering with or disposing of evidence relating to the investigation of a violation;

h) committing multiple violations, which, taken together, constitute a serious disregard of applicable measures;

i) obstructing, intimidating, interfering with or otherwise preventing authorized inspectors from performing duties; and

j) interfering with the satellite monitoring system and/or operating without a vessel monitoring system (VMS).

19. In the case of any boarding and inspection of a fishing vessel during which the inspectors observe an activity or condition that would constitute a violation, as defined above, the authorities of the flag state of the inspection vessel shall immediately notify the flag state of the fishing vessel directly, as well as through the GFCM Secretariat. In such a situation, the inspector should also inform any inspection ship of the flag state of the fishing vessel known to be in the vicinity.

20. GFCM inspectors shall register the inspections conducted and infringements detected (if any) in the fishing vessel logbook.

21. The inspected flag state CPC shall ensure that, following the inspection referred to above, the fishing vessel concerned ceases all fishing activities. The flag state CPC shall require the fishing vessel to proceed within 72 hours to a port it has designated, where an investigation shall be initiated.

22. In the case where an inspection has detected an activity or condition that would constitute a violation, the actions and follow-up taken by the flag CPC shall be notified to its national authorities, as well as the GFCM Secretariat, to be reviewed by the CoC.

23. Resistance to inspectors or failure to comply with their directions shall be treated by the flag state of the inspected vessel in a manner similar to resistance to a national inspector or failure to comply with his or her directions.

24. The authorities of CPCs shall consider and act on inspection reports as provided in Annex 4, sighting information sheets, as provided in the annex of Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/21, and statements resulting from documentary inspections of foreign inspectors under these arrangements on a similar basis as reports of national inspectors in accordance with their national legislation.

PART III
Obligations of the vessel master during inspections

25. The master of a fishing vessel being inspected shall:

a) facilitate safe and effective boarding of officials, in accordance with good seamanship, when the appropriate signal of the International Code of Signals is given or when the intention to board is established through radiocommunication by a vessel or helicopter carrying an official;

b) provide a boarding ladder meeting the requirements of Annex 3 to facilitate safe and convenient access to any vessel which requires a climb of 1.5 m or more;

c) facilitate the inspectors' inspection duties, providing assistance when requested in a reasonable way;

d) permit inspectors to communicate with the authorities of the flag state, the coastal state and the inspecting state;

e) alert inspectors to particular safety hazards on board fishing vessels;

f) provide officials access to all areas of the vessel, all processed or unprocessed catches, all fishing gear and all relevant information and documents;

g) facilitate safe disembarkation by inspectors on completion of the inspection;

h) upon request from the inspector, remove any part of fishing gear which does not seem to be in compliance with GFCM recommendations in place; and

i) where the inspector has made any entries in the logbooks, provide the inspector with a copy of each page where such entries appear and, upon request by the inspector, sign each page to confirm that it is a true copy.

PART IV
Final provisions

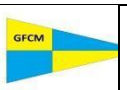
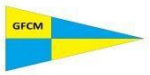
26. This recommendation shall be implemented in 2023, in accordance with the capacity of CPCs, and shall be fully implemented by all CPCs concerned in 2024.

27. This recommendation shall be implemented until at least the end of 2030.

28. The CoC shall monitor and report to the GFCM at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the present scheme. The GFCM shall examine any recommendation for improving the implementation of the scheme.

Annex 1

Template of identity card for GFCM inspectors

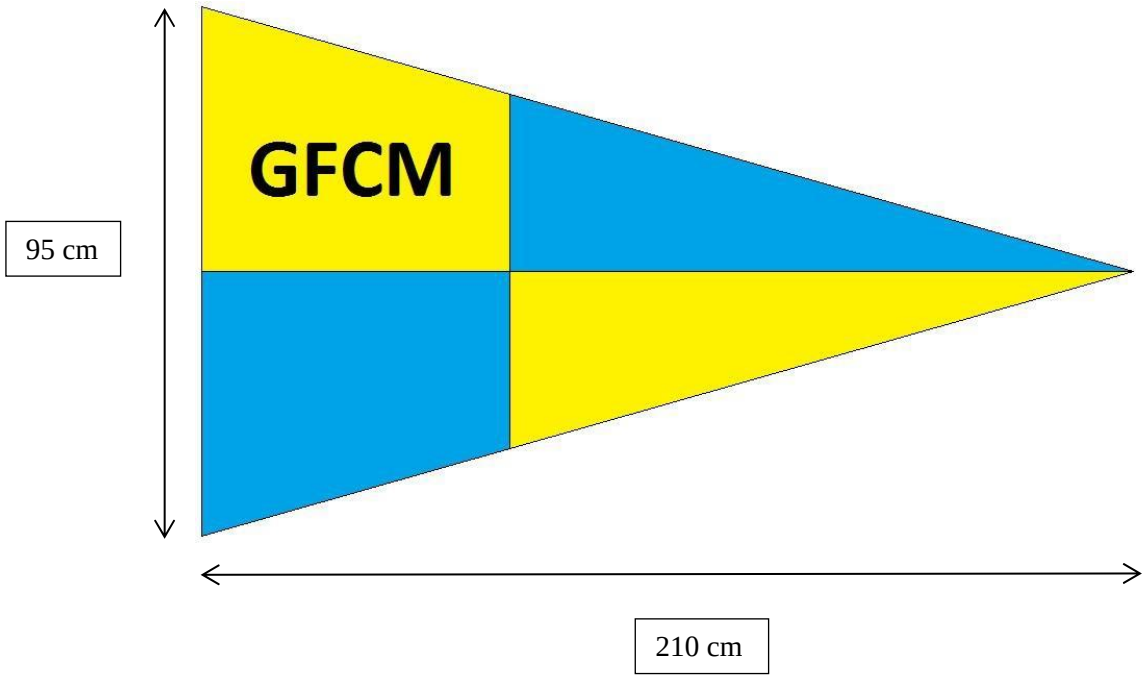
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<tr><td colspan="3">General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)</td><td>  </td><td>GFCM</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">  </td><td>GFCM</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">The holder of this inspector identity card is a GFCM inspector duly appointed under the terms of the GFCM Joint Inspection and Surveillance Scheme and has the power to act under the provisions of GFCM rules.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">INSPECTOR IDENTITY CARD</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Photograph</td><td colspan="2">Contracting party</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Inspector’s name</td><td rowspan="3">……Issuing authority</td><td rowspan="3">…… Inspector</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Card n°</td></tr>
<tr><td>Issue date:</td><td>Valid for five years</td></tr>
</table>

Front Back

Dimensions: 10 cm width, 7 cm height.

Annex 2

Model of GFCM inspection pennant



Pennants to be displayed by a GFCM inspection vessel. A boarding vessel shall display one pennant, which may be half-size.

Annex 3

Construction and use of boarding ladders

1. The provisions of this annex shall apply to ensure safe and convenient access to fishingvessels that require a climb of 1.5 m or more.

2. A boarding ladder shall be provided that shall be efficient for the purpose of enabling inspectors to embark and disembark safely at sea. The boarding ladder shall be kept clean and in good order.

3. The ladder shall be positioned and secured so that:

   a) it is clear of any possible discharges from the vessel;

   b) it is clear of the finer lines and, as far as practicable, in the mid-length of the vessel; and

   c) each step rests firmly against the vessel's side.

4. The steps of the boarding ladder shall:

   a) be of hardwood or other material of equivalent properties, made in one piece free of knots; the four lowest steps may be made of rubber of sufficient strength and stiffness or of another suitable material of equivalent characteristics;

   b) have an efficient non-slip surface;

   c) be no less than 480 mm long, 115 mm wide, and 23 mm in thickness, excluding any non-slip device or grooving;

   d) be equally spaced no less than 300 mm nor more than 380 mm apart; and

   e) be secured in such a manner that they will remain horizontal.

5. No boarding ladder shall have more than two replacement steps, which are secured in position by a method different from that used in the original construction of the ladder, and any steps so secured shall be replaced, as soon as reasonably practicable, by steps secured in position by the method used in the original construction of the ladder. When any replacement step is secured to the side ropes of the boarding ladder by means of grooves in the side of the step, such grooves shall be positioned in the longer sides of the steps.

6. The side ropes of the ladder shall consist of two uncovered manila or equivalent ropes no less than 60 mm in circumference on each side; each rope shall be left uncovered by any other material and be continuous with no joints below the top step; two main ropes, properly secured to the vessel and no less than 65 mm in circumference and a safety line shall be kept at hand, ready for use if required.

7. Battens made of hardwood or another material of equivalent properties, in one piece, free of knots and between 1.8 and 2 m long, shall be provided at such intervals as will prevent the boarding ladder from twisting. The lowest batten shall be on the fifth step from the bottom of the ladder, and the interval between any batten and the next shall not exceed nine steps.

8. Means shall be provided to ensure safe and convenient passage for inspectors embarking on or disembarking from the vessel between the head of the boarding ladder or of any accommodation ladder or other appliance provided. Where such passage is by means of a gateway in the rails or

bulwark, adequate handholds shall be provided. Where such passage is by means of a bulwark ladder, such a ladder shall be securely attached to the bulwark rail or platform and two handhold stanchions shall be fitted at the point of boarding or disembarking from the vessel no less than 0.70 m nor more than 0,80 m apart. Each stanchion shall be rigidly secured to the vessel's structure at or near its base and also at a higher point, shall be no less than 40 mm in diameter and shall extend no less than 1.20 m above the top of the bulwark.

9. Lighting shall be provided at night so that both the boarding ladder and the position where the inspector boards the vessel are adequately lit. A lifebuoy equipped with a self-illuminating light shall be kept at hand, ready for use. A heaving line shall also be kept at hand, ready for use if required.

10. Means shall be provided to enable the boarding ladder to be used on either side of the vessel. The inspector in charge may indicate on which side he would like the boarding ladder to be deployed.

11. The rigging of the ladder and the embarkation and disembarkation of inspector(s) shall be supervised by a responsible officer of the vessel. The responsible officer shall be in radio contact with the bridge.

12. In the case that on a vessel, constructional features such as rubbing bands would prevent the fulfilment of any of these provisions, special arrangements shall be made to ensure that inspector(s) are able to embark and disembark safely.

Annex 4

GFCM inspection report

1. INSPECTOR(s)

Name .....Contracting party .....GFCM identity card number .....

Name .....Contracting party .....GFCM identity card number .....

Name .....Contracting party .....GFCM identity card number .....

2. VESSEL CARRYING THE INSPECTOR(S)

2.1 Name and registration .....

2.2 Flag .....

3. INFORMATION ON VESSEL INSPECTED

3.1 Name and registration .....

3.2 Flag .....

3.3 Captain (name and address) .....

3.4 Ship owner (name and address) .....

3.5 GFCM record number .....

3.6 Type of vessel .....

4. POSITION

4.1 Position as determined by inspecting vessel's master at ... UTC; Latitude..... Longitude.....

4.2 Position as determined by fishing vessel's master at ..... UTC; Latitude..... Longitude.....

5. DATE AND TIMES OF INSPECTION'S COMMENCEMENT AND COMPLETION

5.1 Date .....Time arrived on board ..... UTC; Time of departure .....UTC

6. TYPE OF FISHING GEAR ON BOARD

Bottom otter trawl – OTB	
Mid-water otter trawl – OTM	
Shrimp trawls – TBS	
Purse seine – PS	
Gillnets anchored (set) – GNS	
Set longlines – LLS	
Recreational gear – RG	
Other (specify)	

7. MESH MEASUREMENT (IN MILLIMETRES)

7.1 Legal mesh size to be used:.....mm

7.2 Result of the average mesh size measurement.....mm

7.3 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ – In case of YES, legal reference: .....

8. INSPECTION OF CATCHES ON BOARD

8.1 Results of the inspection of the fish on board

SPECIES **(FAO tri alpha ode)**						
Total (kg)						
Presentation						
Sample inspected						
Percentage of undersize fish						

8.2 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ – In case of YES, legal reference: .....

9. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS ON BOARD AND VMS

9.1 Fishing logbook: YES □ – NO □

9.2 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ – In case of YES, legal reference: .....

9.3 Fishing licence: YES □ – NO □

9.4 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ – In case of YES, legal reference .....

9.5 Specific authorization: YES □ – NO □

9.6 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ – In case of YES, legal reference: .....

9.7 VMS: YES □ – NO □ – functioning: YES □ – NO □

9.8 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ – In case of YES, legal reference: .....

10. LIST OF VIOLATIONS

□ Fishing without a licence, permit or authorization issued by the flag CPC – legal reference:.....

□ Failure to maintain sufficient records of catch and catch-related data in accordance with GFCM reporting requirements or significant misreporting of such catch and/or catch-related data – legal reference: .....

□ Fishing in a closed area – legal reference: .....

□ Fishing during a closed season – legal reference: .....

□ Use of prohibited fishing gear – legal reference: .....

□ Falsification or intentional concealment of the markings, identity or registration of a fishing vessel – legal reference: .....

□ Concealment, tampering with or disposing of evidence relating to the investigation of a violation – legal reference: .....

□ Multiple violations, which, taken together, constitute a serious disregard of measures in force pursuant to the GFCM– legal reference: ..... Assault, resistance, intimidation, sexual harassment, interference with or undue obstruction or delay of an authorized inspector– legal reference: .....

□ Interference with the satellite monitoring system and/or operates without VMS system – legal reference: .....

11. LIST OF DOCUMENTS COPIED ON BOARD

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12. COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE OF THE MASTER OF THE VESSEL

.....

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Signature of master: .....

13. COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE OF THE INSPECTOR(S)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature of inspector(s):

.....

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/17 on information contained in the GFCM record of authorized vessels over 15 metres in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 and repealing Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/18

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.1 "Full compliance with GFCM recommendations achieved";

RECALLING the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2;

RECALLING the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the commitments of the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and of the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture;

NOTING the conclusions of the fifteen session of the Compliance Committee (Cyprus, May 2022);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The annex of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 shall be repealed and replaced as follows:

The below list encompasses all the compulsory data fields on fishing vessels in the GFCM record of fishing vessels larger than 15 metres in length overall authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application (GFCM-AVL) to be reported to the GFCM following the guidance provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies through the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework. These variables are a subset of the GFCM regional fleet register, which shall be considered as a reference for the field description and any optional data applicable to the GFCM-AVL. In line with GFCM data confidentiality policies and procedures, the data confidentiality status identifies the access-level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: public (P), semi-private (S) or private (R).

DATA FIELDS	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
Country	P
Reference year	P
Registration authority	P
Vessel name in Latin characters	P
Previous vessel name (if any)	P
National registration number	P

DATA FIELDS	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
Vessel registration number	P
International radio call sign (IRCS) (if applicable)	P
Maritime mobile service identity (MMSI) (if applicable)	P
International Maritime Organization (IMO)number (if applicable)	P
Operational status (activity indicator)	P
Port of registration	P
Year of entry into fishing activity (if any)	P
Authorization to fish (license indicator)	P
Geographical subarea (GSA) (main GSA)	P
Secondary fishing statistical area (GSA) (if any)	P
Tertiary fishing statistical area (GSA) (if any)	P
Type of vessel (e.g. trawler, longliner)	P
Main fishing gear	P
Subsidiary fishing gear	P
Third fishing gear (if any)	P
Length overall (LOA)	P
Gross tonnage (GT)	P
Construction year	P
Power of the main engine (kW)	P
Owner (name and address)	R
Operator (name and address) (if different from owner)	R
Minimum number of crew members	R
Maximum number of crew members	R
Vessel monitoring system (VMS) indicator (presence/absence)	P
Authorization to fish in a fisheries restricted area (FRA), name of the FRA (as adopted by the GFCM)	P

2. This recommendation repeals and replaces Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/18.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/19 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, repealing Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) adopted, on 23 June 2001, an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, which stipulates that the identification of the vessels carrying out illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities should follow agreed procedures and be made in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.1 "Full compliance with GFCM recommendations achieved";

CONCERNED by the fact that IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application continue, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM conservation and management measures;

FURTHER CONCERNED that there is evidence that a high number of vessel owners engaged in such fishing activities have re-flagged their vessels to avoid compliance with GFCM conservation and management measures;

DETERMINED to address the challenge of increasing IUU fishing activities by way of countermeasures to be applied in respect of vessels without prejudice to further measures adopted in respect of flag states under the relevant GFCM instruments;

CONSIDERING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean;

CONSCIOUS of the need to address, as a matter of priority, the issue of large-scale fishing vessels conducting IUU fishing activities;

NOTING that IUU fishing activities shall be addressed in the light of all relevant international fisheries instruments and in accordance with the relevant rights and obligations established in the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization;

NOTING the conclusions of the fourteenth session (online, May 2021) of the Compliance Committee (CoC);

*ADOPT*S, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective and scope

1. For the purpose of this recommendation, fishing vessels flying the flag of a non-contracting party or fishing vessels flying the flag of a contracting party or cooperating non-contracting party (CPC), are presumed to have carried out IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application when , *inter alia*, a CPC presents evidence that such vessels have engaged in one or more of the following:

a) undertaking any of the following activities in contravention of GFCM conservation and management measures:

i) harvesting fish in the GFCM area of application without being registered in the relevant GFCM list of vessels authorized to fish for the applicable species in the GFCM area of application;

ii) failing to report catches made in the GFCM area of application or providing false or misleading reports;

iii) catching or landing undersized fish, in contravention of GFCM conservation measures;

iv) fishing during closed fishing periods or in closed areas, in contravention of GFCM conservation measures;

v) using prohibited fishing gear or fishing methods, in contravention of GFCM conservation measures;

b) transshipping or participating in joint operations such as re-supplying or refuelling with vessels included in the GFCM List of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application (GFCM IUU vessel list);

c) harvesting fish in maritime waters under the national jurisdiction of a coastal state in the GFCM area of application without the permission of such state or in contravention of its laws and regulations;

d) being without nationality and harvesting fish in the GFCM area of application;

e) being without adequate vessel identification number and harvesting fish in the GFCM area of application; and/or

f) engaging in fishing or fishing-related activities, in contravention of any other GFCM conservation and management measures.

2. The GFCM may review and, as appropriate, revise this recommendation in view of extending it to other types of IUU fishing activities.

PART II
Information on presumed IUU fishing activities

3. The CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat every year, at least 120 days before the GFCM annual session, information on vessels flying the flag of a non-contracting party and on vessels flying the flag of a CPC and presumed to be carrying out IUU fishing activities, as defined in paragraph 1, during the previous year, accompanied by evidence reported by CPCs supporting the presumption of IUU fishing activity, including information on the identification of the concerned vessel.

4. Upon receipt of such information, the GFCM Secretariat shall promptly send it to all CPCs as well as to any non-contracting party concerned and request that, where appropriate, CPCs and any such non-contracting party investigate on the alleged IUU activity and/or monitor the relevant vessels.

5. The GFCM Secretariat shall request the flag state to notify the owner of the vessel concerned regarding the submission of information on the vessel by CPCs for its inclusion in the draft GFCM IUU vessel list and regarding the consequences that may result should the vessel be included on the IUU vessel list adopted by the GFCM.

PART III
Draft GFCM IUU vessel list

6. On the basis of the information received pursuant to paragraph 3, the GFCM Secretariat shall draw up a draft GFCM IUU vessel list which shall include the required information listed in the annex. The GFCM Secretariat shall transmit this list, together with the evidence supporting the presumption of IUU fishing activities provided in accordance with paragraph 3, as well as the current GFCM IUU vessel list, to CPCs and non-contracting parties whose vessels are included in either list, at least 90

days before the annual session of the GFCM. The CPCs and relevant non-contracting party flag states may communicate their comments to the GFCM Secretariat as appropriate, including evidence showing that the listed vessels have not fished in contravention to GFCM conservation and management measures or had the possibility to fish in the GFCM area of application, at least 30 days before the annual session of the GFCM.

7. Upon receipt of the draft GFCM IUU vessel list, the CPCs shall closely monitor the vessels included therein list in order to determine their activities and possible changes of name, flag and/or registered owner.

8. When a vessel appears in a draft GFCM IUU vessel list drawn up in accordance with paragraph 6, the flag state shall notify the owner of the vessel flying its flag of its inclusion in the draft GFCM IUU vessel list and of the consequences that may result from being confirmed in the IUU vessel list to be adopted by the GFCM.

PART IV

Review and adoption of the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list

9. On the basis of the information received pursuant to paragraph 6, the GFCM Secretariat shall draw up a provisional GFCM IUU vessel list that shall include the required information listed in the annex and transmit it to CPCs, together with all the evidence provided, 15 days in advance of the annual session of the GFCM.

10. The CPCs may, at any time, submit to the GFCM Secretariat any additional information which may be relevant for the establishment of the GFCM IUU vessel list. The GFCM Secretariat shall circulate such information, together with all evidence provided, among the CPCs and the non-contracting parties concerned, before the annual session of the GFCM at the latest.

11. The CoC shall examine each year the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list as well as the information referred to in paragraphs 3 and 6. The CoC shall remove a vessel from the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list if the evidence provided clearly demonstrates that:

a) the vessel did not take part in any IUU fishing activity described in paragraph 1, or

b)

i) the flag CPC or non-contracting party has adopted measures so that the vessel conforms with GFCM conservation measures;

ii) the flag CPC or non-contacting party has assumed effectively its responsibilities with respect to this vessel, and will continue to do so, in particular as regards the monitoring and control of the fishing activities executed by the vessel in the GFCM area of application; and

iii) effective action has been taken in response to the IUU fishing activity or activities in question, including, inter alia, the prosecution and imposition of sanctions of adequate severity, or

c) the vessel has changed ownership and the new owner can establish that the previous owner no longer has any legal, financial or real interest in the vessel nor exercises control over it and the new owner has not participated in IUU fishing activities.

12. Following the review referred to in paragraph 11, the CoC shall:

a) review and assess the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list together with information and evidence circulated pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 6;

b) review and propose the removal of vessels from the GFCM IUU vessel list adopted by the GFCM at its previous annual session, following the consideration of such list and of the

information and evidence circulated pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 6 as well as of any information provided pursuant to paragraph 16; and

c) submit the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list to the Commission, with recommendations for its adoption and for the removal of any relevant vessel from the current GFCM IUU vessel list.

PART V
Adopted GFCM IUU vessel list

13. The GFCM shall consider for approval the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list and the removal of vessels from the current GFCM IUU vessel list, as recommended by the CoC.

14. Upon adoption of the GFCM IUU vessel list by the Commission, the GFCM Secretariat shall request the flag states whose vessels appear in the GFCM IUU vessel list to:

a) notify the owner of the vessel identified in the GFCM IUU vessel list of its inclusion in this list and of the consequences that may result from being confirmed in the GFCM IUU vessel list, as described in paragraph 8; and

b) take all necessary measures to eliminate relevant IUU fishing activities including, as appropriate, cancelling the registration and/or the fishing licence(s) of the vessels, and inform the GFCM Secretariat of the measures taken.

15. The CPCs shall take all necessary measures to:

a) ensure that the fishing vessels, support vessels, refuelling vessels, mother ships and cargo vessels flying their flag do not engage in fishing activities, fish processing operations nor participate in any transshipment or joint fishing operations with vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list, nor assist them in any way, except in case of force majeure;

b) ensure the inspection of vessels in the GFCM IUU vessel list if such vessels are otherwise found in their ports, to the extent practicable, and ensure the possibility to refuse port access to a ship that is in the GFCM IUU vessel list, except in the case of force majeure or for inspection purposes only;

c) prohibit the chartering of a vessel included in the GFCM IUU vessel list and encourage importers, transporters and other sector concerned to ban the transactions and the transshipment of any fish caught by vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list;

d) ensure that none of their nationals, whether a natural or legal person subject to their jurisdiction, benefit from supporting or engaging in IUU fishing activities (e.g. operators, effective beneficiaries, owners, logistic and service providers, including insurance providers and other financial service providers);

e) collect and exchange with other CPCs any appropriate information with the aim of searching for, controlling and preventing false documentation (including import/export certificates) from vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list; and

f) monitor vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list and promptly submit any information to the GFCM Secretariat related to their activities and possible changes of name, flag, call sign and/or registered owner.

16. The CPCs shall take all necessary measures in respect of vessels that do not fly their flag to:

a) ensure that vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list are not authorized to land, refuel, re-supply or engage in other commercial transactions;

b) prohibit the entry into their ports to vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list, except in case of force majeure;

c) refuse to grant their flag to vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list, except if a vessel has changed owner and/or operator and sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the previous owner or operator has no further legal, beneficial or financial interest in, or control of, the vessel, or if the flag CPC, after considering all relevant facts, determines that granting the vessel its flag will not result in any IUU fishing activity; and

d) prohibit the imports, landing and/or transshipment of any fish from vessels included in the GFCM IUU vessel list.

17. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure the publication of the GFCM IUU vessel list through the online channels made available by the GFCM Secretariat, including the GFCM website, in a manner that is consistent with GFCM confidentiality policy and procedures. The GFCM Secretariat shall transmit the GFCM IUU vessel list to other regional fishery bodies, as appropriate, with a view to enhancing cooperation between the GFCM and these organizations in order to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

18. Upon receipt of an IUU vessel list adopted by another regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) and of any information regarding such list, the GFCM Secretariat shall circulate this information to the contracting parties and ensure it appears on the GFCM website. Vessels that have been added or deleted from such list shall be incorporated into or deleted from the GFCM IUU vessel list as appropriate, unless any CPC objects within 30 days after the date of transmission by the GFCM Secretariat on the ground(s) that:

a) there is satisfactory information to establish that the vessel did not engage in any IUU fishing activities or that effective action has been taken in response to the IUU fishing activities in question, including, *inter alia*, prosecution and imposition of penalties or sanctions of adequate severity;

b) there is satisfactory information to establish that none of the requirements mentioned in subparagraph a) above have been met with regard to a vessel deleted from the respective lists; or

c) there is insufficient information to make a determination pursuant to subparagraph a) or b) above, within 30 days. In the event of an objection to a vessel listed by another RFMO being incorporated into or deleted from the GFCM IUU vessel list, such vessel shall be placed on the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list.

19. In the case of vessels listed by another RFMO, the GFCM Secretariat shall implement the following procedures:

a) The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain appropriate contacts with the Secretariats of other RFMOs in order to obtain copies of the IUU vessel lists of these RFMOs in a timely manner upon adoption or amendment, including by requesting a copy of these lists annually, upon the conclusion of the RFMOs' meetings at which their final IUU lists are adopted.

b) As soon as possible after adoption or amendment of an IUU vessel list by another RFMO, the GFCM Secretariat shall collect all supporting documentation available from that RFMO regarding the listing/delisting determinations.

c) Once the GFCM Secretariat has received/collected the information outlined in paragraphs a) and b), it shall promptly circulate to all CPCs, consistent with paragraph 10, the IUU vessel lists of the other RFMOs as well as supporting information and any other relevant information regarding the listing determination. The requisite circular shall clearly state the reason why such information is provided, explaining that the GFCM contracting parties have until 30 days from the date of the circular to object to the inclusion of the vessels in the GFCM IUU vessel list and that, absent any such objection, the vessel will be added to the final GFCM IUU vessel list at the expiration of the 30-day period.

d) The GFCM Secretariat shall add any new vessels contained in the IUU vessel lists of other RFMOs to the adopted GFCM IUU vessel list at the end of the 30-day period, provided that no objection to such inclusion has been received from a contracting party pursuant to paragraph 10.

e) Where a vessel has been included in the adopted GFCM IUU vessel list solely due to its inclusion in the IUU vessel list of another RFMO, the GFCM Secretariat shall immediately remove that vessel from the adopted GFCM IUU vessel list once it is deleted by the RFMO that originally listed it.

f) Upon the addition or deletion of vessels from the adopted GFCM IUU vessel list, the GFCM Secretariat shall promptly circulate the adopted GFCM IUU vessel list, as amended, to all CPCs and non-contracting parties concerned.

20. Without prejudice to the rights of flag CPCs and coastal states to take action consistent with international law, the CPCs shall not take any unilateral trade measures nor other sanctions against vessels provisionally included in the draft GFCM IUU vessel list pursuant to paragraph 6, or that have been already removed from the provisional GFCM IUU vessel list, pursuant to paragraph 11, on the ground that such vessels are involved in IUU fishing activities.

PART VI
Deletion from the GFCM IUU vessel list

21. A flag state whose vessel appears on the GFCM IUU vessel list may request, during the intersessional period, the removal of the vessel from the list providing the following information:

a) the actions or measures it has taken to ensure that the vessel complies with GFCM conservation and management measures;

b) the actions or measures it has taken to effectively discharge its responsibilities with respect to the vessel, including the monitoring and control of the vessel's fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

c) the actions it has taken against the vessel in response to the relevant IUU fishing activities, including the prosecution and imposition of sanctions of adequate severity, if relevant; and, as appropriate

d) the vessel has changed ownership and the new owner can establish the previous owner no longer has any legal, financial or real interests in the vessel or exercises control over it, and the new owner has not participated in IUU fishing, if relevant.

PART VII
Intersessional modification of the GFCM IUU vessel list

22. A flag state may send a request for the removal of its vessel from the GFCM IUU vessel list to the GFCM Secretariat, accompanied by the supporting information referred to in paragraph 21.

23. The GFCM Secretariat shall transmit the removal request received in accordance with paragraph 22, with all the supporting information, to the CPCs and the CoC Bureau within 15 days following the notification of the request.

24. The CPCs shall review the removal request and notify their opinion to the GFCM Secretariat, by electronic means or not, within 30 days following the notification by the GFCM Secretariat, on whether the vessel should be removed from or maintained in the GFCM IUU vessel list. The GFCM Secretariat, in close coordination with the CoC Bureau, shall review the responses within 30 days following the last day of their receipt. If a CPC does not respond within the required period, it will be considered as an abstention from the vote and part of the quorum for decision-making.

25. The GFCM Secretariat shall communicate to all CPCs the outcome of the review of the removal request at the end of the 30-day period following the date of the notification referred to in paragraph 24.

26. If the result indicates that there is a two-third majority of the CPCs in favour of the removal of the vessel from the GFCM IUU vessel list, the GFCM Chairperson shall communicate the result to all CPCs and to the non-contracting party or flag state that requested the removal of its vessel from the GFCM IUU vessel list. In the absence of a two-third majority, the vessel will be maintained in the GFCM IUU vessel list and the GFCM Secretariat shall inform the non-contracting party accordingly.

27. The GFCM Secretariat shall remove the vessels referred to in paragraph 26 from the GFCM IUU vessel list as published on the GFCM website. Moreover, the GFCM Secretariat shall communicate to other RFMOs the decision to remove the vessel.

28. Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, repealing Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/4 is replaced by this recommendation.

Annex

Information to be included in the GFCM IUU vessel lists (draft, provisional and final)

The draft GFCM IUU vessel list, provisional GFCM IUU vessel list and adopted GFCM IUU vessel list shall contain the following details, where available:

- name of vessel and previous name(s);
- flag of vessel and previous flag(s);
- name and address of the vessel owner and previous owners, including beneficial owners;
- owners' place of registration;
- vessel operator and previous operator(s);
- vessel call sign and previous call sign;
- Lloyds/IMO number;
- maritime, mobile service identity (MMSI) number;
- length overall;
- photographs of the vessel;
- date on which the vessel was first included in the GFCM IUU vessel list;
- date of alleged IUU fishing activity;
- position of alleged IUU fishing activity;
- summary of activities justifying the inclusion of the vessel in the GFCM IUU vessel list, together with references to all relevant documents informing and evidencing such activities;
- outcome of any action undertaken; and
- any other information.

Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/21 on vessel sightings

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.3 "Monitoring, control and surveillance centralized at the regional level";

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to undermine national and regional management of fish stocks, marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of legitimate fishers, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM conservation and management measures;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture both reflect the strong commitment of the GFCM to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, respectively;

DETERMINED to address the challenge of an increase in IUU fishing activities by way of counter-measures to be applied in respect of vessels, without prejudice to further measures adopted in respect of flag states under the relevant GFCM instruments;

CONSCIOUS of the urgent need to address the issue of fishing vessels as well as other vessels conducting IUU fishing and related activities in support of IUU fishing;

NOTING that the situation must be addressed in the light of all relevant international fisheries instruments and in accordance with the relevant rights and obligations established by other regional fisheries management organizations and the World Trade Organization;

RECALLING the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) on advances in fishing gear technology to improve the selectivity and ensure the rational exploitation of fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea;

NOTING the conclusions of the fourteenth session of the Compliance Committee (online, May 2021) and of the Working Group on Vessel Monitoring Systems and Related Control Systems (online, May 2021);

AWARE that efforts shall be informed and supported by an effective mechanism for contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) as well non-contracting parties and their flagged vessels to gather and report information on the sightings of foreign-flagged vessels or vessels with undetermined or without nationality that may be operating in the GFCM area of application in a manner contrary to GFCM conservation and management measures;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b), and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties shall collect, through enforcement and surveillance operations conducted by their competent authorities in the GFCM area of application, as much information as possible whenever a foreign-flagged vessel or vessel with undetermined or without nationality is sighted as engaged in fishing or fishing-related activities (e.g. transshipment) that are presumed to be illegal, unreported, and unregulated, as defined under paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/19 on the establishment of a list of vessels

presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, repealing Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8.

2. An indicative list of information shall be collected and reported in the sighting information sheet provided in the annex to this recommendation, which should be used for communicating information on vessel sightings to the GFCM Secretariat, as specified hereafter.

3. When a vessel is sighted pursuant to paragraph 1, the sighting CPC shall, without delay, notify and provide the sighting information sheet as well as any recorded images of the vessel to the competent authorities of the flag CPC or flag non-contracting party of the sighted vessel, and:

a) if the sighted vessel is flagged to a CPC, the flag CPC shall, without delay, take appropriate action with respect to the vessel in question. Both the sighting CPC and the flag CPC of the sighted vessel shall provide, as appropriate, information on the sighting to the GFCM Secretariat, including details of any follow-up actions taken;

b) if the sighted vessel is flagged to a non-contracting party, is of indeterminate flag, or is without nationality, the sighting CPC shall, without delay, provide to the GFCM Secretariat all appropriate information related to the sighting.

4. When a vessel is sighted pursuant to paragraph 1 and there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the vessel is without nationality, a CPC may board the vessel to confirm its nationality. If the vessel is confirmed to be without nationality, a competent authority of the CPC is encouraged to inspect the vessel, consistent with international law and, if evidence so warrants, the CPC is encouraged to take such action as may be appropriate, in accordance with international law. Any CPC conducting a boarding of a vessel operating without nationality shall notify the GFCM Secretariat without delay.

5. The CPCs are encouraged, upon the consent of the flag state, to board and inspect vessels of non-contracting parties conducting fishing or fishing-related activities on species covered by GFCM fisheries management measures, in waters beyond national jurisdiction in the GFCM area of application. Relevant information collected from such boardings shall be reported to the GFCM Secretariat.

6. Fishing and support vessels of CPCs operating in the GFCM area of application shall collect and report relevant information to their appropriate domestic authorities to support the vessel sighting process set forth in this recommendation.

7. The GFCM Secretariat shall promptly forward to all CPCs any information received pursuant to this recommendation and report it to the next annual session of the GFCM.

8. The CPCs are encouraged to notify their contacts to the GFCM Secretariat in order to facilitate cooperation and other appropriate actions under this recommendation. The GFCM Secretariat shall publish this information on the GFCM website, in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

Annex

SIGHTING INFORMATION SHEET				
1. Date of sighting:	Time	Day	Month	Year
2. Position of vessel sighted: Latitude		Longitude		
3. Name of the vessel sighted:				
4. Flag state:				
5. Port (and country) of registry:				
6. Type of vessel:				
7. International Radio Call Sign:				
8. Registration number:				
9. GFCM fleet register number:				
10. IMO number:				
11. Estimated length overall and gross tonnage:		m		GT
12. Fishing gear description (if applicable): Type:		Estimated quantity (units)		
13. Nationality of captain:		Officer:		Crew:
14. Vessel situation (Please check): [ ] Fishing [ ] Supplying	[ ] Cruising [ ] Transshipping	[ ] Drifting [ ] Other (specify)		
15. Type of activities of the vessel sighted (please describe):				
16. Description of vessel and fishing gear identified:				
17. Other relevant information:				
18. List of attached documents (such as photos etc.):				

19. The above information was collected by:

Name: Title:

Means of sighting (including vessel/aircraft name and position, where appropriate):

Date: (day) (month) (year) Signature:

Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/7 on information on access agreements in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the 2016 Bucharest Declaration both reflect the strong commitment of the GFCM to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea, respectively;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONCERNED by the continuation of IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures;

RECOGNIZING that the exchange of information on access agreements greatly facilitates monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities in combating IUU fishing activities, and that there is a need to develop and implement such measures in a fair and non-discriminatory manner;

RECOGNIZING the need to ensure transparency among contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) in respect of conditions for accessing the waters of coastal states, in particular to facilitate joint efforts to combat IUU fishing;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Access agreements

1. The CPCs that allow foreign-flagged vessels to fish in waters under their jurisdiction for species managed by the GFCM in its area of application and CPCs whose vessels fish in waters under the jurisdiction of another CPC or non-contracting party for species managed by the GFCM pursuant to an agreement shall, individually or jointly, notify the GFCM Secretariat, prior to the beginning of fishing activities, of the existence of such agreement and provide the GFCM Secretariat with information concerning these agreements, including:

a) CPCs, non-contracting parties or other entities involved in the agreement;

b) time period or periods covered by the agreement;

c) number of authorized vessels and gear types;

d) stock or species authorized for harvest, including any applicable catch limits;

e) CPCs' quota or catch limit to which the catch will be applied;

f) MCS measures required by the flag CPC and coastal state involved with, for the coastal state, a particular specification of:

   i) the national authority (contact coordinates) responsible for issuing fishing licences or permits; and

   ii) the national authority (contact coordinates) responsible for MCS activities;

g) data reporting obligations stipulated in the agreement, including those between the parties involved, as well as those regarding information that must be provided to the GFCM; and

h) copy of the written agreement.

2. For agreements in existence prior to the entry into force of this recommendation, the information specified in paragraph 1 shall be provided in advance of the forty-fourth session of the GFCM.

3. When an access agreement is modified in a manner that changes any of the information specified in paragraph 1, such changes shall be promptly notified to the GFCM Secretariat.

4. Consistent with GFCM data reporting requirements, flag CPCs involved in the agreements specified in paragraph 1 shall ensure that all target and incidental catches made pursuant to such agreements are reported.

5. Flag CPCs and coastal CPCs involved in the agreements specified in paragraph 1 shall provide a summary of the activities carried out pursuant to each agreement, including all catches made pursuant to such agreements, in their annual report to the GFCM.

6. In cases where coastal CPCs allow foreign-flagged vessels to fish in waters under their jurisdiction for species managed by the GFCM in its area of application, through a mechanism other than a CPC-to-CPC or CPC-to-non-contracting party agreement, the relevant coastal CPC shall be solely responsible for providing the information required by this recommendation. Flag CPCs with vessels involved in such an agreement shall endeavour to provide the GFCM with relevant information regarding the agreement as indicated in paragraph 1.

PART II
Role of the GFCM

7. The GFCM Secretariat shall develop a form for reporting the information specified in this recommendation and annually compile the submissions of the CPCs into a report to be presented to the Compliance Committee for consideration at its session.

8. All information provided pursuant to this recommendation shall be consistent with domestic confidentiality requirements.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/10 on access to information and data related to monitoring, control and surveillance within the framework of joint inspection and surveillance schemes

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that this plan stipulates that contracting parties, non-contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall cooperate with each other and with the GFCM Secretariat to identify and discourage nationals who are operators and/or beneficial owners of vessels involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

CONCERNED by the continuation of IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures;

RECOGNIZING that the identification of a vessel greatly facilitates monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities in combating IUU fishing activities, and that there is a need to develop and implement such measures in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
General objective and scope

1. The purpose of the present recommendation is to enhance access and exchange of information as essential components of an effective MCS system and, consequently, of sound fisheries management.

2. This recommendation shall apply to all CPCs engaged in pilot projects or international schemes for joint inspection and surveillance in the GFCM area of application.

PART II
Access to data and information

3. Upon request by CPCs engaged in inspection and control activities in the GFCM area of application and with the agreement of the relevant CPC's flag state, the GFCM Secretariat shall make available all the information it maintains pursuant to GFCM conservation and management measures, including but not limited to updated lists of authorized vessels and of designated landing ports.

4. The CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat shall ensure the secure treatment of the information referred to in paragraph 3 and of related data, reports and messages, in particular when the processing involves electronic data transmission.

5. The GFCM Secretariat shall implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect data, reports and messages against accidental or unlawful destruction, accidental loss, alteration, unauthorized disclosure or access, and all inappropriate forms of processing.

6. This recommendation shall not prejudice the level of protection of individuals having regard to the processing of personal data under the provisions of national law.

PART III
Entry into force

7. The CPCs shall transpose this recommendation into their national legislation, consistent with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement. Where appropriate, they shall seek the support of the GFCM Secretariat so as to facilitate the transposition of this recommendation into their national legislation.

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/11 on the regional marking of fishing gear

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, adopted by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at its thirty-first session (FAO headquarters, June 2014);

RECALLING the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement) of 4 August 1995, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONCERNED by the continuation of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures;

NOTING that the requirements for action on the marking of fishing gear are global in scope and also apply to subregional, regional and global organizations concerned with the conservation of fishery resources and with the management and development of fisheries;

RECOGNIZING that the identification of a fishing gear greatly facilitates monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities in combating IUU fishing activities, and that there is a need to develop and implement such measures in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Marking of fishing gear

1. Each flag CPC shall ensure that passive fishing gear, such as set nets, pots, lines and longlines, used by fishing vessels larger than 15 metres in length overall and authorized to fish for species managed by the GFCM in its area of application, is marked in such a way that it can be readily identified, in accordance with national law and with generally accepted standards such as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

2. The Working Group on Fishing Technology (WGFiT) is invited to include among its activities the possibility to facilitate the exchange of experience among countries in relation to the marking of fishing gear.

3. Each flag CPC shall increase awareness amongst its fishing vessels and fishers about the importance of marking fishing gear for fighting against IUU fishing, abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear.

PART II
Special requirements of CPC developing states

4. The CPCs are aware that the full application of this recommendation requires technical competence by all CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat. To this end, the capacity of CPC developing states to implement this recommendation shall be taken into account in accordance with Article 17 of the GFCM Agreement, in particular by way of technical assistance.

PART III
Final provisions

5. The application of this recommendation shall not prejudice the adoption by CPCs of any other provision or regulation that could imply stricter requirements and obligations in relation to the marking of fishing gear.

6. This recommendation shall enter into force at the latest on 1 January 2022.

Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

DEEPLY CONCERNED that illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to undermine national and regional management of fish stocks, marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of legitimate fishers, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM conservation and management measures;

TAKING NOTE that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), has drafted an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU), which recognizes that IUU fishing leads to the loss of short- and long- term social and economic opportunities and has negative effects on food security;

TAKING FURTHER NOTE that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 recognizes the need to combat IUU fishing in order to ensure prosperity, food security and sustainability for all;

ACKNOWLEDGING that states have the duty, under international law, to cooperate through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in order to promote responsible fishing practices;

ACKNOWLEDGING FURTHER the principles and international standards of responsible fishing practices enshrined in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the FAO international plans of action, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication;

WELCOMING the declaration by the FAO of an International Day for the fight against IUU fishing, which would be celebrated annually on 5 June, to raise awareness on the threats associated to IUU fishing and to reach out to the public through campaigns and initiatives at the regional level;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the Bucharest Declaration both reflect the strong commitment of the GFCM to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, respectively;

BEARING IN MIND that a regional plan of action to combat IUU fishing (RPOA-IUU) is an important link between the implementation of the IPOA-IUU and the national plans of action and corresponding national measures on IUU fishing that all states and regional economic integration organizations are encouraged to develop;

BEARING IN MIND FURTHER that the RPOA-IUU should be conceived as an evolutionary policy instrument that could, in due course, be developed further so as to include linkages with measures such as co-management and marine protected areas, which also have the potential to contribute to deter IUU fishing;

NOTING that the GFCM has adopted Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries which includes a specific target on curbing IUU fishing through a RPOA-IUU;

ADOPTS, in accordance with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), the following recommendation:

PART I
General provisions

Use of terms

1. For the purpose of this plan, terms are defined in accordance with the definitions already given in other relevant international agreements and in existing GFCM recommendations.

2. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties are henceforth referred to as the "CPCs".

Objective

3. The objective of this plan is the prevention, deterrence and elimination of IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea by providing CPCs with comprehensive, effective and transparent measures through which to take action, thereby contributing to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources and marine ecosystems in the region, in accordance with Article 2 of the GFCM Agreement.

Application and scope

4. The geographic scope of this plan is the geographic scope of the GFCM area of application, which comprises all marine waters of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in accordance with Article 3 of the GFCM Agreement.

5. This plan shall be applied in a fair, timely, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with international law.

PART II
All state responsibilities

Implementation of relevant international instruments

6. This plan is consistent with existing international fisheries instruments relevant to the sustainable management of marine living resources and the elimination of IUU fishing. The CPCs shall, to the extent possible, fully and effectively implement these instruments and give effect to the relevant norms of international law in order to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

7. This plan is consistent with existing GFCM recommendations, resolutions and decisions relevant to the sustainable management of marine living resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The CPCs shall fully and effectively implement these instruments, in particular those relating to the elimination of IUU fishing, including but not limited to the following:

a) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

b) Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, with particular emphasis to be given to Target 3 which deals with curbing IUU fishing and harmonizing the existing measures to improve monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), reinforcing inspection procedures within the framework of port state control, and enhancing modular MCS at the regional level including through a regional vessel monitoring system (VMS) and control system;

c) Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea;

d) Resolution GFCM/38/2014/1 on guidelines on vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application;

e) Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

f) Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register;

g) Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2;

h) Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application;

i) Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, repealing Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/4; and

j) two roadmaps which have been adopted by the GFCM for the purpose of fighting IUU fishing in the Black Sea (thirty-seventh session of the GFCM [Croatia, May 2013]) and in the Mediterranean Sea (thirty-eighth session of the GFCM [FAO headquarters, May 2014]).

CPCs national legislation

8. The CPCs shall take measures to ensure that their national legal systems have measures that address effectively all aspects relating to the fight against IUU fishing, including the use of available evidence against vessels engaged in IUU fishing activities.

CPCs control over nationals

9. The CPCs shall take measures to ensure that nationals who are subject to their jurisdiction do not support or engage in IUU fishing.

10. The CPCs shall cooperate with each other and with the GFCM Secretariat to identify and discourage those nationals who are the operators and/or beneficial owners of vessels involved in IUU fishing.

11. The CPCs shall take measures to identify and discourage their nationals from flagging fishing vessels under the jurisdiction of a state that does not meet its flag state responsibilities.

12. The CPCs shall avoid conferring any legal, financial or administrative support, including subsidies, on natural and legal persons that are involved in IUU fishing.

Vessels without nationality

13. The CPCs shall take measures consistent with international law in relation to vessels without nationality involved in IUU fishing activities, according to Article 20 of the IPOA-IUU.

CPCs measures to sanction vessels engaged in IUU fishing activities

14. The CPCs shall ensure that sanctions against vessels engaged in IUU fishing activities as well as nationals under their jurisdiction are of sufficient severity to effectively prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and to deprive offenders of the benefits accruing from such fishing. This may include the adoption of a civil sanction regime based on an administrative penalty scheme, in accordance with Article 21 of the IPOA-IUU.

15. The CPCs shall ensure the consistent and transparent application of sanctions, in particular against the following serious violations:

a) fishing without a valid licence, authorization or permit issued by the flag state;

b) failing to maintain accurate records of catch and catch-related data, as required by GFCM recommendations, or serious misreporting of catch, contrary to GFCM catch reporting requirements;

c) fishing in a closed area, fishing during a closed season;

d) fishing for stocks which are subject to multiannual management plans adopted by the GFCM

in a manner that undermines their implementation;

e) using prohibited fishing gear or falsifying or concealing the markings as well as the identity or registration of a fishing vessel;

f) concealing, tampering with or disposing of evidence relating to IUU fishing activities; and

g) multiple violations which together constitute a serious disregard of GFCM recommendations or such other violations as may be specified in procedures and requirements established by the GFCM.

CPC measures on monitoring, control and surveillance

16. The CPCs shall undertake comprehensive and effective monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing from its commencement, through the point of landing, to final destination in accordance with Article 24 of the IPOA-IUU, including by:

a) developing and implementing schemes for access to waters and resources, including authorization schemes for vessels;

b) maintaining records of all vessels and their current owners and operators authorized to undertake fishing subject to their jurisdiction;

c) implementing a VMS, in accordance with the regional standards adopted by the GFCM, including the requirement for vessels under their jurisdiction to carry VMS on board;

d) implementing observer programmes, in case of GFCM recommendations and/or CPCs measures, with the requirement that vessels under their jurisdiction carry observers on board;

e) providing training and education to all persons involved in MCS operations;

f) planning, funding and undertaking MCS operations;

g) promoting understanding of monitoring, control and surveillance issues within national judicial systems;

h) establishing and maintaining systems for the acquisition, storage and dissemination of MCS data; and

i) ensuring the effective implementation of national boarding and inspection regimes, including in conjunction with Part VII of this RPOA-IUU.

PART III
Flag state responsibilities

Flag state jurisdiction

17. This plan shall be interpreted and applied in conformity with international law dealing with flag state jurisdiction. Each CPC shall, in its capacity as a CPC flag state, ensure to the extent possible that international laws describing flag state responsibilities have been incorporated into their national laws, regulations, permits and practices.

18. The CPC flag state shall ensure that vessels entitled to fly its flags do not undermine the effectiveness of regional conservation and management measures adopted by the GFCM, including by supporting and/or engaging in IUU fishing.

19. A CPC flag state shall ensure that each of the vessels entitled to fly its flag fishing in waters outside its jurisdiction holds a valid authorization for this purpose. CPC flag states fishing in the waters of another CPC shall be duly and preventively authorized by the CPC coastal state and respect its jurisdiction and national legislation.

20. The CPC flag state shall effectively exercise its jurisdiction and control over vessels flying its flag.

Fishing activity and vessel data

21. The CPC flag states shall take such measures to ensure that: a) vessels do not engage in fishing activities before their registration; b) vessels with history of non-compliance are not flagged; c) chartered vessels do not engage in IUU fishing; d) reflagging and flag-hopping of vessels is prevented; and e) vessels are duly registered in national records as well as the GFCM record of fishing vessels.

22. The CPC flag states shall maintain records of fishing vessels including, *inter alia*, the following information: previous names of the vessels, names/addresses/nationalities of owners, names/addresses/nationality of the natural or legal persons responsible for managing the operations of the vessel, vessel dimensions and where applicable, photos taken at the time of registration of the vessel or at the time of the conclusion of any recent structural alterations, showing a side profile view of the vessel, in accordance with Article VI of the FAO Compliance Agreement and Article 42 of the IPOA-IUU.

23. The CPC flag states shall establish a national record of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flag and authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application, including vessels of other states authorized under charter agreements, where appropriate, and this material shall be constantly monitored for additions, deletions, modifications or errors, and regularly transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat.

24. Comprehensive and accurate fishing activity and vessel data lodged with the GFCM Secretariat are necessary for the maintenance, monitoring and cross-checking of flag state databases as well as the GFCM compilation of reliable fishing statistics. All CPCs shall ensure that they fully address the data submission requirements of the GFCM as foreseen under relevant GFCM recommendations and resolutions, including:

a) annual submission of a full dataset, plus regular updates on vessels listed in the GFCM regional fleet register, in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5;

b) electronic submission of a list of vessels over 15 metres that are authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application, in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6; and

c) list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application, in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8.

Awareness of relevant personnel

25. The CPC flag states shall establish and publicize procedures of the national, regional and international obligations that are incumbent upon vessel owners, operators and crews and their vessels. CPC flag states shall ensure that such information is clearly communicated to any person or entity deemed relevant so that they are informed and able to meet their national, regional and international obligations.

Enforcement actions by the flag state

26. The CPC flag states shall ensure that they have in place a law enforcement regime that includes:

a) the capacity to detect violations of national fisheries laws, including regulations, permits and practices, as well as of international fisheries instruments and GFCM recommendations; and

b) a system of sanctions applicable in respect of violations that is adequate in severity to secure compliance and to discourage violations wherever they occur thereby depriving offenders of the benefits accruing from IUU fishing activities.

Flag state performance

27. The CPC flag states should be encouraged to engage in a transparent process of voluntary performance assessment through the GFCM, upon their request and if they so wish, in accordance with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance.

PART IV
Coastal state responsibilities

Coastal state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing

28. CPC coastal states shall take measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing from occurring in waters under their jurisdiction. Such measures include ensuring that:

a) they have the ability to conduct effective MCS of all fishing activities in their waters;

b) they ensure cooperation and exchange information with other CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat;

c) they ensure that no vessels undertake fishing activities in their waters without a valid authorization to fish;

d) they authorize fishing in waters covered by GFCM rules only vessels not flying their flag when such vessels have been entered on the national and GFCM regional fleet register;

e) they do not authorize vessels with a history of non-compliance to engage in fishing activities in their waters;

f) they ensure that each vessel fishing in their waters maintains a logbook recording its fishing activities where appropriate;

g) they authorize, duly monitor and control at-sea transshipment and processing of fish and fish products in their waters; and

h) they have regulations governing fishing activities in their waters to prevent IUU fishing.

PART V
Port state responsibilities

Regional scheme on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application

29. Each CPC shall, in its capacity as a port state, fully and effectively implement the GFCM regional scheme on port state measures contained in Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1. The provisions of this recommendation have been aligned with the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (FAO Port State Measures Agreement □PSMA□).

30. The CPCs that have ratified or acceded to the PSMA shall fully implement this agreement.

31. The CPCs that have not yet ratified or acceded to the PSMA are urged to do so.

Cooperation between port and flag states and the GFCM Secretariat

32. The CPC port states have a duty to cooperate with the GFCM Secretariat and CPC flag states in order to strengthen control over vessels and prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, including via the GFCM mutual assistance system.

33. In the exercise of their inspection rights, and where the CPC port state has reasonable evidence for believing that a vessel has engaged in or supported IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application, the port state will immediately transmit the results of the inspection, without delay, to the flag state of the vessel and the GFCM Secretariat.

34. The CPC flag and port states shall fully cooperate with each other and with the GFCM Secretariat regarding the exchange of information pursuant to a CPC port state inspection. In this regard, the GFCM Secretariat shall develop a system for the exchange and collection of port state data.

35. Following the CPC port state inspection, if the CPC flag state receives an inspection report which suggests that there are grounds for believing that its vessel has engaged in IUU fishing, the CPC flag state shall immediately and fully investigate the matter and shall, upon sufficient evidence, take enforcement actions without delay in accordance with its national laws and regulations, and in full communication with the GFCM Secretariat through the GFCM mutual assistance system.

36. IUU fishing catches shall be minimized by CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat collaborating together in the implementation of regional market measures designed to identify, track, validate and promote Mediterranean and Black Sea fish catches at each step of the value and marketing chain.

37. The GFCM Secretariat shall:

a) collaborate with the CPCs with the aim of drafting in due course a catch documentation scheme, to be subsequently validated by CPCs, that complies with the principles, rights and obligations under international law as defined in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes and contains information that would help demonstrate the legality of fish and fish products entering the market. For this purpose, due account should be taken of existing catch documentation schemes developed by CPCs; and

b) further collaborate with competent organizations, where appropriate and following CPCs approval, for the purpose of monitoring and analysing existing regional markets and trade flows and the strengthening of marketing measures for legal fish and fish products.

38. The CPC market states shall:

a) take all steps that are necessary, and consistent with international law, to prevent that fish caught by vessels that are suspected or proven to have engaged in IUU fishing be traded or imported within their territories;

b) take steps to improve the transparency of their markets for the purpose of allowing the traceability of fish and fish products;

c) collaborate with each other as well as with the GFCM Secretariat to achieve efficient market-related measures that can prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the region; and

d) further collaborate with competent organizations for the purpose of monitoring and analysing existing regional markets and trade flows and the strengthening of legal fish marketing measures.

PART VII
Role of the GFCM

39. The implementation of responsible fishing practices and the prevention, deterrence and elimination of IUU fishing are issues for the whole Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. The GFCM is the competent and relevant RFMO to develop and implement a RPOA-IUU for these regions.

40. The GFCM shall collect all relevant regional fisheries and vessel-related data to assist CPCs in identifying potential instances of IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application and in taking such actions which are consistent with international law in order to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

41. Upon request of CPCs concerned, the GFCM shall support the CPCs through a regional VMS and control system based on a modular approach to monitor the activities of fishing vessels operating in the GFCM area of application. This will include direct support to CPCs in assessing their national control systems with a view to ensuring that they are fully in line with the regional standards adopted by the GFCM.

42. The GFCM shall collaborate with CPCs in the implementation of effective regional market measures that are consistent with international trade law and that will assist in the identification, tracking, validating and promoting of legal fish catches.

43. The GFCM shall monitor the effectiveness of this RPOA-IUU and communicate an annual report on its implementation to the annual session of the GFCM and a biennial report on its implementation to the FAO Committee on Fisheries.

44. The GFCM shall facilitate the definition of joint regional and subregional inspection plans on the high seas addressing those species regulated under subregional management plans adopted through GFCM recommendations.

PART VIII
Developing states

Special requirements of developing countries

45. The parties to this plan are aware that a fully effective RPOA-IUU requires technically competent implementation and operationalization by all CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat. To this end, the capacity of developing states to implement the provisions of this plan will be taken into account by the GFCM and all CPCs in accordance with Article 17 of the GFCM Agreement.

46. All CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat shall give full recognition to the special circumstances and requirements of developing state CPCs. The GFCM Secretariat, as well the CPCs to the extent possible, shall provide developing state CPCs with technical assistance which will allow developing state CPCs to, *inter alia*:

a) prepare and implement a national legal basis for the implementation of this plan, including the transposition of GFCM recommendations pursuant to Article 14 of the GFCM Agreement;

b) improve and harmonize the submission to the GFCM Secretariat of the data that are described throughout this plan;

c) constantly review their compliance with GFCM recommendations in place; and

d) have full participation in GFCM meetings that are held for the purpose of discussing, developing or implementing this plan.

47. The GFCM Secretariat shall provide developing flag and coastal states with technical assistance in their efforts to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

PART IX
Final provisions

Entry into force

48. The CPCs shall transpose, to the extent possible, this plan into their national legislation, consistent with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement. Where appropriate, they shall seek the support of the GFCM Secretariat so as to facilitate the transposition of this plan into their national legislation.

Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that, in giving effect of the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recurrently considered that the stocks of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp are in overexploitation in the geographical subareas (GSAs) 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16;

CONSIDERING that the status of stocks as assessed by the SAC requires the development and adoption of management measures aimed at ensuring the conservation of demersal stocks in the above GSAs;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4 establishing a multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16);

RECALLING that, in accordance with this recommendation "the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), through the GFCM, shall establish, before 2018, an observation and inspection programme to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation";

CONSIDERING the results of the dedicated pilot project approved by the CPCs at the eleventh session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) (FAO headquarters, June 2017) and implemented from 15 July to 15 September 2017 by the CPCs with the assistance of the European Fishery Control Agency (EFCA) and the GFCM Secretariat.

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Scope and general principles

1. This recommendation shall establish an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme (hereafter "the scheme"), the scope of which is limited to the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4 that cover inspection and surveillance activities outside the waters under national jurisdiction of GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 (Strait of Sicily).

2. Each CPC decides to participate to inspections on a voluntary basis. Inspections shall be carried out by inspectors designated by the CPCs. Each CPC shall, no later than 1 December of each year, notify to the GFCM Secretariat the list of the names of inspectors authorized to perform inspection

and surveillance in the GFCM area of application. The full list of inspectors shall be published and maintained by the GFCM Secretariat on its secured and password-protected online portal.

3. Inspectors shall carry appropriate identity documentation issued by the authorities of the flag state, which shall follow the template provided in Annex 1.

4. The names of the vessels and aircrafts used for inspection and surveillance shall be notified by participating CPCs to the GFCM Secretariat, by 15 December of the previous year or as soon as possible before the commencement of inspection activities. The GFCM Secretariat shall make available to all CPCs information related to designated inspection vessels and aircrafts, including by posting it on a password-protected online portal.

5. Vessels carrying out boarding and inspection duties in accordance with the scheme shall fly a special flag or pennant, as described in Annex 2, approved by the Commission and issued by the GFCM Secretariat.

6. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that the information referred to above is automatically made available to all CPCs.

7. A CPC may, by mutual agreement with another CPC, deploy inspectors it has assigned to the scheme to an inspection platform of this other CPC. It shall notify the GFCM Secretariat in advance of such deployment.

8. Each CPC shall ensure that every inspection platform entitled to fly its flag operating in the GFCM area of application maintains secure contact, in a daily manner where possible, with every other inspection platform operating in the GFCM area of application, to exchange information necessary to coordinate their activities.

9. Each CPC with an inspection presence in the GFCM area of application shall seek to ensure that its inspectors treat vessels operating in the GFCM area of application on an equal footing by avoiding a disproportionate number of inspections on vessels entitled to fly the flag of any other CPC.

10. Each CPC with an inspection or surveillance presence in the GFCM area of application shall provide to each inspection platform, upon its entry into the GFCM area of application, a list of sightings, boardings and inspections it has conducted over the previous ten-day period, including the dates, coordinates and any other relevant information.

PART II
Conduct of inspections

11. Each CPC with an inspection presence shall ensure that its inspectors:

a) notify the fishing vessel, prior to boarding, of the name of the inspection vessel;

b) display on the inspection vessel and boarding vessel, the pennant described in Annex 2;

c) ensure that, during boarding, the inspection vessel remains at a safe distance from fishing vessels;

d) do not require the fishing vessel to stop or manoeuvre when towing, shooting or hauling fishing gear; and

e) limit each inspection team to a maximum of three inspectors.

12. Upon boarding the vessel, inspectors shall produce the identity card as described in Annex 1 to the master of the fishing vessel. Inspections shall be conducted in one of the official languages of the GFCM and, where possible, in the language spoken by the master of the fishing vessel.

13. Inspectors shall conduct inspections in accordance with international regulations, procedures and practices relating to the safety of the vessel being inspected and its crew, shall minimize

interference with fishing activities or stowage of products and, to the extent practicable, avoid actions which would adversely affect the quality of the catch on board.

14. Inspectors shall limit their enquiries to ascertaining the observance of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4 in relation to the flag state of the vessel concerned. In making the inspection, inspectors may ask the master of the fishing vessel for any assistance they may need. Inspectors shall draw up a report of the inspection using the form contained in Annex 4.

15. Inspectors shall sign the inspection report in the presence of the master of the vessel, who shall sign the report too and shall be entitled to add any observations to it which he or she may think suitable.

16. Copies of the report shall be given to the master of the vessel and to the government of the inspection party, which shall transmit copies to the appropriate authorities of the flag state of the inspected vessel and to the GFCM Secretariat.

17. The size of the inspection party and length of the inspection shall be determined by the commanding officer of the inspection vessel taking into account relevant circumstances. In general the inspection party should complete its tasks in the shortest possible time.

PART III
Infringements

18. For the purpose of these procedures, an infringement means the following violations observed under the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4:

a) fishing without a valid licence, permit or authorization issued by the flag CPC;

b) failing to maintain sufficient records of catch and catch-related data in accordance with GFCM data reporting requirements, or significantly misreporting such catch and/or catch-related data;

c) fishing in a closed area;

d) fishing during a closed season;

e) using prohibited fishing gear;

f) falsifying or intentionally concealing the markings, identity or registration of a fishing vessel;

g) concealing, tampering with or disposing of evidence relating to investigation on a violation;

h) committing multiple violations which, taken together, constitute a serious disregard of applicable measures;

i) obstructing, intimidating, interfering with or otherwise preventing authorised inspectors from performing duties; and

j) interfering with the satellite monitoring system and/or operating without a vessel monitoring system (VMS).

19. In the case of any boarding and inspection of a fishing vessel during which the inspectors observe an activity or condition that would constitute a violation, as defined above, the authorities of the flag state of the inspection vessel shall immediately notify the flag state of the fishing vessel directly as well as through the GFCM Secretariat. In such situation, the inspector should also inform any inspection ship of the flag state of the fishing vessel known to be in the vicinity.

20. GFCM inspectors shall register the inspections undertaken and infringements detected (if any) in the fishing vessel logbook.

21. The inspected flag state CPC shall ensure that, following the inspection referred to above, the fishing vessel concerned ceases all fishing activities. The flag state CPC shall require the fishing vessel to proceed within 72 hours to a port it has designated, where an investigation shall be initiated.

22. In the case where an inspection has detected an activity or condition that would constitute a violation, the actions and follow-up taken by the flag CPC shall be notified to their national authorities as well as the GFCM Secretariat, to be reviewed by the CoC.

23. Resistance to inspectors or failure to comply with their directions shall be treated by the flag state of the inspected vessel in a manner similar to resistance to a national inspector or failure to comply with his directions.

24. The authorities of CPCs shall consider and act on inspection reports (Annex 4), sighting information sheets (Annex 5) and statements resulting from documentary inspections of foreign inspectors under these arrangements on a similar basis as reports of national inspectors in accordance with their national legislation.

PART IV
Obligations of the master during inspections

25. The master of a fishing vessel being inspected shall:

a) facilitate safe and effective boarding of officials, in accordance with good seamanship, when the appropriate signal of the International Code of Signals is given or when the intention to board is established through radiocommunication by a vessel or helicopter carrying an official;

b) provide a boarding ladder meeting the requirements of Annex 3 to facilitate safe and convenient access to any vessel which requires a climb of 1,5 metre or more;

c) facilitate the inspectors' inspection duties, providing assistance when requested and in a reasonable way;

d) permit inspectors to communicate with the authorities of the flag state, the coastal state and the inspecting state;

e) alert inspectors to particular safety hazards on board fishing vessels;

f) provide access by officials to all areas of the vessel, all processed or unprocessed catches, all fishing gear and all relevant information and documents;

g) facilitate safe disembarkation by inspectors on completion of the inspection;

h) upon request from the inspector, remove any part of the fishing gear which does not seem to be in compliance with GFCM recommendations in place; and

i) where the inspector has made any entries in the logbooks, provide the inspector with a copy of each page where such entries appear and, upon request by the inspector, sign each page to confirm that it is a true copy.

PART V
Final provisions

26. This recommendation shall be implemented in 2018, in accordance with the capacity of CPCs, and shall be fully implemented by all CPCs concerned in 2019.

27. The CoC shall monitor and report to the GFCM on the occasion of its forty-second session, on the implementation of the present scheme. The Commission shall examine any recommendation for improving the implementation of the scheme.

Annex 1

Template of identity card for GFCM inspectors

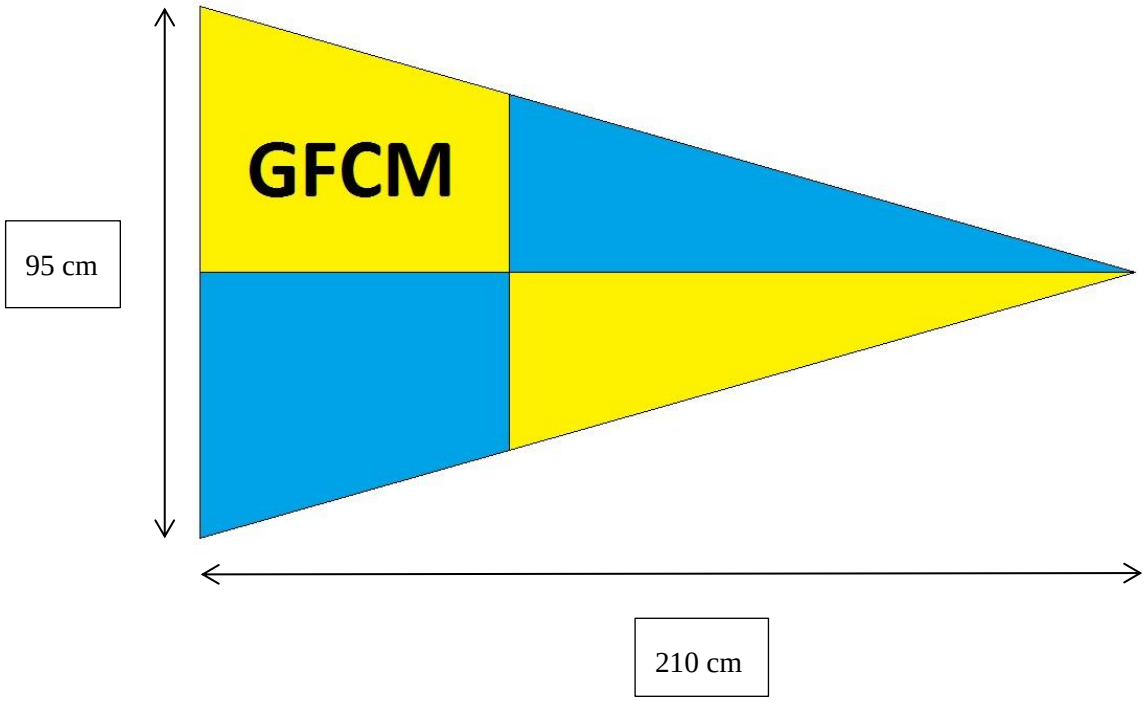
<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">General Fisheries Commission
for the Mediterranean (GFCM)</td><td>  </td><td>GFCM</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">  </td><td>GFCM</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">The holder of this inspector identity card is a GFCM inspector duly appointed under the terms of the GFCM Joint Inspection and Surveillance Scheme and has the power to act under the provisions of GFCM rules.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">INSPECTOR IDENTITY CARD</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Photograph</td><td colspan="2">Contracting party</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Inspector name:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Card n°</td><td>……
Issuing authority</td><td>……
Inspector</td></tr>
<tr><td>Issue date:</td><td>Valid for five years</td></tr>
</table>

Recto Verso

Dimensions: width 10 cm, height 7 cm.

Annex 2

Model of GFCM inspection pennant



Pennants to be displayed by a GFCM inspection vessel. A boarding vessel shall display one pennant, which may be half-size.

Annex 3

Construction and use of boarding ladders

1. The provisions of this annex shall apply to ensure safe and convenient access to fishing vessels which require a climb of 1,5 metre or more.

2. A boarding ladder shall be provided which shall be efficient for the purpose of enabling inspectors to embark and disembark safely at sea. The boarding ladder shall be kept clean and in good order.

3. The ladder shall be positioned and secured so that:

   a) it is clear of any possible discharges from the vessel;

   b) it is clear of the finer lines and as far as practicable in the mid-length of the vessel; and

   c) each step rests firmly against the vessel's side.

4. The steps of the boarding ladder shall:

   a) be of hardwood or other material of equivalent properties, made in one piece free of knots; the four lowest steps may be made of rubber of sufficient strength and stiffness, or of other suitable material of equivalent characteristics;

   b) have an efficient non-slip surface;

   c) be not less than 480 mm long, 115 mm wide, and 23 mm in thickness, excluding any non-slip device or grooving;

   d) be equally spaced not less than 300 mm or more than 380 mm apart; and

   e) be secured in such a manner that they will remain horizontal.

5. No boarding ladder shall have more than two replacement steps which are secured in position by a method different from that used in the original construction of the ladder and any steps so secured shall be replaced, as soon as reasonably practicable, by steps secured in position by the method used in the original construction of the ladder. When any replacement step is secured to the side ropes of the boarding ladder by means of grooves in the side of the step, such grooves shall be positioned in the longer sides of the steps.

6. The side ropes of the ladder shall consist of two uncovered manila or equivalent ropes not less than 60 mm in circumference on each side; each rope shall be left uncovered by any other material and be continuous with no joints below the top step; two main ropes, properly secured to the vessel and not less than 65 mm in circumference, and a safety line shall be kept at hand ready for use if required.

7. Battens made of hardwood, or other material of equivalent properties, in one piece, free of knots and between 1,8 and 2 m long, shall be provided at such intervals as will prevent the boarding ladder from twisting. The lowest batten shall be on the fifth step from the bottom of the ladder and the interval between any batten and the next shall not exceed nine steps.

8. Means shall be provided to ensure safe and convenient passage for inspectors embarking on or disembarking from the vessel between the head of the boarding ladder, or of any accommodation ladder or other appliance provided. Where such passage is by means of a gateway in the rails or bulwark, adequate handholds shall be provided. Where such passage is by means of a bulwark ladder, such ladder shall be securely attached to the bulwark rail or platform and two handhold stanchions shall be fitted at the point of boarding or leaving the vessel not less than 0,70 m or more than 0,80 m apart. Each stanchion shall be rigidly secured to the vessel's structure at or near its base and also at a higher point, shall be not less than 40 mm in diameter, and shall extend not less than 1,20 m above the top of the bulwark.

9. Lighting shall be provided at night so that both the boarding ladder and also the position where the inspector boards the vessel shall be adequately lit. A lifebuoy equipped with a self-illuminating light shall be kept at hand ready for use. A heaving line shall also be kept at hand ready for use if required.

10. Means shall be provided to enable the boarding ladder to be used on either side of the vessel. The inspector in charge may indicate which side he would like the boarding ladder to be deployed.

11. The rigging of the ladder and the embarkation and disembarkation of inspector(s) shall be supervised by a responsible officer of the vessel. The responsible officer shall be in radio contact with the bridge.

12. Where on any vessel constructional features such as rubbing bands would prevent the implementation of any of these provisions, special arrangements shall be made to ensure that inspector(s) are able to embark and disembark safely.

Annex 4

GFCM inspection report

1. INSPECTOR(s)

Name……Contracting Party……GFCM Identity Card number……

Name……Contracting Party……GFCM Identity Card number……

Name……Contracting Party……GFCM Identity Card number……

2. VESSEL CARRYING THE INSPECTOR(S)

2.1 Name and registration ……

2.2 Flag……..

3. INFORMATION ON VESSEL INSPECTED

3.1 Name and registration……..

3.2 Flag……..

3.3 Captain (name and address)……

3.4 Ship owner (name and address)……

3.5 GFCM record number……..

3.6 Type of vessel……..

4. POSITION

4.1 Position as determined by inspecting vessel's master at ……UTC; Lat……. Long……

4.2 Position as determined by fishing vessel's master at ……UTC; Lat…… Long……

5. DATE AND TIMES THE INSPECTION COMMENCED AND FINISHED

5.1 Date …… Time arrived on board …… UTC-Time of Departure ……UTC

6. TYPE OF FISHING GEAR ON BOARD

Bottom otter trawl – OTB	
Mid-water otter trawl – OTM	
Shrimp trawls – TBS	
Purse seine – PS	
Gillnets anchored (set) – GNS	
Set longlines – LLS	
Recreational gear – RG	

Other (Specify)	

7. MESH MEASUREMENT - IN MILLIMETRES

7.1 Legal mesh size to be used: ……mm

7.2 Result of the average mesh size measurement: ……mm

7.3 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ -------- In case of YES, legal reference:

8. INSPECTION OF CATCHES ON BOARD

8.1 Results of the inspection of the fish on board

SPECIES **(FAO tri alpha Code)**						
Total (Kg)						
Presentation						
Sample inspected						
Percentage of undersize fish						

8.2 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ -------- In case of YES, legal reference:

9. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS ON BOARD AND VMS

9.1 Fishing Logbook: YES □ – NO □

9.2 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ -------- In case of YES, legal reference:

9.3 Fishing licence: YES □ – NO □

9.4 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ -------- In case of YES, legal reference:

9.3 Specific authorisation: YES □ – NO □

9.4 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ -------- In case of YES, legal reference:

9.5 VMS: YES □ – NO □ --------in function: YES □ - NO □

9.6 Infringement: YES □ – NO □ -------- In case of YES, legal reference:

10. LIST OF VIOLATIONS

□ Fishing without a licence, permit or authorization issued by the flag CPC – legal reference:

□ Failure to maintain sufficient records of catch and catch-related data in accordance with GFCM reporting requirements or significant misreporting of such catch and/or catch-related data – legal reference:

□ Fishing in a closed area – legal reference:

□ Fishing during a closed season– legal reference:

□ Use of prohibited fishing gear – legal reference:

□ Falsification or intentional concealment of the markings, identity or registration of a fishing vessel – legal reference:

□ Concealment, tampering with or disposing of evidence relating to investigation of a violation – legal reference:

□ Multiple violations which taken together constitute a serious disregard of measures in force pursuant to the GFCM

□ Assault, resistance, intimidation, sexual harassment, interference with, or undue obstruction or delay of an authorized inspector

□ Interference with the satellite monitoring system and/or operates without VMS system – legal reference:

11. LIST OF DOCUMENTS COPIED ON BOARD

……..
……
……
……
……
……

12. COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE BY THE MASTER OF VESSEL

……..
……
……
……
……
……

Signature of master: ……..

13. COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE BY THE INSPECTOR(S)

……..
……
……
……
……
……

Signature of inspector (s): ……..

Annex 5

GFCM sighting report

1. Date of the sightings: ……/……/…….. Time:……UTC

2. Position of the vessel sighted: Latitude…… - Longitude…….

3. Course:…….. – Speed……..

4. Name of the vessel sighted:

5. Flag of the vessel sighted:

6. External number/marking:

7. Type of vessel:

Fishing vessel

Carrier vessel

Freezer vessel

Other (specify)

8. International Radio Call Sign:

9. IMO number (where applicable):

10. Activity(ies):

Fishing

Steaming

Drifting

Transshipping

11. Radio contact: YES - NO

12. Name and nationality of the captain of the sighted vessel: ……..

13. Number of people on board the sighted vessel: ……..

14. Catches on board sighted vessel: ……

15. Information collected by:

Name of inspector:

Contracting Party:

GFCM Identity Card number:

Name of the patrol vessel:

Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

RECALLING further the 2005 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing endorsed by the twenty-sixth session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (FAO headquarters, March 2005);

RECALLING further the resolutions on sustainable fisheries adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, in 2005, 2006 and 2007, calling for the development of a legally binding instrument on port state measures;

RECALLING further part three of the 2005 General Guidelines for a GFCM control and enforcement scheme and Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application repealing Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/4;

REAFFIRMING its roadmap to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea endorsed at the thirty-seventh session of the GFCM (Croatia, May 2013);

REAFFIRMING its roadmap to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean endorsed at the thirty-eighth session of the GFCM (FAO headquarters, May 2014);

ACKNOWLEDGING the decision of the twenty-seventh session of the COFI (FAO headquarters, March 2007) to develop a legally binding instrument on port state measures;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, signed in Rome on 22 November 2009;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, adopted by the COFI at its thirty-first session (FAO headquarters, June 2014);

NOTING port state measures that have been adopted by various regional fisheries management organizations;

NOTING ALSO that port state measures provide a powerful and cost-effective means of preventing, deterring and eliminating IUU fishing;

CONCERNED by the continuation of IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM conservation and management measures;

RECOGNIZING the potential effectiveness of strengthened and harmonized port state measures in combating IUU fishing activities, and the need to develop and to implement such measures in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

RECOGNIZING the need for assistance to developing countries to adopt and implement port state measures;

RECOGNIZING also the need to raise awareness on the negative impacts of IUU fishing activities;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following recommendation:

Objective

1. The objective of this recommendation is to contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application through strengthened, harmonized and transparent port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

Definitions

2. For the purposes of this recommendation:

a) "Fish" means all species of marine living resources, whether processed or not.

b) "Fishing" means:

i) the actual or attempted searching for, catching, taking or harvesting of fish in the GFCM area of application; and

ii) engaging in any activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the locating, catching, taking or harvesting of fish in the GFCM area of application.

c) "Fishing-related activities" means any operation in the GFCM area of application in support of, or in preparation for fishing, including the processing, transshipment or transport of fish that have not been previously landed and offloaded at a port, as well as the provision of personnel, fuel, gear and other supplies at sea.

d) "Port" includes offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, processing, refuelling or resupplying.

e) "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing" has the same meaning as set out in the paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) and applies to all marine fisheries.

f) "Regional economic integration organization" means a regional economic integration organization to which its member states have transferred competence over matters covered by this recommendation, including the authority to make decisions binding on its member states in respect of those matters.

g) "Regional fisheries management organization" (RFMO) means an intergovernmental fisheries organization or arrangement, as appropriate, that has the competence to establish conservation and management measures.

h) "Vessel" means any vessel, ship of another type, boat and other craft used for, equipped to be used for, or intended to be used for, fishing or fishing related activities in the GFCM area of application.

Application

3. This recommendation only applies to vessels which are within the GFCM area of application.

4. Each contracting party and cooperating non contracting party (CPC) shall, in its capacity as a port state, apply this recommendation in respect of vessels that are not flying its flag and that are seeking access to its port(s) or are in one of its ports, except for:

a) vessels of a neighbouring state that are engaged in artisanal fishing for subsistence, provided that the port state and the flag state cooperate to ensure that such vessels do not engage in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing; and

b) container vessels that are not carrying fish or, if carrying fish, carry only fish that have been previously landed, provided that there are no clear grounds for suspecting that such vessels have engaged in fishing-related activities in support of IUU fishing.

5. A CPC may, in its capacity as a port state, decide not to apply this recommendation to vessels chartered by its nationals exclusively for fishing in areas under its national jurisdiction and operating under its authority therein. Such vessels shall be subject to measures by the CPC which are as effective as measures applied in relation to vessels entitled to fly its flag.

6. Each CPC shall take additional measures, as it deems necessary, to reinforce effective jurisdiction and control over the fishing and fishing-related activities of vessels flying its flag. To the greatest extent possible, such measures shall include *mutatis mutandis* the port state measures set forth in this recommendation in respect of such vessels.

7. This recommendation shall be applied in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with international law.

Integration and coordination at the national level

8. To the greatest extent possible, CPCs shall:

a) integrate or coordinate port state measures into a broader system of port state controls;

b) integrate port state measures with other measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and fishing-related activities in support of such fishing; and

c) take measures to exchange and share information among relevant national agencies and to coordinate the activities of such agencies in the implementation of this recommendation.

Cooperation and exchange of information

9. In the implementation of this recommendation and with due regard to appropriate confidentiality requirements, CPCs shall cooperate and exchange information with the GFCM Secretariat, relevant coastal states, flag states, international organizations, RFMOs and other entities, including, as appropriate, by:

a) requesting information from, and providing information to, relevant databases; and

b) requesting and providing cooperation to promote the effective implementation of this recommendation.

10. The CPCs shall, to the extent possible, ensure that national fisheries-related information systems allow for the direct electronic exchange of information on port state inspections between them and with the GFCM Secretariat, with due regard to appropriate confidentiality requirements, in order to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation.

11. The CPCs shall establish a list of contact points in the relevant administrations in order to take due note of any reply or any actions proposed or taken by the flag state of the inspected vessel. The list shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat and to the other CPCs not later than 30 days after the entry into force of this recommendation. Any subsequent changes shall be notified to the GFCM Secretariat at least 15 days before the change takes effect.

12. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a register of contact points based on the lists submitted by the CPCs. The register shall be posted on the GFCM website.

Designation of ports

13. The CPCs shall designate and publicize national ports to which foreign vessels may be permitted access and, to the greatest extent possible, shall ensure that every port designated and publicized has sufficient capacity to conduct inspections and take other port state measures in accordance with this recommendation.

14. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Secretariat of the ports designated under paragraph 13 not later than 30 days after the entry into force of this recommendation. Any subsequent change to this list shall be notified to the GFCM Secretariat at least 15 days before the change takes effect.

GFCM register of ports

15. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a register of designated and publicized national ports based on the lists submitted by CPCs. The register shall be made available through the online channels established by the GFCM Secretariat.

Prior notice of entry into port

16. The CPCs shall, before granting access to their designated ports, require the masters of vessels to notify the competent authorities of the port they wish to use at least 72 hours before the estimated time of arrival. However, a CPC may make provision for another notification period, taking into account, *inter alia*, the distance between the fishing grounds and its ports. In such a case, the CPC shall inform the GFCM Secretariat, which will integrate this information in the register of ports. The notification shall include, as a minimum standard, the information set out in Annex 1.

Port entry authorization

17. After receiving the relevant information required pursuant to paragraph 16, as well as such other information as it may require to determine whether the vessel requesting entry into its port has engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing, each CPC shall decide whether to authorize or deny the entry of the vessel into its port and shall communicate this decision to the vessel or to its representative.

18. Each CPC, through its competent authorities, shall communicate in a written form the authorization, or denial, for access to the port for landing, transshipping or processing to the master of the vessel seeking access to its ports. The master of the vessel shall present the authorization for access to the port to the competent authorities of the CPC upon arrival at port before commencing authorized activities.

Denial of use of port

19. A CPC shall not allow a vessel to use its ports for landing, transshipping or processing of fish if the vessel:

a) at the relevant time was engaged in fishing in the GFCM area of application and was not flying the flag of a CPC; or

b) has been sighted as being engaged in, or supporting, IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application, unless the vessel can establish that the catch was taken in a manner consistent with relevant GFCM conservation and management measures.

20. A CPC shall not allow a vessel to use its ports for landing, transshipping or processing of fish if the vessel is included in a list of vessels having engaged in, or supported, IUU fishing adopted by the GFCM.

21. A CPC shall not allow a vessel to use its ports for landing, transshipping or processing of fish where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the vessel does not have a valid and applicable authorization to engage in fishing and fishing-related activities in the GFCM area of application.

22. A CPC shall, in appropriate situations, deny a vessel referred to in paragraphs 19, 20 and 21 access to port services, including, *inter alia*, refuelling and resupplying services but not including services essential to the safety, health and welfare of the crew.

23. Where a CPC has denied the use of its ports in accordance with this recommendation, it shall promptly notify the master of the vessel, the flag state and, as appropriate, the relevant coastal state(s), the GFCM Secretariat and other relevant organizations of such action.

Withdrawal of denial of use of port

24. A CPC may withdraw its denial of the use of its ports in respect of a vessel only if the CPC is satisfied that there is sufficient proof to show that the grounds on which the use was denied were inadequate or erroneous or that such grounds no longer apply.

25. Where a CPC has withdrawn its denial pursuant to paragraph 24, it shall promptly notify those to whom a notification was issued pursuant to this recommendation.

Non-authorized entry

26. Each CPC shall ensure that any vessel or vessel engaged in fishing-related activities that enters into its port without prior authorization shall be automatically subject to inspection.

Levels and priorities for inspection

27. Each CPC shall inspect at least 15 percent of the total number of port entries of vessels in the previous year in accordance with this recommendation.

28. In determining which vessels to inspect, a CPC shall give priority to:

a) vessels that have previously been denied the use of a port in accordance with this recommendation; or

b) requests from other relevant states or RFMOs that particular vessels be inspected; and

c) other vessels for which there are clear grounds for suspecting that they have engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing.

Conduct of inspections

29. Each CPC shall ensure that inspections of vessels in its ports are carried out in accordance with the inspection procedures set out in Annex 2.

30. Each CPC shall, in carrying out inspections in its ports:

a) ensure that inspections are carried out by properly qualified inspectors authorized for that purpose;

b) ensure that, prior to an inspection, inspectors are required to present to the master of the vessel an appropriate document identifying the inspectors as such;

c) ensure that inspectors examine all relevant areas of the vessel, the fish on board, the nets and any other gear, equipment, and any document or record on board that is relevant to verifying compliance with relevant conservation and management measures;

d) require the master of the vessel to give inspectors all necessary assistance and information, and to present relevant material and documents as may be required, or certified copies thereof;

e) in case of appropriate arrangements with the flag state of the vessel, invite that state to participate in the inspection;

f) make all possible efforts to avoid unduly delaying the vessel to minimize interference and inconvenience, including any unnecessary presence of inspectors on board, and to avoid action that would adversely affect the quality of the fish on board;

g) make all possible efforts to facilitate communication with the master or senior crew members of the vessel, including where possible and where needed that the inspector is accompanied by an interpreter;

h) ensure that inspections are conducted in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner and would not constitute harassment of any vessel; and

i) not interfere with the master's ability, in conformity with international law, to communicate with the authorities of the flag state.

31. Each CPC shall, as a minimum standard, require the information set out in Annex 3 to be included in the report of the results of each inspection.

32. Each CPC shall ensure that the results of port inspections are always presented to the master of the vessel for review and signature and that the report is completed and signed by the inspector. The master of the inspected vessel shall be given the opportunity to add any comment to the report and, as appropriate, to contact the relevant authorities of the flag state, in particular when there are serious difficulties in understanding the contents of the report.

33. Each CPC shall ensure that a copy of the report of inspection shall be provided to the master of the inspected vessel for retention on board the vessel.

Standardized information on port inspections

34. Each CPC shall handle information on port inspections in a standardized form, consistent with Annex 4.

Training of inspectors

35. Each CPC shall ensure that its inspectors are properly trained, taking into account the guidelines for the training of inspectors in Annex 5. The CPCs shall seek to cooperate in this regard.

Port state actions following inspection

36. Where there is reasonable evidence for believing that a vessel has engaged in or supported IUU fishing activities or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing, the relevant port state shall:

a) transmit the results of the inspection without delay to the flag state of the inspected vessels, to the GFCM Secretariat and to other CPCs; and

b) deny use of their ports to the vessel for landing, transshipping or processing of fish and for other port services, including, inter alia, refuelling and resupplying, maintenance and dry-docking, if these actions have not already been taken in respect of the vessel, in a manner consistent with this recommendation.

37. Notwithstanding paragraph 36, a CPC shall not deny a vessel referred to in that paragraph the use of port services essential for the safety or health of the crew or the safety of the vessel.

38. The CPCs may take measures other than those in paragraph 36, if they are provided for in their national laws and regulations and consistent with international law.

Information on recourse in the port state

39. Each CPC shall maintain the relevant information available to the public and provide such information, upon written request, to the owner, operator, master or representative of a vessel with regard to any recourse established in accordance with its national laws and regulations concerning port state measures taken by that CPC, including information pertaining to the public services or judicial institutions available for this purpose, as well as information on whether there is any right to seek compensation in accordance with its national laws and regulations in the event of any loss or damage suffered as a consequence of any alleged unlawful action by the CPC.

40. The CPC shall inform the flag state, the owner, operator, master or representative of the vessel, as appropriate, of the outcome of any such recourse.

Regional information system

41. A regional information system which includes port state information shall be developed by the GFCM to better monitor and control the GFCM area of application.

Force majeure or distress

42. Nothing in this recommendation affects the access of vessels to port in accordance with international law for reasons of force majeure or distress, or prevents a CPC from permitting entry into port to a vessel exclusively for the purpose of rendering assistance to persons, ships or aircraft in danger or distress.

Role of the flag state

43. Each CPC shall, in its capacity as a flag state, cooperate with other CPCs in inspections or exchange of information carried out pursuant to this recommendation.

44. When a CPC has reasonable grounds to believe that a vessel flying its flag has engaged in or supported IUU fishing and is seeking access to or is in the port of another CPC, it shall, as appropriate, request that CPC to inspect the vessel or take other measures consistent with this recommendation and to advise it of the results.

45. Each CPC shall ensure that vessels entitled to fly its flag land, transship and process fish, and use other port services, in ports of other CPCs that are acting in accordance with, or in a manner consistent with this recommendation.

46. The flag state shall ensure that the master of a fishing vessel entitled to fly its flag shall, when being inspected:

a) cooperate with and assist in the inspection of the fishing vessel conducted pursuant to these procedures, and not obstruct, intimidate or interfere with the inspectors in the performance of their duties;

b) provide access to any areas, decks and rooms of the fishing vessel, catch (whether processed or not), nets or other gear, equipment, and any information or document which the inspector deems necessary in undertaking an inspection; and

c) provide access to registration documents, fishing authorizations or any other documentation as required by the inspector.

47. If the master of a fishing vessel refuses to allow an authorized inspector to carry out an inspection in accordance with these procedures, the master shall offer an explanation of the reason for such refusal. The port inspection authorities shall immediately notify the authorities of the fishing vessel, as well as the GFCM, of the master's refusal and any explanation.

48. If the master does not comply with an inspection request, the flag state shall be requested to suspend the vessel's authorization to fish and order the vessel to remain in port or take other measures that it deems appropriate. The flag state shall immediately notify the port inspection authorities and the GFCM of the action it has taken in these circumstances.

49. Where, following port state inspection, a flag state receives an inspection report indicating that there are clear grounds to believe that a vessel entitled to fly its flag has engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing, it shall immediately and fully investigate the matter and shall, upon sufficient evidence, take enforcement action without delay in accordance with its laws and regulations.

50. Each CPC shall, in its capacity as a flag state, report to other CPCs and, as appropriate, relevant coastal states and the GFCM Secretariat on actions it has taken in respect of vessels entitled to fly its flag that, as a result of port state measures taken pursuant to this recommendation, have been determined to have engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing.

Requirements of developing states

51. The CPCs shall give full recognition to the special requirements of CPC developing states in relation to the implementation of this recommendation. To this end, CPCs shall, either directly or through the GFCM Secretariat, provide assistance to CPC developing states in order to, *inter alia*:

a) enhance their ability, in particular the least developed among them, to develop a legal basis and capacity for the implementation of effective port state measures;

b) facilitate their participation in GFCM meetings that promote the effective development and implementation of port state measures; and

c) facilitate technical assistance to strengthen the development and implementation of port state measures by them, in coordination with other international organizations, where appropriate.

52. The CPCs shall give due regard to the special requirements of developing CPC port states, in particular the least developed among them, to ensure that a disproportionate burden resulting from the implementation of this recommendation is not transferred directly or indirectly to them. In cases where the transfer of a disproportionate burden has been demonstrated, CPCs shall cooperate to facilitate the implementation by the relevant CPC developing states of specific obligations under this recommendation.

53. The CPCs shall assess the special requirements of CPC developing states concerning the implementation of this recommendation.

Entry into force of this recommendation

54. Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application is replaced by this recommendation.

Annex 1

Information to be provided in advance by vessels

1. Vessel identification						
Name of the vessel						
Previous name(s) and flag state(s), if any						
External Identification Number						
International Radio Call Sign						
Lloyd's IMO number (where appropriate)						
RFMO ID, if available						
Flag state						
Type of vessel						
Vessel owner (name, address, contact, unique identity for company and registered owner)						
Vessel operator if different from owner (name, address and contact)						
Beneficial owner if different from owner (name, address and contact)						
Vessel master (name and nationality)						
Vessel agent (name, address and contact)						
VMS	No	Yes: National	Yes: RFMO(s)	Type:		Details of the unit to enable communication
2. Access to port						
Intended port of call						
Port state						
Estimated time of arrival						
Purpose(s)						
Port and date of last port call						
Fishing authorization (licences/permits)						
Identifier	Issued by (state)	Validity	Fishing area(s)	Species	Bycatch authorized	Details of allocation authorized (quota, effort or other)
Transshipment authorization						
Identifier		Issued by		Validity		
Identifier		Issued by		Validity		

Transshipment at sea (Yes/No):		Date:		Species:		Quantity:	
Fishing trip information							
Area visited							
Date:	GSA:		High sea:			Other:	
Total catch on board						Catch to be offloaded	
Species	Product form	Catch area	Quantity			Quantity	Intended destination of landed fish
			Estimated processed weight	Estimated equivalent live weight			
Other							

Annex 2

Port state inspection procedures for vessels

1. Vessel identification

The port inspector(s) shall:

a) verify that the official documentation on board is valid, if necessary, through appropriate contacts with the flag state or international records of vessels;

b) where necessary, arrange for an official translation of the documentation;

c) be assured that the vessel's name, flag, any external identification number and markings (and IMO ship identification number when available), main dimensions and the international radio call sign are correct;

d) to the extent possible, examine whether the vessel has changed name and/or flag and, if so, note the previous name(s) and flag(s);

e) note the port of registration, name and address of the owner (and operator and beneficial owner if different from the owner), agent and master of the vessel, including the unique ID for company and registered owner if available; and

f) note name(s) and address(es) of previous owner(s), if any, during the past five years.

2. Authorization(s)

The port inspector(s) shall verify that the authorization(s) for fishing activities and fishing-related activities are compatible with the information obtained under paragraph 1 and examine the duration of the authorization(s) and their application to areas, species and fishing gear.

3. Other documentation

The port inspector(s) shall review all relevant documentation, including documents in electronic format. Relevant documentation may include logbooks, in particular the fishing logbook, as well as the crew list, stowage plans and drawings or descriptions of fish holds if available. Such holds or areas may be inspected in order to verify whether their size and composition correspond to these drawings or descriptions and whether the stowage is in accordance with the stowage plans. Where appropriate, this documentation shall also include catch documents or trade documents issued by any RFMO.

4. Fishing gear

a) The port inspector(s) shall verify that the fishing gear on board is in conformity with the conditions of the authorization(s). The gear may also be checked to ensure that features such as, inter alia, the mesh size(s) (and possible devices), length of nets, hook sizes conform with applicable regulations and that identification marks of the gear correspond to those authorized for the vessel.

b) The port inspector(s) may also search the vessel for any fishing gear stowed out of sight and for fishing gear that is otherwise illegal.

5. Fish and fishery products

a) The port inspector(s) shall, to the greatest extent possible, examine whether the fish and fishery products on board were harvested in accordance with the conditions set out in the applicable authorization(s). In doing so, the port inspector(s) shall examine the fishing logbook and reports submitted, including those transmitted by a vessel monitoring system (VMS), as appropriate.

b) In order to determine the quantities and species on board, the port inspector(s) may examine the fish in the hold or during the landing. In doing so, the port inspector(s) may open cartons

where the fish has been pre-packed and move the fish or cartons to ascertain the integrity of fish holds.

c) If the vessel is unloading, the port inspector(s) may verify the species and quantities landed. Such verification may include product type, live weight (quantities determined from the logbook) and the conversion factor used for calculating processed weight to live weight. The port inspector(s) may also examine any possible quantities retained on board.

d) The port inspector(s) may review the quantity and composition of all catch on board, including by sampling.

6. Verification of IUU fishing

If the port inspector(s) has reasonable grounds to believe that a vessel has engaged in, or supported IUU fishing, the competent authority of the port state shall as soon as possible contact the flag state authorities to verify whether the fish and fishery products have been harvested or collected in the areas as recorded in the relevant documents. As appropriate, the competent authority may also contact a coastal state where the fish was allegedly taken.

7. Report

A written report shall be prepared and signed by the inspector on completion of the inspection and a copy provided to the master of the vessel in accordance with paragraph 30 of the recommendation. The inspector shall, where necessary and possible, arrange for translation of relevant documentation.

Annex 3

Results of port state inspections

1. Inspection report No		2. Port state		
3. Inspecting authority				
4. Name of principal inspector		ID		
5. Port of inspection				
6. Commencement of inspection	YYYY	MM	DD	HH
7. Completion of inspection	YYYY	MM	DD	HH
8. Advance notification received	Yes		No	
9. Purpose(s)	LAN	TRX	PRO	OTH (specify)
10. Port and state and date of last port call			YYYY	MM DD
11. Vessel name				
12. Flag state				
13. Type of vessel				
14. International Radio Call Sign				
15. Certificate of registry ID				
16. IMO ship ID, if available				
17. External ID, if available				
18. Port of registry				
19. Vessel owner(s)				
20. Vessel beneficial owner(s), if known and different from vessel owner				
21. Vessel operator(s), if different from vessel owner				
22. Vessel master name and nationality				
23. Fishing master name and nationality				
24. Vessel agent				
VMS	No	Yes: national	Yes: RFMOs	Type:
25. Status in RFMO areas where fishing or fishing related activities have been undertaken, including any IUU vessel listing				
Vessel identifier	RFMO	Flag state status	Vessel on authorized vessel list	Vessel on IUU vessel list

26. Relevant fishing authorization(s)					
Identifier	Issued by	Validity	Fishing area(s)	Species	Gear

27. Relevant transshipment authorization(s)					
Identifier		Issued by		Validity	
Identifier		Issued by		Validity	

28. Transshipment information concerning donor vessels						
Name	Flag state	ID no	Species	Product form	Catch area(s)	Quantity

29. Evaluation of offloaded catch (quantity)					
Species	Product form	Catch area(s)	Quantity declared	Quantity offloaded	Difference between quantity declared and quantity determined, if any

30. Catch retained onboard (quantity)					
Species	Product form	Catch area(s	Quantity declared	Quantity retained	Difference between quantity declared and quantity determined, if any

31. Examination of logbook(s) and other documentation	Yes	No	Comments
32. Compliance with applicable catch document	Yes	No	Comments
33. Compliance with applicable trade information scheme(s)	Yes	No	Comments

34. Type of gear used	

35. Gear examined in accordance with paragraph e) of Annex 2	Yes	No	Comments

36. Findings by inspector(s)

37. Apparent infringement(s) noted including reference to relevant legal instrument(s)

38. Comments by the master
39. Action taken
40. Master’s signature
41. Inspector’s signature

Annex 4

Information system on port state inspections

1. Communication between CPCs and the Secretariat, and the relevant flag states as well as between CPCs and relevant RFMOs would require the following

- data characters;
- structure for data transmission;
- protocols for the transmission; and
- formats for transmission including data element with a corresponding field code and a more detailed definition and explanation of the various codes.

2. International agreed codes shall be used for the identification of the following items

- states: 3-ISO Country Code;
- fish species: FAO 3-alpha code;
- vessels: FAO alpha code;
- gear types: FAO alpha code;
- devices/attachments: FAO 3-alpha code; and
- ports: UN LO-code, or codes as provided by the port state.

3. Data elements shall at least include the following

- inspection references;
- vessel identification;
- fishing authorization(s) (licences/permits);
- trip information;
- result of the inspection on discharge;
- quantities inspected;
- result of gear inspection;
- irregularities detected;
- actions taken; and
- information from the flag state.

Annex 5

Guidelines for the training of port state inspectors

Elements for a training programme of port state inspectors should include at least the following areas:

1. training in inspection procedures;
2. relevant laws and regulations, areas of competence, conservation and management measures of relevant RFMOs, and applicable rules of international law;
3. information sources, such as logbooks and other electronic information that may be useful for the validation of information given by the master of the vessel;
4. identification of fish species and measurement calculation;
5. monitoring catch landing, including determining conversion factors for the various species and products;
6. identification of vessels and gear and gear measurements and inspections;
7. vessel boarding/inspection, hold inspections and calculation of vessel hold volumes;
8. VMS equipment, other electronic tracking systems and operation;
9. collection, evaluation and preservation of evidence;
10. range of measures available to be taken following the inspection;
11. health and safety issues in the performance of inspections;
12. conduct during inspections; and
13. relevant languages, particularly English.

Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance, amending and repealing Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/3

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Council adopted on 23 June 2001 an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;

RECALLING the terms of reference for the Compliance Committee (CoC);

CONSIDERING the need for action to ensure the effectiveness of the GFCM objectives;

CONSIDERING the obligation of all contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties to respect the GFCM conservation and management measures when fishing in the GFCM area of application;

AWARE of the necessity for coordinated and timely actions by all contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties to ensure the enforcement of GFCM conservation and management measures, and of the need to encourage all contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties to abide by these measures when fishing in the GFCM area of application;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The GFCM, through its CoC, shall each year:

   a) conduct, consistent with sub-paragraphs iii) and iv), a process of identification of cases of non-compliance by contracting parties that have not met their obligations under the GFCM Agreement in respect of the GFCM conservation and management measures, in particular, by failing to take the required measures and actions or to exercise effective control according to national rules and regulations to ensure compliance with conservation and management measures by the vessels flying their flag;

   b) conduct, consistent with subparagraphs iii) and iv), a process of identification of cases of non-compliance by cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties that have failed to discharge their obligations under international law to cooperate with the GFCM in the management of marine living resources when fishing in the GFCM area of application, in particular, by failing to take measures or to exercise effective control according to national rules and regulations to ensure that their vessels do not engage in any fishing- or fisheries-related activity that undermines the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures;

   c) review all available information on the status of implementation of GFCM decisions, including, for example catch or effort data and trade information, on the basis of, as appropriate, i) requests for clarifications; ii) letters of concern; and iii) letters of identification. The standard form of such requests and letters, that will be sent by the GFCM Executive Secretary, shall be adopted by the CoC;

   d) consider all other verifiable information available, including information submitted by non-contracting parties on fishing activities by contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties. Such information shall reach the GFCM Secretariat at

least 60 days before the next GFCM annual session. This deadline does not apply to contracting parties; and

e) entrust the GFCM Secretariat with the mandate to consult any source of verifiable information and present a preliminary analysis to the CoC with a view to suggesting a course of action to be followed by the CoC in the identification of cases of non-compliance.

2. The GFCM shall request contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties concerned to rectify any act or omission identified so as not to diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM management measures, in accordance with the procedure in paragraph 3.

3. When the CoC identifies cases of non-compliance, the GFCM Executive Secretary shall, within 30 working days following the approval of the report of the CoC in which the identification was made, transmit a letter of identification to the relevant contracting party, cooperating non-contracting party or non-contracting party. The GFCM Executive Secretary shall seek to obtain confirmation from the relevant contracting party, cooperating non-contracting party or non-contracting party that it received the letter of identification. The letter of identification shall, *inter alia,* contain the following:

a) the reason(s) for the identification with all available supporting evidence and information;

b) the right to respond to the GFCM in writing at the latest 60 days before the next session of the CoC with regard to the identification and the invitation to provide any relevant information such as, for example, evidence refuting the identification or, where appropriate, a plan of action to improve the situation and the steps that were taken to rectify it; and

c) in the case of a cooperating non-contracting party or a non-contracting party, an invitation to participate as an observer at the session of the CoC where the issue will be considered.

4. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties are encouraged jointly and individually to request the contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties concerned to rectify any act or omission identified so as not to diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM management measures. In addition, they shall cooperate to the greatest extent possible throughout the identification process to draw the attention of contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties to the need to implement in good faith the duty to cooperate in the conservation and management of marine living resources, consistent with international law.

5. The CoC shall evaluate the response of contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties to letters of identification, together with any new information, and propose to the Commission to decide upon one of the following actions:

a) the revocation of the identification; or

b) the continuation of the identification status of the contracting party, cooperating non-contracting party and non-contracting party. In these cases, the Commission shall recommend appropriate measures aiming at resolving situations of non-compliance, including non-discriminatory trade measures, to deter non-compliance by identified contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties or non-contracting parties.

6. The absence of response from the contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties and non-contracting parties concerned to the letter of identification within the time limit shall not prevent action from the Commission consistent with paragraph 5 b).

Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Rule XVII paragraph 1 b) of the GFCM Rules of Procedure according to which contracting parties have the obligation to provide information on catches and other data relevant to enable the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) to carry out its duties;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register;

CONSIDERING the importance of knowing the spatial allocation of the fishing effort and the origin of the catches, at the highest possible level of resolution, for sound scientific monitoring and management of fisheries;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6 on the submission of data on fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall require that the masters of fishing vessels over 15 metres in length overall authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application and registered on the GFCM record of vessels keep a bound logbook of their operations, indicating in particular the quantities of each species caught and kept on board, above 50 kg in live weight, whether the catches are weighed or estimated, the date and geographical positions of such catches and the type of gear used in accordance with the minimum specifications and information set out in Annex 1.

2. The minimum quantity referred to in paragraph 1 shall be without prejudice to stricter rules implemented by CPCs, which may define a lower threshold between 0 and 50 kg in the light of further work to be undertaken under the GFCM framework.

3. The provisions of the present recommendation shall not affect more detailed or stricter obligations on the use of logbooks, including on the use of electronic means, adopted and implemented by CPCs.

Annex 1

Minimum specifications and information to be reported in the GFCM logbook

Minimum specifications for the GFCM logbook

1. The logbook shall be numbered by sheet (3-digit country code and 7-digit unique reference).
2. The logbook shall be filled for each fishing operation carried out every day (preferably by midnight) and before port arrival.
3. The logbook shall be completed in case of sea inspections or upon request of the flag state.
4. One copy of the sheets shall remain attached to the logbook.
5. Logbooks shall be kept on board to cover a period of one-year operation or the quota period.

Minimum standard information for the GFCM logbook

1. Master(s) name(s) and address(es);
2. date and time of departure and return from/to port;
3. vessel name, call-sign, vessel registration number and IMO number (if available);
4. fishing gear (FAO code and units) and their dimension, mesh size and number of hooks;
5. operations at sea, with at least one line per day of trip, providing:
    a) activity (fishing, steaming, etc.);
    b) position: geographical positions, recorded for each fishing operation or at noon when no fishing has been conducted during this day as well as GFCM geographical subarea (GSA) and/or the number of the rectangle 30'x30' of the GFCM statistical grid;
    c) the numbers of a rectangle in the GFCM statistical grid is a 5-digit code, as reported in the Annex 2 of this recommendation and identified by the following rule:
        (i) latitude is covered by a 3-digit code composed of a letter and two numbers. Maximum range from M00 (30°N) up to M34 (47°30'N); and
        (ii) longitude is covered by a code composed of a letter and a number. The letter range is from A to J and number range per letter is from 0 to 9. Maximum range from A0 (6°W) up to J5 (42°E);
    d) record of catches by species.
6. species identification:
    a) by FAO code;
    b) round weight (RWT) in kg per day for all species; and
    c) number of fish caught per day (only for tuna, swordfish and highly migratory shark);
7. master(s) signature(s);
8. observer signature (if applicable); and
9. means of weight measure: estimation, weighing on board and/or counting of containers (boxes, baskets, etc.).

Minimum information in case of landing and/or transshipment

1. Date, time and port of landing and/or transshipment;
2. products:

a) Presentation; and

b) number of fish or containers and quantity in kg;

3. signature of the master(s) or vessel agent(s);
4. vessel details (transshipment): (name, call-sign, markings, flag and any other characteristics); and
5. the permitted margin of tolerance of 10 percent shall be expressed as a percentage of the actual determined live weight equivalent of each species retained on board.

Annex 2

Digits for the codification of the rectangles in the statistical grid

Latitude

Digit 2–3		
code	**from**	**to**
M00	30°N	30°30’N
M01	30°30’N	31°N
M02	31°N	31°30’N
M03	31°30’N	32°N
M04	32°N	32°30’N
M05	32°30’N	33°N
M06	33°N	33°30’N
M07	33°30’N	34°N
M08	34°N	34°30’N
M09	34°30’N	35°N
M10	35°N	35°30’N
M11	35°30’N	36°N
M12	36°N	36°30’N
M13	36°30’N	37°N
M14	37°N	37°30’N
M15	37°30’N	38°N
M16	38°N	38°30’N
M17	38°30’N	39°N

M18	39°N	39°30’N
M19	39°30’N	40°N
M20	40°N	40°30’N
M21	40°30’N	41°N
M22	41°N	41°30’N
M23	41°30’N	42°N
M24	42°N	42°30’N
M25	42°30’N	43°N
M26	43°N	43°30’N
M27	43°30’N	44°N
M28	44°N	44°30’N
M29	44°30’N	45°N
M30	45°N	45°30’N
M31	45°30’N	46°N
M32	46°N	46°30’N
M33	46°30’N	47°N
M34	47°N	47°30’N

Longitude

Digit 4–5		
code	**from**	**to**
A0	6°W	5°30’W
A1	5°30’W	5°W
A2	5°W	4°30’W
A3	4°30’W	4°W
A4	4°W	3°30’W
A5	3°30’W	3°W
A6	3°W	2°30’W
A7	2°30’W	2°W
A8	2°W	1°30’W
A9	1°30’W	1°W
B0	1°W	0°30’W
B1	0°30’W	0°W
B2	0°E	0°30’E
B3	0°30’E	1°E
B4	1°E	1°30’E
B5	1°30’E	2°E
B6	2°E	2°30’E
B7	2°30’E	3°E
B8	3°E	3°30’E
B9	3°30’E	4°E
C0	4°E	4°30’E
C1	4°30’E	5°E
C2	5°E	5°30’E
C3	5°30’E	6°E
C4	6°E	6°30’E
C5	6°30’E	7°E
C6	7°E	7°30’E
C7	7°30’E	8°E
C8	8°E	8°30’E
C9	8°30’E	9°E
D0	9°E	9°30’E
D1	9°30’E	10°E
D2	10°E	10°30’E

Digit 4–5		
code	**from**	**to**
D3	10°30’E	11°E
D4	11°E	11°30’E
D5	11°30’E	12°E
D6	12°E	12°30’E
D7	12°30’E	13°E
D8	13°E	13°30’E
D9	13°30’E	14°E
E0	14°E	14°30’E
E1	14°30’E	15°E
E2	15°E	15°30’E
E3	15°30’E	16°E
E4	16°E	16°30’E
E5	16°30’E	17°E
E6	17°E	17°30’E
E7	17°30’E	18°E
E8	18°E	18°30’E
E9	18°30’E	19°E
F0	19°E	19°30’E
F1	19°30’E	20°E
F2	20°E	20°30’E
F3	20°30’E	21°E
F4	21°E	21°30’E
F5	21°30’E	22°E
F6	22°E	22°30’E
F7	22°30’E	23°E

F8	23°E	23°30’E
F9	23°30’E	24°E
G0	24°E	24°30’E
G1	24°30’E	25°E
G2	25°E	25°30’E
G3	25°30’E	26°E
G4	26°E	26°30’E
G5	26°30’E	27°E

Digit 4–5		
code	**from**	**to**
G6	27°E	27°30’E
G7	27°30’E	28°E
G8	28°E	28°30’E
G9	28°30’E	29°E
H0	29°E	29°30’E
H1	29°30’E	30°E
H2	30°E	30°30’E
H3	30°30’E	31°E
H4	31°E	31°30’E
H5	31°30’E	32°E
H6	32°E	32°30’E
H7	32°30’E	33°E
H8	33°E	33°30’E
H9	33°30’E	34°E
I0	34°E	34°30’E
I1	34°30’E	35°E
I2	35°E	35°30’E
I3	35°30’E	36°E
I4	36°E	36°30’E
I5	36°30’E	37°E
I6	37°E	37°30’E
I7	37°30’E	38°E
I8	38°E	38°30’E
I9	38°30’E	39°E
J0	39°E	39°30’E
J1	39°30’E	40°E
J2	40°E	40°30’E
J3	40°30’E	41°E
J4	41°E	41°30’E
J5	41°30’E	42°E

Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/2 on the management of fishing capacity

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species, which urges the control of fishing effort and the improvement of the exploitation patterns of demersal fisheries, as well as the limitation of catches of juveniles of small pelagic species;

CONSIDERING that in the advice for 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) considered that several demersal and small pelagic stocks were overexploited, some with a high risk of recruitment overfishing, and that sustainable management required measures aimed at controlling or reducing the fishing effort from 10 percent up to 40 percent and more;

NOTING that the stock assessment conducted by the SAC only concerns specific geographical subareas corresponding to the data supplied by certain contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) and that the assessed stocks may be shared with adjacent GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs);

CONSIDERING that in cases where no scientific information on the status of fisheries and of the exploited resources is available, a more cautious approach is needed in the development plans of fishing fleets and that suitable information from adjacent areas could be used for proper and precautionary management of fisheries until sound scientific evidence becomes available;

NOTING that the SAC advises to apply the precautionary approach;

CONSIDERING that any possible global limitation of the fleet capacity at the regional level shall not prevent nor hinder the transferability of the fishing fleet capacity from one CPC to another, and from one GSA to another, provided that the targeted fisheries are exploited sustainably and that the overall fleet capacity does not increase;

RECALLING the International Plan of Action for the management of fishing capacity (IPOA-CAP) elaborated within the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which calls upon states to cooperate, where appropriate, through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) or arrangements and other forms of cooperation, with a view to ensuring the effective management of the fishing capacity, as specified in Article 27 of the IPOA-CAP;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6 on the submission of data on fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING that the GFCM, at its thirty-second session (FAO headquarters, February 2008), requested the SAC to carry out an evaluation of the consequences of a possible freezing of the fleet capacity and the proposals and results of the workshop on the assessment, management and monitoring of fishing fleet capacity held in February 2010;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register by June 2010 to contain information on all vessels, boats, ships or other crafts that are equipped and used for commercial fishing activities, and recalling that, as from 2011, CPCs shall submit a full database, at least at the beginning of each calendar year, followed by updates as appropriate;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. In order for the GFCM to be able to develop an action plan to manage the fishing capacity at the regional level (regional plan of action), including actions to monitor and manage the fishing capacity, measures to tackle overcapacity based on scientific advice shall be taken, where appropriate.

2. For the purpose of this recommendation, "fishing capacity" means a fishing vessel's tonnage in gross tonnage (GT) and its engine power in kW. The fishing capacity level per CPC shall be the sum of its vessels expressed in GT and engine power (kW).

3. The levels of the overall fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application shall be determined based on a regional plan of action considering the national and regional fishing capacity management plans and scientific advice.

4. All CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat, via the electronic tools available on the GFCM website, an updated list of their respective vessels larger than 15 metres in length overall (LOA) that were entitled to fish in the GFCM area of application in 2007, 2008 or 2009, before the thirty-fifth session of the GFCM. These lists shall contain the following information for each vessel:

- vessel name;
- national registration number (code assigned by CPCs);
- vessel registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001);
- previous flag;
- previous details of deletion from other registers;
- International radio call sign;
- vessel type, LOA, GT and engine power expressed in kW;
- name and address of owner, and/or charterer, and/or operator;
- main target species;
- main gear used and fleet segment allocation; and
- GSA(s) where fishing occurred.

5. Subregional and national measures, such as temporary closures or fisheries management for other fishing effort limitations, shall be taken into account when establishing actions and measures referred to under paragraph 1.

6. The levels of fishing capacity of vessels larger than 15 metres LOA referred to in paragraph 4 shall be without prejudice to the transferability of fishing capacity from one CPC to another, provided that the overall fishing capacity of concerned CPCs authorized and licensed to fish in the GFCM area of application does not increase.

7. The overall level of fishing capacity shall not be exceeded when vessels are replaced.

8. The existing fishing capacity management plans shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat 30 days before each GFCM annual session, at the latest.

9. The provisions of this recommendation shall not affect more detailed or stricter obligations adopted and implemented by CPCs or other RFMOs.

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/21/1995/2 on the reporting of activities of fishing vessels operating in the Mediterranean Sea whereby it is agreed to set a minimum length of 15 metres for the application of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels in the High Seas, Resolution GFCM/21/1995/4[1] concerning the preparation of a list of fishing boats in operation from national ports in the Mediterranean and the exchange of information on vessels and Resolution GFCM/22/1997/2[2] on the activities of non-contracting parties, as well as the decision adopted by the GFCM at its twenty-seventh session (FAO headquarters, November 2002) to establish a fleet segmentation for the vessels operating in the Mediterranean;

RECALLING that the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) adopted, on 23 June 2001, an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, which stipulates that regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) should take action to strengthen and develop innovative ways, in conformity with international law, to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and, in particular, to establish records of vessels authorized to operate and records of vessels engaged in IUU fishing;

CONSIDERING the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean, held in Venice in 2003;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The Commission shall establish a GFCM record of fishing vessels more than 15 metres in length overall (LOA) authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application (GFCM Authorized Vessel List [GFCM-AVL]). For the purpose of this recommendation, vessels more than 15 metres LOA that are not entered into the record are deemed not to be authorized to fish for, retain on board, transship or land species covered by the Commission.

2. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat, by the end of May of each calendar year, the list of their vessels that are authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, followed by updates as appropriate. The list of data fields, with the related confidentiality status, is included in the Annex to this recommendation.

3. Each CPC shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, any deletion from and/or any modification of the GFCM-AVL any time such changes occur.

4. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain the GFCM-AVL database and make it available through its online channels in a manner consistent with the provisions established under Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/7 on data confidentiality policy and procedures.

[1] This recommendation has been repealed in the context of the revision of the Compendium of GFCM decisions.
[2] This recommendation has been repealed in the context of the revision of the Compendium of GFCM decisions.

5. The flag CPCs of the vessels in the record shall:

a) authorize their vessels to operate in the GFCM area of application only if they are able to fulfil, in respect of these vessels, the requirements and responsibilities under the GFCM Agreement and its conservation and management measures;

b) take necessary measures to ensure that their vessels comply with all the relevant GFCM conservation and management measures;

c) take necessary measures to ensure that their vessels on the GFCM-AVL keep on board valid certificates of registration and valid authorization to fish and/or transship;

d) ensure that their vessels on the GFCM-AVL have no history of IUU fishing activities or, if those vessels have such history, that the new owners have provided sufficient evidence demonstrating that the previous owners and operators have no legal, beneficial or financial interest in, or control over those vessels, or that having taken into account all relevant facts, their vessels are not engaged in or associated with IUU fishing;

e) ensure, to the extent possible, under domestic law, that the owners and operators of their vessels on the GFCM-AVL are not engaged in or associated with fishing activities conducted by vessels not entered into the GFCM-AVL in the GFCM area of application;

f) take necessary measures to ensure, to the extent possible under domestic law, that the owners of the vessels on the GFCM-AVL are citizens or legal entities of the flag CPC so that any control can effectively be made or any punitive action can effectively be taken against them; and

g) keep consistency between the GFCM-AVL and International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) record of vessels.

6. The CPCs shall review their own internal actions and measures taken pursuant to paragraph 5, including punitive and sanction actions and, in a manner consistent with domestic law as regards disclosure, report on the results of the review to the GFCM at its 2007 session and annually thereafter. In consideration of the results of such review, the Commission shall, if appropriate, request the flag CPC of vessels in the GFCM-AVL to take further action to enhance compliance by those vessels to GFCM conservation and management measures.

7. The CPCs shall take measures, under their applicable legislation, to prohibit the fishing for, the retaining on board, the transshipment and landing of species in the GFCM area of application by vessels more than 15 metres LOA which are not entered into the GFCM-AVL.

8. Each CPC shall notify the GFCM Secretariat of any factual information showing that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting vessels not included in the GFCM-AVL to be engaged in fishing and/or transshipment in the GFCM area of application.

9. a) If a vessel mentioned in paragraph 8 is flying the flag of a CPC, the GFCM Executive Secretary shall request that the CPC take necessary measures to prevent the vessel from fishing in the GFCM area of application.

b) If the flag of a vessel mentioned in paragraph 8 cannot be determined or is of a non-contracting party, the GFCM Executive Secretary shall compile such information for future consideration by the Commission.

10. The Commission and the CPCs concerned shall communicate with each other and make the best efforts with FAO and other relevant RFMOs to develop and implement appropriate measures, where feasible, including the establishment of records of a similar nature in a timely manner so as to avoid adverse effects upon fisheries resources in other oceans. Such adverse effects might consist of excessive fishing pressure resulting from a shift of the IUU vessels from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to other seas or oceans.

Annex

The below list encompasses all the compulsory data fields on fishing vessels in the GFCM record of fishing vessels larger than 15 metres in length overall authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application (GFCM-AVL) to be reported to the GFCM following the guidance provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies through the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). These variables are a subset of the GFCM regional fleet register which has to be considered as a reference for the fields description and any optional data applicable to the GFCM-AVL. In line with the GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures, the "data confidentiality status" identifies the access-level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: public (P), semi-private (S) and private (R).

DATA FIELDS	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
Country	P
Reference year	P
Registration authority	P
Vessel name (if any) in Latin characters	P
National registration number	P
Vessel registration number	P
International radio call sign (IRCS) (if applicable)	P
Maritime mobile service identity (MMSI) number (if applicable)	P
IMO number (if applicable)	P
Operational status (activity indicator)	P
Port of registration	P
Year of entry into fishing activity (if any)	P
Authorization to fish (licence indicator)	P
GSA (main geographical fishing area)	P
Secondary fishing statistical area (GSA) (if any)	P
Tertiary fishing statistical area (GSA) (if any)	P
Main fishing gear used	P
Secondary fishing gear (if any)	P
Third fishing gear (if any)	P
Length overall (LOA)	P
Gross tonnage (GT)	P
Construction year	P
Power of the main engine (kW)	P
Owner (name and address)	R

DATA FIELDS	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
Operator (name and address) if different from owner	R
Minimum number of the crew	R
Maximum number of the crew	R
Vessel monitoring system (VMS) indicator (presence/absence)	P

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

IN ACCORDANCE WITH the general guidelines for a GFCM control and enforcement scheme elaborated in 2005 to ensure, *inter alia*, effective monitoring measures;

RECALLING the 2005 Declaration on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, adopted by the Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2005 Rome Declaration) to ensure, *inter alia*, that all large-scale fishing vessels operating on the high seas be required by their flag state to be fitted with vessel monitoring systems (VMS) not later than December 2008, or earlier if so decided by their flag state or any relevant regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs);

RECOGNIZING the developments in satellite-based VMS and their importance in ensuring the long-term conservation and management of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application as part of effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS);

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the need for laying down agreed standards for the establishment of VMS in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING that the establishment of such systems has been discussed in recent sessions of the GFCM and has been considered by the *ad hoc* Working Group on VMS of the Compliance Committee (CoC) as an MCS tool;

AWARE that many parties, as a well as several RFMOs, have established VMS;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

Objective

1. The objective of this recommendation is to contribute to the long-term conservation and management of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application through the establishment of VMS.

Application

2. This recommendation shall only apply to fishing vessels which are operating within the GFCM area of application and, in particular, to the fishing vessels which are included in the GFCM authorized vessels list established by Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application.

3. Each contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) shall implement a satellite-based VMS for its commercial fishing vessels exceeding 15 metres in length overall, in conformity with the requirements laid down in this recommendation, without prejudice to stricter obligations that CPCs may have engaged in.

Satellite tracking device requirements

4. While specific operational details of the VMS of CPCs may vary and include hybrid systems, they shall ensure that the satellite tracking devices fitted on board fishing vessels shall enable those fishing vessels to continuously collect and transmit automatically the following data, at least every

two hours while out of its base port, to the fisheries monitoring centre (FMC), or an equivalent authority, in the flag state:

a) the vessel registration numberof the vessel as recorded in the GFCM fishing fleet register and authorized vessels list;

b) the geographical position of the vessel (longitude and latitude) with a minimum resolution of 500 metres and a confidence interval of 99 percent;

c) the date and time of the fixing of the said position of the vessel; and

d) the speed and course of the vessel.

When a fishing vessel is in its base port, the satellite tracking device may be switched off, subject to prior notification to the FMC of the flag state, or equivalent authority.

5. Each CPC shall:

a) require its fishing vessels to be equipped with an autonomous system able to automatically transmit a message to the land-based FMC in the flag state, or an equivalent authority, allowing a continuous tracking of the position of a fishing vessel by the CPC of that fishing vessel. If the satellite tracking device is turned off, either deliberately or due to malfunction, the system must be capable of sending an alarm signal to the FMC or an equivalent authority, so to improve safety conditions for the crew members;

b) take all the necessary measures to ensure that the FMC, or an equivalent authority, receives, through the on-board satellite tracking device, the data mentioned in paragraph 4 in electronic format and, to this end, that the FMC or an equivalent authority, is equipped with computer hardware and software enabling automatic data processing and electronic data transmission;

c) provide for back-up and recovery procedures in case of system failures; and

d) ensure, as much as possible, that the satellite tracking devices on board its fishing vessels are tamper-proof and that they are not susceptible to manual input of position data. To this end, the on-board satellite tracking device(s) must be located within a sealed unit and be protected by official seals of a type that reveals whether the unit has been accessed or tampered with. In the event that a CPC has evidence, following an inspection, that the on-board satellite tracking devices do not meet the requirements mentioned above, or have been tampered with, it shall immediately notify the flag state of the vessel.

Duties of the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS

6. Masters and/or owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS shall ensure that the satellite tracking devices on board their vessels are permanently operational and that the information identified in paragraph 4 is collected at least every two hours. Masters and/or owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS shall in particular ensure that:

a) VMS reports and messages are not altered in any way;

b) the antennas connected to the satellite monitoring devices are not obstructed in any way;

c) the power supply of the satellite tracking devices are not interrupted in any way; and

d) the satellite tracking devices are not removed from the vessel.

7. In the event of a technical failure or non-operation of the satellite tracking devices fitted on board a fishing vessel, the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS, or their representative, shall communicate to the flag state, every four hours starting from the time the technical failure or the non-operation of VMS were detected, the up-to-date geographical position of the vessel by any available means (telephone text message, e-mail, facsimile, radio, etc.).

8. Fishing vessels with a defective on-board satellite tracking device shall take immediate steps to have the device repaired or replaced as soon as possible and, in any event, as soon as the fishing vessels enter a port. Fishing vessels shall not be allowed by the flag state/the port state to commence another fishing trip in the GFCM area of application without having the defective devices repaired or replaced, unless authorized to leave by the competent flag state/the port state authority.

9. Until 31 December 2010, masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels referred to in paragraph 3 which are not equipped with VMS shall report to the FMC, or equivalent authority, at least every four hours by any available means (telephone text message, e-mail, facsimile, radio, etc.). Such reports shall include, *inter alia*, information on the official numbers (radio call sign and vessel registration number), the name of the fishing vessel, the date, the time (coordinated universal time) and the geographical position (latitude and longitude) when transmitting the report to their competent authorities, as well as:

a) the geographical position at the beginning of the fishing operation;

b) the geographical position at the end of the fishing operation; and

c) additional information on the geographical position while fishing operations occur.

Role of the CPCs

10. When CPCs did not receive data transmission, or have reasons to doubt the correctness of the data transmission they have received, they shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS, or their representative, as soon as possible. Where appropriate, CPCs shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether the equipment has been tampered with. The outcome of this investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence, legal proceedings), shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat that will report the matter to the Commission for consideration/action (e.g. inclusion of the vessel in the GFCM list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application).

11. When CPCs have reasons to doubt the correctness of the data transmission they have received and suspect that the fishing vessel concerned will seek access to the ports of a third country within the GFCM area of application, they shall notify the port state. The port state shall ensure either that the fishing vessel is denied access to its ports or that the fishing vessel is subject to inspection, consistent with the provisions in Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

12. Each CPC shall provide annually to the GFCM Secretariat a progress report on its VMS, consistent with this recommendation.

13. Each CPC shall notify the name, address, email, telephone and facsimile numbers of the relevant authorities of their FMC, or equivalent authority, to the GFCM Secretariat by 31 December 2009. Each CPC shall also notify without delay to the GFCM Secretariat any changes in these contacts. The GFCM Secretariat shall draw and maintain a list of contacts based on the information it receives by CPCs.

14. The CPCs are encouraged to make VMS data available to the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) in summary form for its meetings, including its subcommittees, to estimate fishing effort and for any other scientific purpose it deems important for its work.

Role of the GFCM Secretariat

15. Based on the national reports received according to paragraph 13, the GFCM Secretariat shall report to CPCs, at the session of the CoC, on the implementation of and compliance with this recommendation.

16 By 1 January 2011, the GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for VMS data.

Confidentiality/data security

17. The GFCM Executive Secretary shall ensure that any information provided to the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this recommendation will be maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/7 on data confidentiality policy and procedures.

Recommendation GFCM/22/1997/1 on the limitation of the use of driftnets in the Mediterranean

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that on 22 December 1989, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted by consensus Resolution 44/225 on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing and its impact on the marine living resources of the world's oceans and seas;

CONSIDERING that uncontrolled expansion and growth of driftnetting may entail serious disadvantages in terms of increased fishing effort and increased bycatch of species other than the target species, and that it was therefore desirable to regulate fishing with driftnets;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following recommendation:

1. No vessel flying the flag of a contracting party or cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) may keep on board, or use for fishing, one or more driftnets whose individual or total length is more than 2.5 kilometres;

2. Throughout the fishing referred to in paragraph 1, the net, if longer than one kilometre, shall remain attached to the vessel. However, within the 12 mile coastal band, a vessel may detach itself from the net, provided that the net is kept under constant observation.

1.3 Recommendations on data and information reporting

Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/1 on the reporting of aquaculture data and information repealing Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/6

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objectives of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) include ensuring the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which calls for sustainable aquaculture development and responsible aquaculture practices;

RECALLING the role of the GFCM in promoting the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters;

RECALLING Rule XVII 1. b) of the GFCM Rules of Procedure whereby contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) have an obligation to provide information on production as well as other data relevant to the work of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ);

CONSIDERING the continuous development of the Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) over the past years;

RECOGNIZING the need for the CAQ to have reliable data available in order to carry out its work effectively;

RECALLING that standards in aquaculture data collection and statistics should be established in line with the guidelines set by the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Aquaculture Statistics (CWP-AS);

NOTING the proposal made at the sixth session of the CAQ (Albania, December 2008) to establish a regional data collection scheme for aquaculture;

NOTING that the thirty-first session of the GFCM (FAO headquarters, January 2007) recommended that the responsibilities of the SIPAM national coordinators be formally endowed with a national institution;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The CPCs shall submit the data for all the parameters listed below to the GFCM Secretariat, on an annual basis:

<u>production statistics</u>

- CWP-AS[1] statistical areas;
- culture environment (brackish, marine and freshwater);
- cultured species (scientific and common names; including capture-based species);
- system of culture (extensive, semi-intensive, intensive);
- type of culture (cages, ponds, raceways, hatcheries, etc.);
- type of product (ongrowing, eggs, fingerlings, etc.);
- capture-based aquaculture input (seed quantity: eggs, wild fingerlings, wild fish, etc.);
- production quantity (tonnes/units); and

[1] See *The Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics: Its origin, role and structure.* FAO Fisheries Circular. No. 193. December 1995.

- production value (currency);

<u>production centres</u>

- units (segments) of production (hatcheries, ongrowing farms);
- number of production centres per unit (segment);
- cultured species per unit (segment);
- total volume (m3) of facilities of production centres per segment; and
- destination of production per segment (consumption, ongrowing, restocking, ornamental);

<u>market</u>

- trade and consumption
    - imports and exports of aquatic products of animal origin (weight and value);
    - imports and exports of species that are also produced with aquaculture (weight and value); and
    - top five import origins and export destinations of farmed species.

2. The data shall be submitted by 31 December, the reference year for submitted data being the preceding year.

3. The CPCs shall nominate a national focal point responsible for the submission of aquaculture data.

Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6 on the submission of data on fishing activities in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that rational management for sustainable fisheries is dependent on the scientific utilization of relevant data on fishing fleet capacity, on the fishing activities carried out, on the status of exploited biological resources and on the social and economic situation of fisheries;

RECALLING the subregional approach to fisheries management as enshrined in the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), with a view to better addressing the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region;

NOTING the importance of multidisciplinary data and information to monitor and assess fisheries and fisheries resources and to ensure their sustainable exploitation;

RECOGNIZING the need to develop a GFCM database, on the basis of the information received from contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to a standardized format;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as an instrument supporting the implementation of the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries (mid-term strategy) through the identification and collection of fisheries-related data necessary to improve the formulatation of sound scientific advice by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies;

CONSIDERING that a timely submission of complete data and the analysis of the status of fisheries and exploited resources are of paramount importance for the effectiveness and credibility of GFCM management measures;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the importance of the classification priority species groups as identified by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), of the use of the GFCM fleet segmentation for the collection of economic and biological data, as well as of the use of standard nominal fishing effort measurement;

NOTING that relevant data on fishing fleets, red coral and common dolphinfish as identified by the SAC in the DCRF are already requested under existing recommendations GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices, GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register, GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2, and GFCM/36/2012/1 on further measures for the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the decision taken by the GFCM at its fortieth session to adopt, for a one-year period, Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 on the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework, and to reconsider its contents at its forty-first session;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat national data on catch, incidental catch of vulnerable species, fishing effort, socio-economic and biological information (as specified in Annex 1) for the first time in 2018, and subsequently each calendar year. Such submission shall be done in accordance with appropriate data submission standards, procedures and protocols to be made available online by the GFCM Secretariat. Data shall be compiled following the specifications on the GFCM fleet segmentation (Annex 2) and on fishing effort measurement (Annex 3).

2. In addition to the data mentioned above, CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat for the first time in 2018, and subsequently each calendar year, information needed to assess the status of those stocks considered priority by the Commission. Such submission shall be done using the stock assessment form (SAF) made available online by the GFCM Secretariat and following the data structure specified in Annex 5.

3. The CPCs shall submit the data referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 according to submission specifications (reporting schedule, reference year and frequency) as defined in Annex 4. With a view to ensuring consistency of the time series in the GFCM database, populated with data submitted in line with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix and repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1 up to the 2015 reference year, the first data submission in 2018 shall also cover the preceding two-year timeframe, i.e. 2016 and 2017.

4. The quality of data submitted pursuant to this recommendation shall be regularly assessed with a view to ensuring the formulation of scientific advice for the Commission.

5. Relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies may draw the attention of the Commission to the possible need for any revision of Annexes 1–5 to this recommendation in order to ensure the effectiveness of data collection and analysis.

6. Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 is hereby repealed.

7. All references to the Task 1 statistical matrix and Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 found in previous GFCM recommendations and resolutions will be automatically replaced by references to the DCRF upon the entry into force of this recommendation.

Annex 1

GFCM DATA FIELDS (DCRF TASKS)

The data variables listed below are those that should be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat following the guidance provided by the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies through the DCRF manual, including field definitions, list of species (groups 1, 2 and 3 by GFCM subregion), fishing gear, vulnerable species, shared stocks. In line with the GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures, the "data confidentiality status" identifies the access-level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: Public (P), Semi-private (S), Private (R).

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)			**MANDATORY (X)**	**DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS**
Global figures of national fisheries		Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landings	X	P
		Total capacity (GT)	X	P
		Total engine power (kW)	X	P
Catch	**Total landing** (by GSA and fleet segment)	Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landings	X	P
	Catch per species (by GSA and fleet segment)	Species	X	P
		Total landings per species	X	P
		Total discards per species (if any)	X	S
		Total catch per species	X	P
Incidental catch of vulnerable species (by GSA and fleet segment)[1]		Date	X	P
		Source of data	X	S
		Fishing gear (if available)	X	P
		Group of vulnerable species[1]	X	P
		Family (if available)	X	P
		Species (if available)	X	P
		Total number of individuals caught	X	P
		Total weight of individuals caught (if available)	X	P
		Number of individuals released alive (if available)	X	S
		Number of dead individuals (if available)	X	S

[1] Mandatory for the GFCM vulnerable species

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)			MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
		Number of individuals released in unknown status (if available)	X	S
Effort	**Fleet segment** (by GSA and fleet segment)	Fishing days	X	S
		Capacity	X	P
		Activity	X	S
		Nominal effort	X	S
		Number of vessels	X	P
	Fishing gear (by GSA)	Fishing gear	X	S
		Fishing days (by fishing gear)	X	S
	CPUE (by GSA)[2]	Fishing gear	X	P
		Species[2]	X	P
		Nominal effort	X	S
		CPUE	X	S
Socio-economics	**Economic and social data** (by GSA and fleet segment)	Capacity (gross tonnage)	X	P
		Capacity (engine power)	X	P
		Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landing value	X	S
		Total days at sea	X	S
	Operating costs (by GSA and fleet segment)	Number of vessels	X	P
		Personnel costs	X	R
		Fuel consumption (if available)	X	R
		Fuel price (if available)	X	R
		Total fuel cost (if available)	X	R
		Repair and maintenance costs	X	R
		Commercial costs	X	R
		Other variable costs	X	R
		Capital costs	X	R
		Value of physical capital	X	R
		Fixed costs	X	R
		Employment	X	R
		Currency	X	S

[2] Mandatory for the species of group 1 and group 2

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)			MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
	Species value (by GSA and fleet segment)[3]	Number of vessels	X	P
		Species[3]	X	P
		Total landing volume	X	P
		Total landing value	X	S
		Prices by commercial species	X	S
		Currency	X	S
	Other economic aspects (by GSA and fleet segment)	Operating subsidies		R
		Investments in physical capital		R
		Other income		R
		Full-time equivalent (FTE)		S
		Number of persons in the crew < 25 years-old		S
		Number of persons in the crew 25-40 years-old		S
		Number of persons in the crew > 40 years-old		S
		Currency		S
Biological information	**Length data** (by GSA)[4]	Source of data	X	S
		Name of the scientific survey (if any)	X	S
		Fleet segment (only if from fishery-dependent data)	X	S
		Species[4]	X	S
		Length	X	S
		Number of individuals sampled (per length classes)	X	S
		Weight of individuals sampled (per length classes)	X	S
		Number of individuals expanded (per length classes)	X	S
	Size at first maturity (by GSA)[5]	Species[5]	X	P
		Sex	X	S

[3] Mandatory for the species of group 1 and 2
[4] Mandatory for the species of group 1, 2 and 3
[5] Mandatory for the species of group 1.

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)			MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
Biological information		L_{50}	X	S
		Reference (if any)	X	S
	Maturity data (by GSA)[5]	Source of data	X	S
		Name of the scientific survey (if any)	X	P
		Fleet segment (only if from fishery-dependent data)	X	P
		Species[5]	X	P
		Length	X	S
		Sex	X	S
		Maturity[6]	X	S
		Number of individuals sampled (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	X	S
		Weight of individuals sampled (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	X	S
		Number of individuals expanded (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	X	S
		Habitat	X	P
		Site	X	P
		Gear type	X	P
		Mesh size		S
		Number of fishermen	X	S
		Fishing days	X	S
		Average number of “gear units” per day per fisherman	X	S
		Total catch of silver eel	X	P
		Total catch of yellow eel	X	P
		Total catch of silver and yellow eel	X	P
		Total catch of glass eel	X	P
		Stocking life stage	X	P
		Stocking (kg/year)	X	P

[6] Following the scale of maturity stages (DCRF manual).

Annex 2

GFCM fleet segmentation
(Combination of vessel groups and length classes)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3" rowspan="2">VESSEL GROUPS</th><th colspan="4">LENGTH CLASSES (LOA)</th></tr>
<tr><th>< 6 m</th><th>6 - 12 m</th><th>12-24 m</th><th>> 24 m</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Polyvalent</td><td rowspan="6">P</td><td rowspan="2">Small-scale vessels without engine using passive gear</td><td>P-01</td><td>P-02</td><td rowspan="2">P-03</td><td rowspan="2">P-04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">P-13</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small-scale vessels with engine using passive gear</td><td>P-05</td><td>P-06</td><td>P-07</td><td>P-08</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Polyvalent vessels</td><td rowspan="2">P-09</td><td rowspan="2">P-10</td><td>P-11</td><td>P-12</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">P-14</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Seiners</td><td rowspan="4">S</td><td rowspan="2">Purse seiners</td><td rowspan="2">S-01</td><td rowspan="2">S-02</td><td>S-03</td><td>S-04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">S-09</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Tuna seiners</td><td rowspan="2">S-05</td><td rowspan="2">S-06</td><td>S-07</td><td>S-08</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">S-10</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Dredgers</td><td rowspan="2">D</td><td rowspan="2">Dredgers</td><td rowspan="2">D-01</td><td>D-02</td><td>D-03</td><td rowspan="2">D-04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">D-05</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Trawlers</td><td rowspan="3">T</td><td>Beam trawlers</td><td>T-01</td><td>T-02</td><td>T-03</td><td>T-04</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Pelagic trawlers</td><td rowspan="2">T-05</td><td>T-06</td><td>T-07</td><td>T-08</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">T-13</td></tr>
<tr><td>Trawlers</td><td>T-09</td><td>T-10</td><td>T-11</td><td>T-12</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Longliners</td><td rowspan="2">L</td><td rowspan="2">Longliners</td><td rowspan="2">L-01</td><td>L-02</td><td>L-03</td><td>L-04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">L-05</td></tr>
</table>

Note

- A vessel is assigned to a group on the basis of the dominant gear used in terms of percentage of time: more than 50 percent of the time at sea using the same fishing gear during the year.
- “Polyvalent vessels” are defined as all the vessels using more than one gear, with a combination of passive and active gear, none of which exceeding more than 50 percent of the time at sea during the year.
- A vessel is considered “active” when it executes at least one fishing operation during the reference year in the GFCM area of application.
- The yellow cells contain the codes of reported fleet segments which should be included in the GFCM data submission. If necessary, fleet segments as identified in the orange cells can be used: P-13 (P-01 + P-02), P-14 (P-11 + P-12), S-09 (S-03 + S-04), S-10 (S-07 + S-08), D-05 (D-02 + D-03), T-13 (T-06 + T-07 + T-08) and L-05 (L-02 + L-03 + L-04). Any proposal for a different aggregation of fleet segments should be brought to the attention of the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, mentionning the rationale and corresponding references (e.g. existing scientific studies), which in turn should confirm the similarity/homogeneity of the combined cells.

Annex 3

Table on fishing effort measurement

Effort measurement by fishing gear

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
Surrounding nets	Purse seines	PS	GT	Number of fishing sets[7]	GT x Number of fishing sets
	Surrounding nets without purse lines	LA			
	Surrounding nets (nei)	SUX			
Seine nets	Beach seines	SB	Net length[8]	Fishing days	Net length x Fishing days
	Boat seines	SV			
	Seine nets (nei)	SX			
Trawls	Beam trawls	TBB	GT	Fishing days	GT x Fishing days
	Bottom pair trawls	PTB			
	Bottom trawls (nei)	TB			
	Midwater pair trawls	PTM			
	Midwater trawls (nei)	TM			
	Multiple bottom otter trawls	OTP			
	Single boat bottom otter trawls	OTB			
	Single boat midwater otter trawls	OTM			
	Trawls (nei)	TX			
	Twin bottom otter trawls	OTT			

[7] Should this information not be available, "fishing days" may be used as activity unit upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case by case basis.

[8] Should this information not be available, "GT" may be used as capacity unit upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case by case basis.

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
Dredges	Hand dredges	DRH	GT	Fishing days	GT x Fishing days
	Mechanised dredges	DRM			
	Towed dredges	DRB			
Gillnets and entangling nets	Combined gillnets-trammel nets	GTN	Net length^2	Fishing days	Net length x Fishing days
	Drift gillnets	GND			
	Encircling gillnets	GNC			
	Fixed gillnets (on stakes)	GNF			
	Gillnets and entantling nets (nei)	GEN			
	Set gillnets (anchored)	GNS			
	Trammel nets	GTR			
Traps	Aerial traps	FAR	Number of traps/pots^2	Fishing days	Number of traps/pots x Fishing days
	Barrier, fences, weirs, etc	FWR			
	Fyke nets	FYK			
	Pots	FPO			
	Stationary uncovered pound nets	FPN			
	Stow nets	FSN			
	Traps (nei)	FIX			
Hooks and lines	Handlines and hand-operated pole-and-lines	LHP	Number of lines^2	Fishing days	Number of lines x Fishing days
	Mechanized lines and pole-and-lines	LHM			
	Trolling lines	LTL			

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
	Vertical lines	LVT			
	Drifting longlines	LLD	Number of hooks[2]	Fishing days	Number of hooks x Fishing days
	Hooks and lines (nei)	LX			
	Longlines (nei)	LL			
	Set longlines	LLS			
Miscellaneous gear	Diving	MDV	Number / Length / GT	Fishing days	Number / Length / GT x Fishing days
	Drive-in nets	MDR			
	Electric fishing	MEL			
	Gear nei	MIS			
	Hand implements (wrenching gear, clamps, tongs, rakes, spears)	MHI			
	Harpoons	HAR			
	Pumps	MPM			
	Pushnets	MPN			
	Scoopnets	MSP			

Annex 4

Data submission calendar

Each calendar year (n), the requested data, as specified in Annex 2 and pertaining to the year before submission (n-1), shall be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat on the basis of the following schedule:

- May
    - Global figures of national fisheries
    - Socio-economics – Species value[9]
    - Socio-economics – Other economic aspects[3]
    - Socio-economics – Operating costs[3]
- June
    - Catch – Landing data
    - Catch – Catch data per species
    - Effort – Fleet segment
    - Effort – Fishing gear
    - Effort – CPUE
- July
    - Incidental catch of vulnerable species
    - Biological information – Length data
    - Biological information – Size at first maturity
    - Biological information – Maturity data
- September
    - Biological information – Stock assessment form[10]
    - Biological information – European eel
- November
    - Socio-economics – Economic and social data

[9] Data should refer to the reference year n-2 and their submission should take place on a biennial basis only for those countries that do not have annual economic surveys in place. Countries collecting these data on a yearly basis are requested to submit them annually (keeping reference year n-2).

[10] The date of data submission is linked to the scheduling of the GFCM stock assessment working groups and therefore may differ from one year to another.

Annex 5

Stock assessment forms

The stock assessment forms (SAFs) to be used to submit the information required to assess the status of those stocks considered as priority stocks by the Commission shall be provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies according to the following structure:

- basic identification data;
- stock identification and biological information (stock unit, growth and maturity);
- fisheries information (description of the fleet, historical trends, management measures, reference points);
- fisheries independent information (name, brief description of the chosen method and assumptions used, spatial distribution of the resources, historical trends);
- ecological information (protected species potentially affected by the fisheries, environmental indexes);
- stock assessment (name of the model, model assumptions, scripts, input data and parameters, tuning data, results, robustness analysis, retrospective analysis, comparison between model runs, sensitivity analysis, assessment quality);
- stock predictions (short, medium, and long term); and
- draft scientific advice.

SAFs shall be revised by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a regular basis and their most updated version will be disseminated online by the GFCM Secretariat.

Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 on the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that rational management for sustainable fisheries is dependent on the scientific utilization of relevant data on fishing fleet capacity, on the fishing activities carried out, on the status of exploited biological resources and on the social and economic situation of fisheries;

RECALLING the subregional approach to fisheries management as enshrined in the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), with a view to better addressing the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region;

NOTING the importance of multidisciplinary data and information to monitor and assess fisheries and fisheries resources and to ensure their sustainable exploitation;

RECOGNIZING the need to develop a GFCM database, on the basis of the information received from contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to a standardized format;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as an instrument supporting the identification of fisheries-related data necessary to formulate sound scientific advice;

CONSIDERING that a timely submission of complete data and the analysis of the status of fisheries and exploited resources are of paramount importance for the effectiveness and credibility of GFCM management measures;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the importance of the classification by groups of priority species as identified by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), of the use of the GFCM fleet segmentation for the collection of economic and biological data, as well as of the use of standard nominal fishing effort measurement;

NOTING that relevant data on fishing fleet, red coral and common dolphinfish as identified by the SAC in the DCRF are already requested under existing GFCM recommendations GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices, GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register, GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2 and GFCM/36/2012/1 on further measures for the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat national data on catch, incidental catch of vulnerable species, fishing effort, socio-economic and biological information (as specified in Annex 1) for the first time in 2017, and subsequently each calendar year. Such submission shall be made in accordance with appropriate data submission standards, procedures and protocols to be made available online by the GFCM Secretariat. Data shall be compiled following the specifications on the GFCM fleet segmentation (Annex 2) and on fishing effort measurement (Annex 3).

2. In addition to the data mentioned above, CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat for the first time in 2017, and subsequently each calendar year, the information needed to assess the status of those stocks considered as priority stocks by the Commission. Such submission shall be made using the stock assessment form (SAF) made available online by the GFCM Secretariat and following the data structure specified in Annex 5.

3. The CPCs shall submit the data referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 according to submission specifications (reporting schedule, reference year and frequency) as defined in Annex 4. With a view

to ensuring the consistency of time series in the GFCM database, populated with data submitted in line with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix and repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1 up to the 2014 reference year, the first data submission in 2017 shall also cover the preceding two-year time frame, i.e. 2015 and 2016.

4. The quality of data submitted pursuant to this recommendation shall be regularly assessed with a view to ensuring the formulation of scientific advice for the Commission.

5. Relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies may draw the attention of the Commission to the possible need for any revision of Annexes 1–5 to this recommendation in order to ensure the effectiveness of the data collection and analysis.

Annex 1

Data fields (DCRF tasks)

The data variables listed below are those that should be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat following the guidance provided by the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies through the DCRF manual, which indicates namely the field definitions, list of species (groups 1, 2 and 3 by GFCM subregion), fishing gear, vulnerable species and shared stocks. In line with the GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures, the "data confidentiality status" identifies the access level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: public (P), semi-private (S) or private (R).

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)			MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
Global figures of national fisheries		Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landings	X	P
		Total capacity (GT)	X	P
		Total engine power (kW)	X	P
Catch	**Total landing** (by GSA and fleet segment)	Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landings	X	P
	Catch per species (by GSA and fleet segment)	Species	X	P
		Total landings per species	X	P
		Total discards per species (if any)	X	S
		Total catch per species	X	P
Incidental catch of vulnerable species (by GSA and fleet segment)[1]		Date	X	P
		Source of data	X	S
		Fishing gear (if available)	X	P
		Group of vulnerable species[1]	X	P
		Family (if available)	X	P
		Species (if available)	X	P
		Total number of individuals caught	X	P
		Total weight of individuals caught (if available)	X	P
		Number of individuals released alive (if available)	X	S
		Number of dead individuals (if available)	X	S
		Number of individuals released in unknown status (if available)	X	S
Effort	**Fleet segment** (by GSA and fleet segment)	Fishing days	X	S
		Capacity	X	P
		Nominal effort	X	S
		Number of vessels	X	P
	Fishing gear (by GSA)	Fishing gear	X	S
		Fishing days (by fishing gear)	X	S
	CPUE	Fishing gear	X	P

[1]Mandatory for the GFCM vulnerable species.

	(by GSA)[2]	Species[2]	X	P
		Nominal effort	X	S
		CPUE	X	S

Socio-economics	**Economic and social data** (by GSA and fleet segment)	Capacity (gross tonnage)	X	P
		Capacity (engine power)	X	P
		Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landing value	X	S
		Total days at sea	X	S
	Operating costs (by GSA and fleet segment)	Number of vessels	X	P
		Personnel costs	X	R
		Fuel consumption (if available)	X	R
		Fuel price (if available)	X	R
		Total fuel cost (if available)	X	R
		Repair and maintenance costs	X	R
		Commercial costs	X	R
		Other variable costs	X	R
		Capital costs	X	R
		Value of physical capital	X	R
		Fixed costs	X	R
		Employment	X	R
		Currency	X	S
	Species value (by GSA and fleet segment)[3]	Number of vessels	X	P
		Species[3]	X	P
		Total landing volume	X	P
		Total landing value	X	S
		Prices by commercial species	X	S
		Currency	X	S
	Other economic aspects (by GSA and fleet segment)	Operating subsidies		R
		Investments in physical capital		R
		Other income		R
		Full-time equivalent (FTE)		S
		Number of persons in the crew < 25 year-old		S
		Number of persons in the crew 25–40 year-old		S
		Number of persons in the crew > 40 year-old		S
		Currency		S

Biological information	**Length data** (by GSA)[4]	Source of data	X	S
		Name of the scientific survey (if any)	X	S
		Fleet segment (only if from fishery-dependent data)	X	S
		Species[4]	X	S
		Length	X	S

[2] Mandatory for the species of groups 1 and 2.
[3] Mandatory for the species of groups 1 and 2.
[4] Mandatory for the species of groups 1, 2 and 3.

		Number of individuals sampled (per length classes)	X	S
		Weight of individuals sampled (per length classes)	X	S
		Number of individuals expanded (per length classes)	X	S
	Size at first maturity (by GSA)[5]	Species[5]	X	P
		Sex	X	S
		L_{50}	X	S
		Reference (if any)	X	S
	Maturity data (by GSA)[5]	Source of data	X	S
		Name of the scientific survey (if any)	X	P
		Fleet segment (only if from fishery-dependent data)	X	P
		Species[5]	X	P
		Length	X	S
		Sex	X	S
		Maturity[6]	X	S
		Number of individuals sampled (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	X	S
		Weight of individuals sampled (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	X	S
		Number of individuals expanded (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	X	S
	European eel	Habitat	X	P
		Site	X	P
		Gear types	X	P
		Mesh size (if any)	X	S
		Number of fishermen	X	S
		Fishing days	X	S
		Average number of “gear units” per day per fisherman (if any)	X	S
		Total catch of silver eel (if any)	X	P
		Total catch of yellow eel (if any)	X	P
		Total catch of glass eel (if any)	X	P

[5] Mandatory for the species of group 1.

[6] Following the scale of maturity stages (DCRF manual).

Annex 2

GFCM fleet segmentation
(Combination of vessel groups and length classes)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3" rowspan="2">VESSEL GROUPS</th><th colspan="4">LENGTH CLASSES (LOA)</th></tr>
<tr><th>< 6 m</th><th>6–12 m</th><th>12-24 m</th><th>> 24 m</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Polyvalent</td><td rowspan="4">P</td><td rowspan="2">Small-scale vessels without engine using passive gear</td><td>P-01</td><td>P-02</td><td rowspan="2">P-03</td><td rowspan="2">P-04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">P-13</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small-scale vessels with engine using passive gear</td><td>P-05</td><td>P-06</td><td>P-07</td><td>P-08</td></tr>
<tr><td>Polyvalent vessels</td><td rowspan="2">P-09</td><td rowspan="2">P-10</td><td>P-11</td><td>P-12</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">P-14</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Seiners</td><td rowspan="2">S</td><td>Purse seiners</td><td>S-01</td><td>S-02</td><td>S-03</td><td>S-04</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuna seiners</td><td>S-05</td><td>S-06</td><td>S-07</td><td>S-08</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dredgers</td><td>D</td><td>Dredgers</td><td>D-01</td><td>D-02</td><td>D-03</td><td>D-04</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Trawlers</td><td rowspan="3">T</td><td>Beam trawlers</td><td>T-01</td><td>T-02</td><td>T-03</td><td>T-04</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pelagic trawlers</td><td>T-05</td><td>T-06</td><td>T-07</td><td>T-08</td></tr>
<tr><td>Trawlers</td><td>T-09</td><td>T-10</td><td>T-11</td><td>T-12</td></tr>
<tr><td>Longliners</td><td>L</td><td>Longliners</td><td>L-01</td><td>L-02</td><td>L-03</td><td>L-04</td></tr>
</table>

Note

- A vessel is assigned to a group on the basis of the dominant gear used in terms of duration, i.e. more than 50 percent of the time at sea using the same fishing gear during the year.
- “Polyvalent vessels” are defined as all the vessels using more than one gear, with a combination of passive and active gear, none of which exceeding more than 50 percent of the time at sea during the year.
- A vessel is considered “active” when it executes at least one fishing operation during the reference year in the GFCM area of application.
- The yellow cells contain the codes of reported fleet segments which should be included in the GFCM data submission. If necessary, fleet segments as identified in the orange cells can be used: P-13 (P-01 + P-02), P-14 (P-11 + P-12), S-09 (S-03 + S-04), S-10 (S-07 + S-08), D-05 (D-02 + D-03), T-13 (T-06 + T-07 + T-08) and L-05 (L-02 + L-03 + L-04). Any proposal for a different aggregation of fleet segments should be brought to the attention of the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, mentioning the rationale and corresponding references (e.g. existing scientific studies), which in turn should confirm the similarity/homogeneity of the combined cells.

Annex 3

Table on fishing effort measurement

Effort measurement by fleet segment

FLEET SEGMENTS			EFFORT MEASUREMENTS		
Vessel groups		**Length classes (LOA)**	**Unit of capacity**	**Unit of activity**	**Nominal effort**
P	Small-scale vessels without engine using passive gear Small-scale vessels with engine using passive gear Polyvalent vessels	All	Net length[1]	Fishing days	Net length x Fishing days
			Number of traps/pots[1]	Fishing days	Number of traps/pots x Fishing days
			Number of lines[1]	Fishing days	Number of lines x Fishing days
S	Purse seiners Tuna seiners	All	GT	Number of fishing sets[2]	GT x Number of fishing sets
D	Dredgers	All	GT	Fishing days	GT x Fishing days
T	Beam trawlers Pelagic trawlers Trawlers	All	GT	Fishing days	GT x Fishing days
L	Longliners	All	Number of hooks[1]	Fishing days	Number of hooks x Fishing days

[1] Should this information not be available, "GT" may be used as capacity unit, upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

[2] Should this information not be available, "fishing days" may be used as activity unit, upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

Effort measurement by fishing gear

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
Surrounding nets	With purse lines (purse seines)	PS	GT	Number of fishing sets[3]	GT x Number of fishing sets
	One boat operated purse seines	PS1			
	Two boats operated purse seines	PS2			
	Without purse lines (lampara)	LA			
Seine nets	Beach seines	SB	Net length[4]	Fishing days	Net length x Fishing days
	Boat or vessel seines	SV			
	Danish seines	SDN			
	Scottish seines	SSC			
	Pair seines	SPR			
	Seine nets (not specified)	SX			
Trawls	Bottom trawls	TB	GT	Fishing days	GT x Fishing days
	Bottom beam trawls	TBB			
	Bottom otter trawls	OTB			
	Bottom pair trawls	PTB			
	Bottom nephrops trawls	TBN			
	Bottom shrimp trawls	TBS			
	Midwater trawls	TM			
	Midwater otter trawls	OTM			
	Midwater pair trawls	PTM			
	Midwater shrimp trawls	TMS			
	Otter twin trawls	OTT			
	Otter trawls (not specified)	OT			
	Pair trawls (not specified)	PT			
	Other trawls (not specified)	TX			
Dredges	Boat dredges	DRB	GT	Fishing days	GT x Fishing days
	Mechanised dredges	HMD			
	Hand dredges	DRH			
Gillnets and Entangling nets	Set gillnets (anchored)	GNS	Net length[2]	Fishing days	Net length x Fishing days
	Driftnets	GND			
	Encircling gillnets	GNC			
	Fixed gillnets (on stakes)	GNF			
	Trammel nets	GTR			
	Combined gillnets-trammel nets	GTN			
	Gillnets and entangling nets (not specified)	GEN			
	Gillnets (not specified)	GN			
Traps	Stationary uncovered pound nets	FPN	Number of traps/pots[2]	Fishing days	Number of traps/pots x
	Pots	FPO			
	Fyke nets	FYK			
	Stow nets	FSN			
	Barrier, fences, weirs, etc.	FWR			

[3] Should this information not be available, “fishing days” may be used as activity unit upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

[4] Should this information not be available, “GT” may be used as capacity unit upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
	Aerial traps	FAR			Fishing days
	Traps (not specified)	FIX			
Hooks and lines	Handlines and pole-lines (hand operated)	LHP	Number of lines[2]	Fishing days	Number of lines x Fishing days
	Handlines and pole-lines (mechanised)	LHM			
	Trolling lines	LTL			
	Set longlines	LLS	Number of hooks	Fishing days	Number of hooks x Fishing days
	Drifting longlines	LLD			
	Longlines (not specified)	LL			
	Hooks and lines (not specified)	LX			

Annex 4

Data submission calendar

Each calendar year (n), the requested data, as specified in Annex 2 and pertaining to the year before submission (n-1), shall be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat on the basis of the following schedule:

- May
    - Global figures of national fisheries
    - Socio-economics – Species value[5]
    - Socio-economics – Other economic aspects[1]
    - Socio-economics – Operating costs[1]
- June
    - Catch – Landing data
    - Catch – Catch data per species
    - Effort – Fleet segment
    - Effort – Fishing gear
    - Effort – CPUE
- July
    - Incidental catch of vulnerable species
    - Biological information – Length data
    - Biological information – Size at first maturity
    - Biological information – Maturity data
- September
    - Biological information – Stock assessment form[6]
    - Biological information – European eel
- November
    - Socio-economics – Economic and social data

[5] Data should cover the reference year n-2 and their submission should take place on a biennial basis only for those countries that do not have annual economic surveys in place. Countries collecting these data on a yearly basis are requested to submit data each year (keeping reference year n-2).

[6] The date of data submission is linked to the scheduling of the GFCM stock assessment working groups and therefore may differ from one year to another.

Annex 5

Stock assessment forms

The stock assessment forms (SAFs) to be used to submit the information required to assess the status of those stocks considered as priority stocks by the Commission shall be provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies according to the following structure:

- basic identification data;
- stock identification and biological information (stock unit, growth and maturity);
- fisheries information (description of the fleet, historical trends, management measures, reference points);
- fisheries independent information (name, brief description of the chosen method and assumptions used, spatial distribution of the resources, historical trends);
- ecological information (protected species potentially affected by the fisheries, environmental indexes);
- stock assessment (name of the model, model assumptions, scripts, input data and parameters, tuning data, results, robustness analysis, retrospective analysis, comparison between model runs, sensitivity analysis, assessment quality);
- stock predictions (short, medium, and long-term); and
- draft scientific advice.

The SAFs shall be revised by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a regular basis and their most up-to-date version shall be disseminated online by the GFCM Secretariat.

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas and the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which call upon states to maintain a record of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flag and authorized to fish in the high seas as well as to exchange related information, including through FAO and other appropriate global, regional and subregional fisheries organizations;

RECALLING the International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity elaborated within the framework of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which calls upon states to cooperate, where appropriate, through regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements and other forms of cooperation, with a view to ensuring the effective management of fishing capacity;

CONSIDERING that a regional fleet register is an effective and comprehensive tool for the management, at the regional level, of the capacity of fishing fleets and their activity;

RECOGNIZING that the GFCM record of fishing vessels larger than 15 metres in length overall authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application, established under Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, is a subset of the regional fleet register;

NOTING the request made by the GFCM during its thirty-second session (FAO headquarters, February 2008) to address fleet capacity monitoring and management issues;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following recommendation:

1. The GFCM shall establish, by 30 June 2010, a regional fleet register containing information on all vessels, ships, boats or other crafts that are equipped and used for commercial fishing activity in the GFCM area of application.

2. As from 2011, by 31 May of each calendar year, contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall submit a full dataset, as referred to in paragraph 1, followed by updates as appropriate. The updating of the GFCM regional fleet register lies within the responsibility of the CPCs and shall fully reflect the situation of their fleets at any time.

3. The annual data submission shall be done in accordance with appropriate data submission standards and protocols set by the GFCM Secretariat and address the timeframe of the year preceding the submission. The list of data fields as well as related definitions and confidentiality status are included in the Annex to this recommendation.

4. The GFCM Secretariat shall make the regional fleet register database available through its online channels, in a manner consistent with the provisions established under Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/7 on data confidentiality policy and procedures.

Annex

Description of data fields in the GFCM regional fleet register

The data variables below shall be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat following the guidance provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies through the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). In line with the GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures, the "data confidentiality status" identifies the access-level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: Public (P), Semi-private (S), Private (R).

	FIELDS	DESCRIPTION	MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
1	Country	ISO 3-alpha code of the country under which the vessel is operating	X	P
2	Reference year	Year to which the collected data refer	X	P
3	Registration authority	Name of the authority that issued the vessel registration	X	P
4	Vessel name (if any)	Name of the vessel (in Latin characters)	X	P
5	National registration number	Code representing the official vessel identifier as reported in the national fleet register (alphanumeric string)	X	P
6	Vessel registration number	Code representing the national registration number of the vessel (ISO 3-alpha code of the country plus 9 digits)	X	P
7	IMO registration number	If applicable, International Maritime Organization (IMO) identification number assigned to the vessel by IHS Maritime & Trade. This information is compulsory in cases where the fishing vessel is eligible under the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme (Res. GFCM/41/2017/6) (mandatory for vessels > 15 m length overall [LOA])	X	P
8	Previous vessel name	Previous name of vessel, if applicable		P
9	Previous flag State	Previous flag of vessel, if applicable		P
10	Previous deletion from other registers	If applicable, reason why the vessel was deleted from other registers and moved to the current register		P
11	International radio call sign (IRCS)	If applicable, International radio call sign of the vessel. This information is compulsory in cases where the vessel is eligible to obtain the IRCS due to the presence of on-board radiocommunication devices		P

	FIELDS	DESCRIPTION	MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
12	Maritime mobile service identity (MMSI) number	If applicable, maritime mobile service identity (MMSI) number of the vessel. Series of nine digits commonly associated to on-board radio equipment. This information is compulsory in cases where vessel is eligible to obtain the MMSI due to the presence of on-board radiocommunication devices.	X	P
13	Operational status (Activity indicator)	Active / Inactive. Permanent status until receiving allowance to return to activity: indicator Y/N	X	P
14	Port of registration	Full name of the port where the vessel is registered	X	P
15	Year of entry into fishing activity (if any)	Year in which the vessel commenced its fishing activity	X	P
16	Authorization to fish (licence indicator)	Any authorization to fish, e.g. licence, permit or any other official authorization: indicator Y/N	X	P
17	Period authorized for fishing and/or transshipping	Time period authorized for fishing and/or trans-shipping		P
18	Main geographical subarea (GSA)	GSA where the vessel is authorized to fish and operates the majority of the year	X	P
19	Secondary GSA	If any, GSA where the vessel is authorized to fish and operates occasionally		P
20	Tertiary GSA	If any, GSA where the vessel is authorized to fish and operates occasionally		P
21	Main fishing gear used	Main gear, according to the fishing licence of the vessel or the owner/operator, based on the International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Gear (ISSCFG)	X	P
22	Secondary fishing gear	If any, secondary gear according to the fishing licence of the vessel or the owner/operator, based on the ISSCFG		P
23	Third fishing gear	If any, third gear according to the fishing licence of the vessel or the owner/operator, based on the ISSCFG		P
24	Length overall (LOA)	Vessel's LOA in metres, which represents the main longitudinal	X	P

	FIELDS	DESCRIPTION	MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
		dimension of the hull of the vessel. This value should be provided with an accuracy of 2 digits		
25	Gross tonnage (GT)	Gross tonnage, according to the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, London, 1969 (in use since 1996)	X	P
26	Construction year	Year in which the vessel was constructed	X	P
27	Hull material	Material of the vessel hull		P
28	Powered/Motorised	Value indicating whether the power of the vessel's main engine > 0: indicator Y/N		P
29	Power of the main engine (kW)	Total maximum continuous rated output power in kW of all the vessel's main propulsion machinery which appears on the vessel's certificate or register or other official document, according to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel	X	P
30	Power of auxiliary engine(s) (if any)	Total installed auxiliary engine power not included in the value "Power of the main engine"	X	P
31	Owner(s)	Details of the owner(s): name and address (mandatory for vessels >15 m LOA)		R
32	Operator (if different from owner)	Details of the operator: name and address		R
33	Minimum number of the crew	Minimum number of crew required to conduct fishing operations during the reference year (mandatory for vessels >15 m LOA)		R
34	Maximum number of the crew	Number of crew required to conduct specific fishing operation, if superior to "Minimum number of the crew" (mandatory for vessels >15 m LOA)		R
35	VMS	Indicating whether the vessel is equipped with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) device. Enter Yes (Y) or No (N)	X	P
36	Navigation equipment	Type of navigation equipment being reported		P

	FIELDS	DESCRIPTION	MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
37	Communication equipment	Type of communication equipment being reported		P
38	Fish finder	Type of fish finder equipment being regularly used		P
39	Deck machinery	Deck machinery used to operate fishing gear, listed according to the vessel on which each item is present and the event being reported		P
40	Fish hold capacity (m^3)	Capacity, in m^3, of the vessel's fish hold		P
41	Refrigeration equipment	Textual description of refrigeration equipment being reported		P
42	Fish processing equipment	Textual description of fish processing equipment being reported		P
43	Lights for fishing	Number of lights on the fishing vessel, in case of fishing operations requiring light		P
44	Safety equipment	Textual description of the main item of safety equipment being reported		P
45	Period authorized for fishing with demersal trawl gear	If applicable, period authorized for fishing with demersal trawl gear		P
46	Fisheries restricted area (FRA)	Name of the GFCM fisheries restricted area (as adopted by the Commission)	X	P
47	Number of fishing days	Number of fishing days operated by the vessel in the FRA during the year	X	P
48	Fishing gear used in the FRA	Name of the gear used to fish in the FRA, according to the ISSCFG	X	P
49	Period authorized (if applicable) for fishing in the FRA	Period authorized for fishing in the FRA	X	P

2. RESOLUTIONS

Resolution GFCM/45/2022/1 on empowering women in the aquaculture sector

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING the important contribution of women working in aquaculture and the sector's essential role in economic development and as a source of food and income for coastal communities of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs);

CONSISTENT WITH the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in particular its Article 9, which, *inter alia,* requires states to develop and regularly update strategies and plans, as required, with a view to ensuring that the development of aquaculture is environmentally sustainable and to enabling the rational use of shared resources between aquaculture and other activities;

RECALLING the outcome document, *The Future We Want*, of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Brazil, June 2012), which reaffirmed the need to promote, enhance and support a more sustainable aquaculture that ensures food security and nutrition, provides for the livelihoods of millions of people and is economically viable, while conserving land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, biodiversity and ecosystems and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters;

CONSIDERING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.7 "By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism";

ACKNOWLEDGING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, which commits signatories to implementing actions in support of sustainable aquaculture development to contribute to food security and to strengthen coastal economies, and to implementing, starting from 2017, the GFCM Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture supporting, *inter alia*, the sustainable farming of food fish products and enhanced market access and trade environment, thereby creating employment opportunities and reducing the current stress on marine capture fisheries;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM 2030 Strategy), in particular its Target 3 "Aquaculture: a sustainable and resilient sector growing to its full potential";

ACKNOWLEDGING the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 Global Action Plan, which envisions "a world in which small-scale artisanal fishers, fishfarmers and fishworkers of both genders are fully recognized and empowered to continue their contributions to poverty alleviation, human well-being and resilient and sustainable food systems through the responsible use of fisheries and aquaculture resources and socioeconomic development";

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
Objectives

1. This resolution encourages CPCs to promote and support the empowerment of women in the aquaculture sector through the development of relevant national and/or sectoral strategies and

policies, in order to achieve gender equality and equity in marine and inland aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

2. According to the GFCM 2030 Strategy, CPCs are invited to create the appropriate governance framework and conditions so as to ensure that the sector is fair and inclusive, providing opportunities and actively supporting the empowerment of women.

3. The GFCM will continue to engage in aquaculture capacity building dedicated to women, as well as promote and support public awareness activities on the contributions and potential of women in the sector, improve access to education for women in aquaculture, disseminate information and resources and establish partnerships to promote dialogue and activities on gender issues and women's empowerment.

PART II
Final provisions

4. This resolution shall enter into force at the latest on 1 January 2024.

Resolution GFCM/45/2022/2 on a research programme on jellyfish in the western Mediterranean (geographical subareas 1 to 3)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the GFCM High-level conference on MedFish4Ever initiatives: Advances and renewed commitments, held in Marrakech in 2019, invite Mediterranean countries to strengthen multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of living marine resources, in particular with regard to data collection, scientific assessment and implementation of a framework for ecosystem-based fisheries management in the Mediterranean Sea;

CONSIDERING that the Mediterranean is a semi-enclosed basin, which makes it particularly sensitive to climate change that favors the emergence of invasive species, and that any effort to preserve the marine environment would contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the GFCM Agreement;

AWARE of the adverse effects of jellyfish proliferation on socioeconomic activities, including tourism and fisheries;

RECOGNIZING the need to collect more data and information and to deepen scientific knowledge on the causes associated with jellyfish blooms, including potential interactions with sea turtles in the western Mediterranean (geographical subareas 1 to 3);

ADOPTS, in accordance with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
General objectives and scope

Objectives of the research programme

1. This resolution invites the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) to establish a research programme on jellyfish in the western Mediterranean (geographical subareas 1 to 3).

2. The operational objective of this research programme is to improve scientific knowledge about jellyfish and their interactions with other taxa and the marine ecosystem.

3. The SAC at its twenty-fifth session in 2024 should assess the results of the research programme, report to the forty-seventh session of the GFCM in 2024, and present, if necessary, proposals for measures and actions to mitigate jellyfish proliferation.

4. The coordination of the research programme and its scientific evaluation should take place within the framework of the MedSea4fish programme.

Geographical scope

5. The jellyfish research programme established by this resolution applies to geographical subareas 1 to 3.

PART II
Specific objectives

6. The specific objectives of the research programme are to collect data on jellyfish and their interactions with other taxa and the marine ecosystem. The purpose of this study is to improve research and scientific knowledge with a view to maintaining the ecological balance and preserving

the viability of socioeconomic activities. The research programme also aims to propose mitigation measures to reduce jellyfish blooms.

PART III
Regional research programme and scientific monitoring

7. The GFCM Secretariat should develop terms of reference, including costs, services and other guidance to support the implementation of a jellyfish research programme in the western Mediterranean, as described in the annex to this resolution. The research programme will be launched in early 2023.

PART IV
Final provisions

8. Contracting Parties and cooperating non-contracting parties may develop conservation and management measures during the implementation of the research programme. These measures may be analysed by the SAC and, where appropriate, by the GFCM Secretariat.

9. Depending on the results of the research programme, the GFCM may propose and adopt measures and actions to be implemented in order to mitigate jellyfish blooms in the western Mediterranean.

Annex

Key elements of the jellyfish research programme in the Western Mediterranean

Introduction

Jellyfish are gelatinous species found in all the seas and oceans of the world, from the surface to great depths. They can wash up on shorelines with seasonally variable densities and generally limited in time.

The resurgence of jellyfish, especially the species *Pelagia noctiluca*, in Moroccan Mediterranean waters is a natural phenomenon but has become more and more frequent in recent years, especially during the summer. The years 2021 and 2022 were marked by great abundances of jellyfish and mass strandings. This phenomenon disrupts not only tourist activities but also fishing because it leads to the clogging of nets.

Pelagia noctiluca is an exclusively gelatinous pelagic jellyfish. It is part of the phylum of cnidarians. This cnidarian has a rounded or flattened umbrella, depending on the degree of contraction, measuring 3 to 12 cm in adults. The margin of the umbrella has hollow whitish tentacles, up to 40 cm. The manubrium attached to the subumbrella is extended by four long, scalloped buccal arms, of pinkish color, up to 15 cm in length. The whole body is covered with cnidocytes (stinging nematocyst cells that can cause severe pain in case of contact with the skin. This species feeds on zooplankton (90 percent cladoceran and copepod crustaceans, small jellyfish and small fish).

The reproduction of *Pelagia noctiluca* is sexual and the species is gonochoric (sexes separated). In autumn, male jellyfish release their sperm into open water; fertilization is internal, within the umbral cavity. The female jellyfish then release their eggs as a yellowish cloud that escapes through the mouth.

Each egg yields a ciliated larva, the planula, which develops directly into a tiny jellyfish. There is no fixation of the planula as with other jellyfish. There is therefore a loss of the asexual phase in the reproductive cycle of the species. Since it spends its entire life in plankton (without a fixed phase), the species *Pelagia noctiluca* is called holoplanktonic.

The proliferation of blooms of this species offshore is favored by the small number of its predators, mainly sperm whales and sea turtles, and by the rise in temperature in winter and spring. This factor promotes an increase in abundances of phytoplankton, the main food of jellyfish, thus creating ideal conditions for the proliferation of these invertebrates in the summer.

In the western Mediterranean, large abundances of phytoplankton are generally located along the southern Spanish coast, an area characterized by high primary productivity due to the phenomenon of upwelling. The phytoplankton and jellyfish present in these Spanish waters are subsequently transported to the Moroccan coast through the western gyre of the Alboran Sea.

Situation observed in 2021

<u>Factors favoring the development of jellyfish</u>

Surface temperatures measured in 2021 show a slight increase compared to 2020, especially in March (+0.5 °C) and April (+1 °C) in the southern Spanish zone (Figure 1).

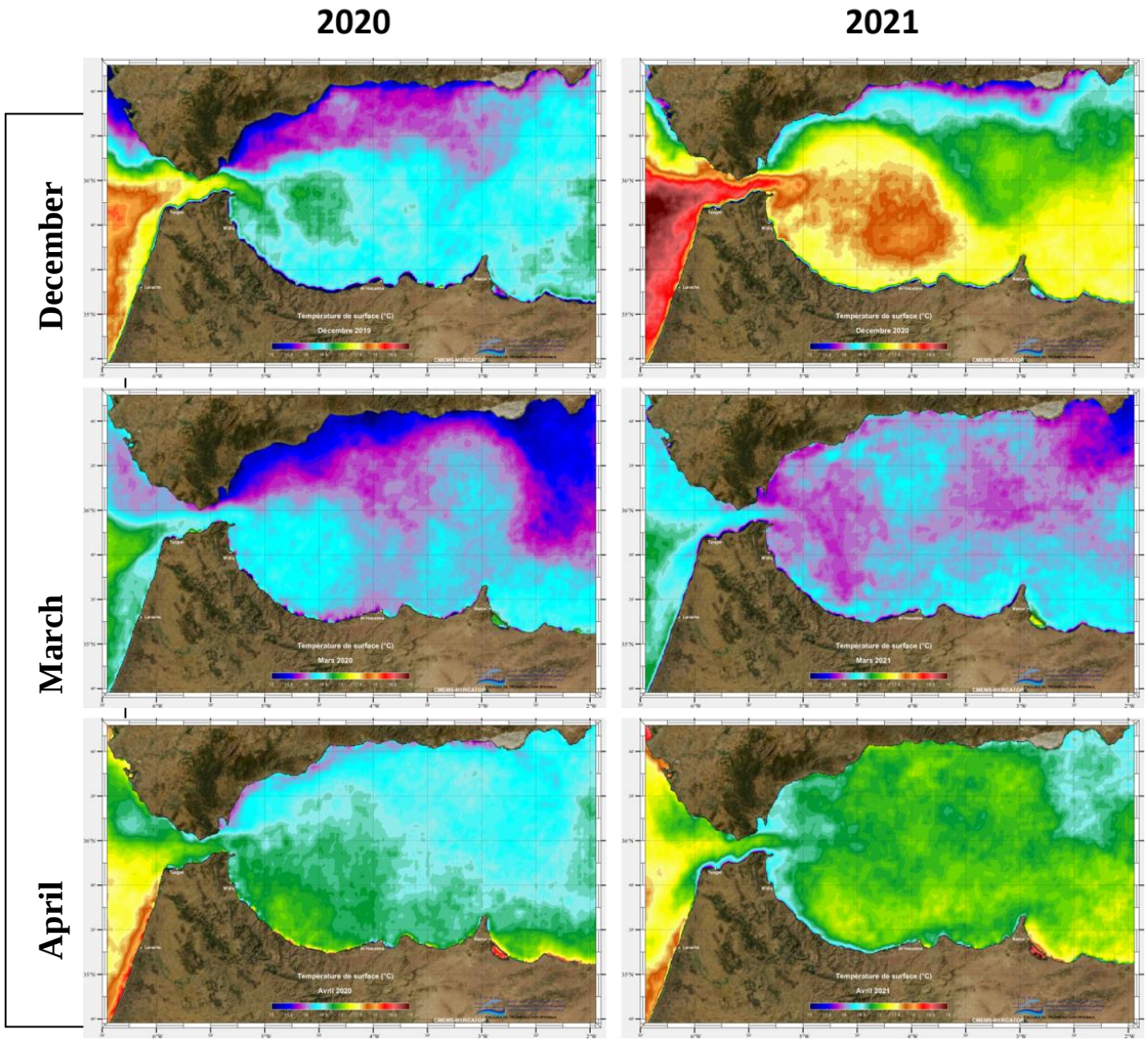


Figure 1. Distribution of surface temperatures during the months of December, March and April 2020 and 2021

In late spring 2021, there was a slight improvement in chlorophyll-a levels (Figure 2), indicating a concentration of phytoplankton in the Spanish upwelling zone. This increase in phytoplankton levels may have favored the development of young jellyfish in this area.

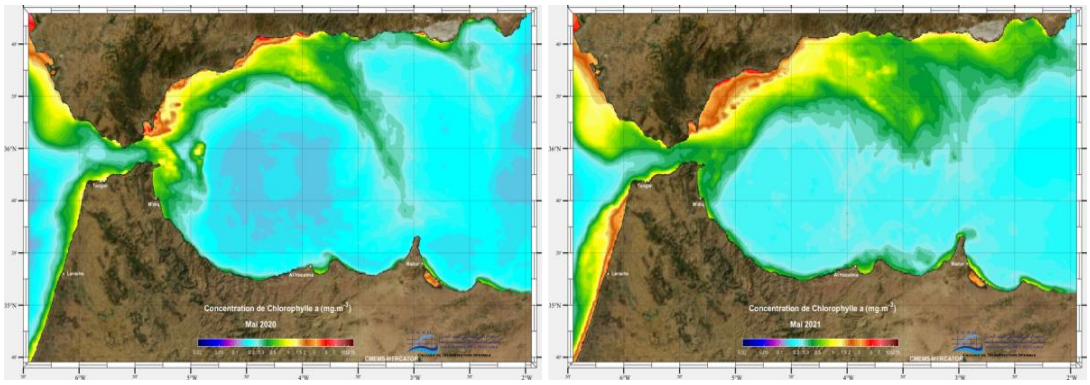


Figure 2. Distribution of chlorophyll-a concentration in May 2020 (left) and May 2021 (right)

Factors favoring the transport of jellyfish to the Moroccan Mediterranean coasts

The young jellyfish are then transported by the western gyre of the Alboran Sea from the southern Spanish zone to the beaches of the Moroccan coast between M'diq and Fnideq. This transport of jellyfish is accentuated in case of strong easterly winds.

Figure 3 shows the prevailing surface current and wind conditions in the western Mediterranean between 13 and 15 July 2021. An intensification of easterly winds is observed around July 15, as well as the presence of a local northwesterly coastal current that carries water masses from the western gyre to the coastal area of Fnideq. These conditions explain the larger strandings of jellyfish in the northern part of the northern zone than in the southern part (Figure 4).

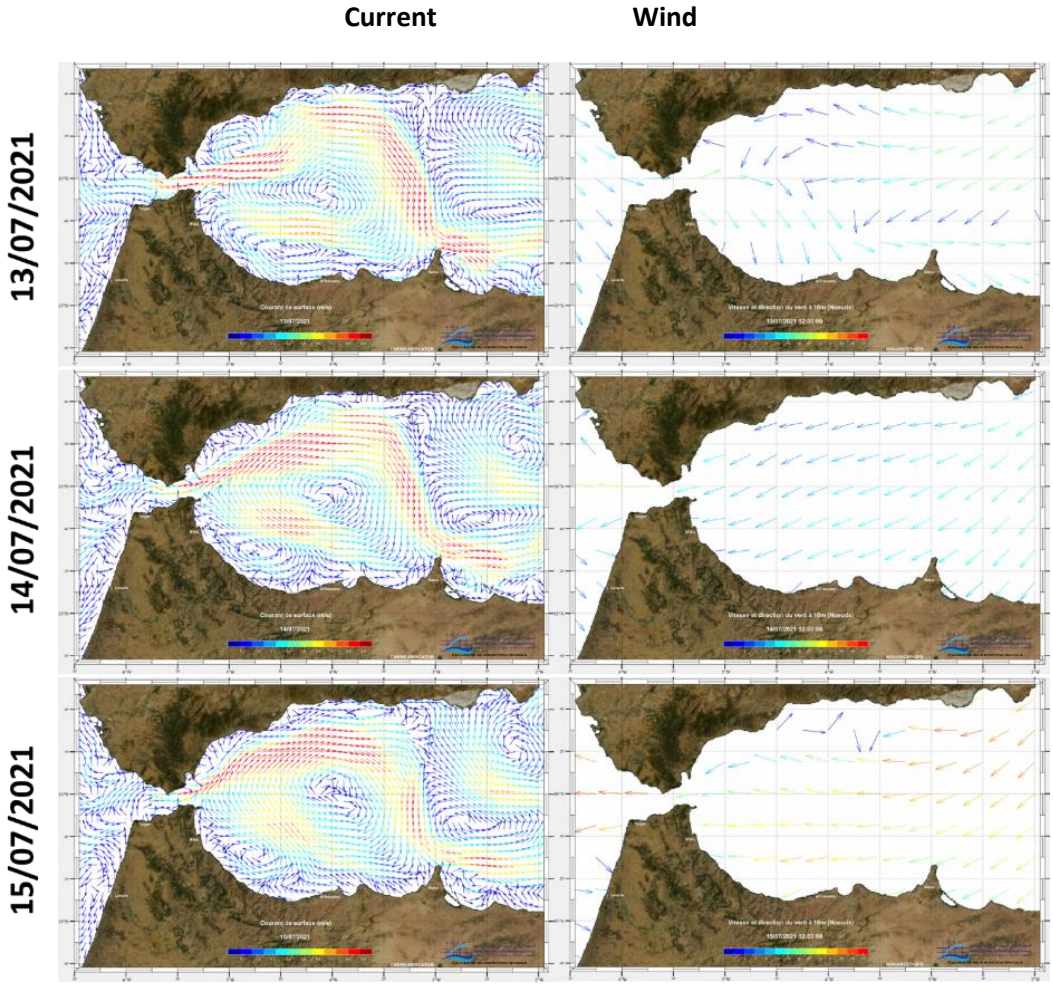


Figure 3. Predominant surface current and wind conditions in the western Mediterranean between 13 and 15 July 2021

Due to several factors that contributed to the proliferation of *Pelagia noctiluca* during the summer of 2021, and following the persistence of adverse weather conditions, some accumulations in the tidal swing zone as well as strandings on beaches with high densities of *Pelagia noctiluca* were observed.

These strandings have been associated with strandings of a brown algae, *Rugulopteryx okamurae*.

From the first appearances of *Pelagia noctiluca*, a scientific team from the National Institute of Fisheries Research (Morocco) decided to carry out regular daily surveys at sea and on land on the beaches in order to track the evolution of the phenomenon in the region.



Figure 4. Mass appearance of *Pelagia noctiluca* along the Moroccan Mediterranean coast (July 2021)

In the Alboran Sea (Spanish part), recent research has shown an increase in the frequency of jellyfish (Bellido *et al.*, 2020). Six species are identified: *Aurelia* spp, *Chrysaora hysoscella*, *Cotylorhiza tuberculata*, *Pelagia noctiluca*, *Rhizostoma pulmo* and *Velella velella*. Other gelatinous blooms are also present in the western Mediterranean, such as Mnemiopsis or the cubozoan *Carybdea marsupialis* (Báez *et al.*, 2022). Jellyfish are considered a source of particular concern because of their negative socioeconomic impact, especially at the local level, on coastal tourism and fishing activities. In addition, some jellyfish species feed on pelagic fish larvae such as the economically important European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), which could lead to losses for the local fishing sector. Similarly, some jellyfish species compete at times with fish that feed on the same zooplankton prey (Báez *et al.*, 2022).

Main features of the regional research programme on jellyfish in the western Mediterranean

The main objective of the research programme is to understand the main macroeconomic variables behind jellyfish blooms in the region and to maintain an early warning system and monitoring of swarms in the Alboran Sea.

Other important issues will also be raised, including:

- Are jellyfish blooms predictable?
- Do jellyfish blooms lead to an increase in jellyfish populations in the area or only to their movement?
- What is the actual direct impact of jellyfish blooms on the larvae of the main jellyfish populations in the area?
- What is the movement pattern of the swarm in the Alboran Sea?
- Is there any connectivity between *Pelagia noctiluca* populations in the Alboran Sea and those in the rest of the Mediterranean?
- Does the removal of jellyfish biomass have a negative impact on the ecosystem?

Work Packages

Work Package 1

Analyse the abundance of jellyfish:

- Carry out specific campaigns.
- Use data from oceanographic and fishing campaigns to complement the analyses.

Work Package 2

Sample jellyfish specimens to study the gonadal state and determine the spawning time.

Work Package 3

Monitor beaches during the summer months to estimate the impact of jellyfish blooms on tourism and fishing.

Work Package 4

Involve fishers and other stakeholders in observing the monthly abundance of jellyfish in predefined transects.

Work Package 5

Study the stomach contents of jellyfish to estimate impacts on fish larvae.

Work Package 6

Perform genetic analyses on jellyfish in the Alboran Sea and compare the results with those obtained in other areas of the Mediterranean and Atlantic in order to estimate the degree of connectivity.

Work Package 7

Identify mitigation solutions and measures.

Involve fishers and beach users in the search for solutions.

Implementation of the regional research programme

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean:

- assesses progress made under the various work packages;
- defines standardized methods (e.g. for age) and research protocols; and
- conducts capacity-building activities.

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Resolution GFCM/45/2022/3 on the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (UN headquarters, New York, September 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources", SDG 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", SDG 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", SDG 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", SDG 12 "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns", SDG 13 "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts", SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss" and SDG 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development";

RECALLING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states "should widely apply the precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment", highlighting besides that "the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures";

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration both reflect the strong commitment of the GFCM to ensure the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries;

REAFFIRMING that the quest for productive, sustainable and responsible fisheries to achieve food security is enshrined in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and captured in the four betters (better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the 2021 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries, represents a renewed call to action to achieve the sustainable management of aquatic resources;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region and the Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean adopted at the twenty-second meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in December 2022;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT Resolution GFCM/44/2021/12 on the implementation of a GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Regional Plan of Action for Small Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF) was signed as a Ministerial Declaration by high-level representatives

from 18 Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, as well as the European Union, on 26 September 2018 with an additional country signing in 2021 and took the shape of a concrete commitment to ensure the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability of small-scale fisheries over the period 2018–2028;

CONSIDERING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING the conclusions of the 2022 Working Group on Small-Scale Fisheries, which recognized the need for concrete and dedicated actions in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING the results of the twenty-third session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC),which acknowledged the socioeconomic importance of the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector and its impacts on select species at both the regional and subregional levels;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the conclusions of the SAC, which highlighted the need to strengthen the resilience of the SSF sector and enhance the implementation of the RPOA-SSF;

RECOGNIZING the importance of pursuing the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action to Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing by strengthening compliance and enforcement, as well as by progressing in the field of monitoring, control and surveillance, in a coordinated and transparent way;

RECOGNIZING the need for capacity development and technical support at the national and subregional levels to ensure policy commitments are met;

RECOGNIZING that the overexploitation of scientifically assessed resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and threats to the biodiversity of these two semi-enclosed basins remain a challenge;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM should ensure, in line with the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the gradual and efficient implementation of the RPOA-SSF to achieve sustainable small-scale fisheries and the long-term resilience of fisheries-based livelihoods.

2. The RPOA-SSF prescribes concrete and coherent measures to address challenges and reinforce opportunities for SSF, including by giving fishers a voice in the decisions that affect their livelihoods, safeguarding environmentally sustainable fishing practices and providing economic, social and employment benefits, ensuring SSF transformation into a productive and sustainable food production system that contributes to thriving economies and healthy ecosystems. It offers a common vision and guiding principles to achieve sustainable fisheries, federating all efforts to deliver on national, regional and global commitments.

3. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) should promote actions towards the effective implementation of the different measures foreseen in the RPOA-SSF listed below. Bearing in mind possible national or regional issues that may need to be considered, CPCs should:

a) submit within the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework Tasks VI.1, VI.2, VI.3 and VI.4 data for all SSF vessels (based on updated fleet registers) with no quality control issues;

b) support investments in SSF to, *inter alia*, improve selectivity, preserve biodiversity, minimize bycatch and interactions with vulnerable species and predators, and promote energy efficiency;

c) ensure that the SSF sector is formally included in existing and new long-term management plans;

d) ensure that the data collected by small-scale fishers is utilized to assess the effectiveness of long-term management plans 'targets and to adapt the latter accordingly;

e) have fleet registers that include all SSF vessels and non-vessel-based fishers (gleaners);

f) evaluate the potential use of access rights and, when possible, adapt them to manage SSF;

g) consider the solutions in long-term management plans to reduce the impacts of SSF on biodiversity and to reduce bycatch;

h) encourage SSF to be fully equipped with efficient communication, navigation and onboard catch preservation equipment, in accordance with flag state requirements, as well as develop small-scale fisher training programmes for optimal use of such technologies;

i) develop monitoring, control and surveillance schemes and the participatory surveillance of SSF fishing within existing or new long-term management plans;

j) improve market access and profitability of existing SSF producers through market capacity, as well as access to public and private funding;

k) promote financial investments to consolidate the marketing capacity of small-scale fishers through the use of direct sales, increased hygiene, reduced use of plastic and reduced food waste;

l) promote consumer awareness of the availability of sustainable SSF seafood products;

m) formally include participatory processes or co-management as legal/formal tools for the management of SSF in national legislation;

n) implement formal mechanisms allowing the participation of small-scale fishers in fisheries management in all fisheries restricted areas in the GFCM area of application;

o) legally ensure the participation of SSF actors in decision-making processes;

p) encourage solutions to reduce frictions and increase synergies with other marine economies, at least within marine protected areas;

q) encourage small-scale fishers to associate themselves within fisheries organizations and/or platforms or to connect to international SSF platforms;

r) run national capacity-building activities to: i) increase the capacity of small-scale fishers to access public funds to encourage sustainable fishing; ii) encourage livelihood diversification of SSF actors; and iii) reduce the digital divide between small-scale fishers;

s) provide adequate social protection to small-scale fishers;

t) initiate projects to highlight and include the role of women in SSF management;

u) develop emergency plans to support SSF communities in case of adverse effects of climate change; and

v) have solutions in place for the marketing of non-indigenous species targeted by SSF.

4. In 2024, a mid-term review of the objectives and outcomes of the RPOA-SSF should assess the progress made in its implementation, review the lessons learned and provide recommendations on possible readjustments and improvements to ensure targets are met efficiently by 2028.

5. The measures laid out in paragraph 3 should be regularly updated by CPCs if necessary. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties should collect information on the implementation of the RPOA-SSF.

6. This resolution is without prejudice to the implementation of stricter national measures.

Resolution GFCM/45/2022/4 on the launch of a roadmap for the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Cabliers coral mounds in the Alboran Sea with a view to adopting adequate protection and management measures

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that States "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement aiming "to minimize the impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement aiming "to establish fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including but not limited to nursery and spawning areas [...]";

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 on the identification of new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, the enhancement of their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats;

RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraph 38;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5, which specifically calls for conserving at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) recommended in 2021 (paragraphs 29 and 30 of the report of the twenty-second session of the SAC) and in 2022 (paragraph 50 of the report of the twenty-third session of the SAC) creating a network of fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) with minimum standards in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that in 2022 the SAC (paragraph 28 of the report of the twenty-second session of the SAC) welcomed the work done to launch a roadmap for the implementation of a FRA in the Cabliers coral mound area in the Alboran Sea, taking into account socioeconomic costs and expected benefits from its potential implementation;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
Subject matter and scope

1. The GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) agree on the principle of the launching of a roadmap for the establishment of a FRA in the Cabliers coral mound area in the Alboran Sea in order to adopt appropriate protection and management measures.

2. The present resolution presents the roadmap to achieve this objective.

PART II
Transitional measures

3. The GFCM Secretariat should coordinate before 1 May 2023 a scientific campaign in order to assess the exact geographical delimitation of the area that will be subject to protection, management and control measures.

4. The GFCM, at its forty-sixth session in 2023, should adopt management and control measures that will be applicable in the study area based on the assessment of the SAC.

5. The CPCs wishing to participate in this scientific campaign shall notify the GFCM Secretariat of the contact points and names of scientists participating in such a scientific campaign before 1 January 2023.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/1 on the reporting of information on non-indigenous species used in aquaculture

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING the important contribution of aquaculture to economic development and its essential role as a source of food and income for coastal the communities of the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs);

CONSISTENT WITH the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in particular its Article 9, which, *inter alia,* requires states to develop and regularly update strategies and plans, as required, with a view to ensuring that the development of aquaculture is environmentally sustainable and to enabling the rational use of shared resources between aquaculture and other activities;

RECALLING the outcome document *The Future We Want* of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Brazil, June 2012) that reaffirmed the need to promote, enhance and support a more sustainable aquaculture that ensures food security and nutrition, provides for the livelihoods of millions of people and is economically viable, while conserving land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, biodiversity and ecosystems and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters;

CONSIDERING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources” and Target 14.7 “By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”;

ACKNOWLEDGING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration that commits signatories to implement actions in support of sustainable aquaculture development to contribute to food security and to strengthen coastal economies, and to implement, as from 2017, the GFCM Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture supporting, *inter alia*, the sustainable farming of food fish products and enhanced market access and trade environment, thereby creating employment opportunities and reducing the current stress on marine capture fisheries;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING Resolution GFCM/41/2017/1 on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture, in particular its Target 2 “Enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment while ensuring animal health and welfare” which recalls the importance of having procedures in place to regulate the introduction of non-indigenous species and other locally-absent species;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Target 3 “Aquaculture: a sustainable and resilient sector growing to its full potential”;

RECOGNIZING that existing lengthy and cumbersome aquaculture consenting systems hinder the development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and that streamlining aquaculture licensing and leasing procedures is a priority;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the possible environmental risks associated with aquaculture activities and the need to control adverse environmental and social interactions while ensuring mitigation measures to offset any negative externality;

NOTING the need to adopt a common terminology related to assessing and minimizing the possible impacts of the use of non-indigenous species in aquaculture;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to support farmers and potential investors in aquaculture towards the diversification of farmed species;

RECOGNIZING the importance of monitoring, data availability and coordination among the various bodies responsible for aquaculture-related matters;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
General objectives and definitions

General objectives

1. This resolution establishes a framework for the establishment by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPC) of a national list of non-indigenous species and species already used in aquaculture and for its submission to the Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) on an annual basis.

2. The national list referred to in paragraph 1 should include the information reported in Part II.

3. Each flag CPC shall increase efforts towards monitoring and reporting in order to assess and minimize the possible impacts of the use of non-indigenous species in aquaculture.

Definitions

4. For the purpose of this resolution, the following definitions should apply:

a) "Non-indigenous species" means any live specimen of a species and subspecies of aquatic organisms introduced outside its known natural range and the area of its natural dispersal potential.

b) "Species that are already present" means any transfauned and acclimated species that have been introduced in the past and that: i) do not cause any harm to biodiversity, natural habitats, ecosystems nor related ecosystem services; ii) are commonly used in aquaculture practices, including capture-based aquaculture; ii) are a usual target of capture fisheries; and iv) are of importance for local economies and traditions.

PART II
Required information on non-indigenous species

5. Each CPC shall send to the GFCM Secretariat every year the national list of non-indigenous species according to the following table:

Species	**Date of introduction**	**Type of culture**	**Origin**	**Rationale for introduction**	**Annual production volume**

PART III
Final provisions

6. The application of this resolution shall not prejudice the adoption by CPCs of any other provision or regulation that could imply stricter requirements and obligations in relation to species diversification.

7. This resolution shall enter into force at the latest on 1 January 2023.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/2 on the definition of a minimum conservation reference size for priority stocks in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.4 "By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics";

RECALLING the recommendations by the second performance review of the GFCM to develop conservation measures and management plan, making full use of the science-policy interface provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and to initiate, within five years, appropriate interim management measures to conserve fisheries, stocks and habitats targeted by the different fisheries, comprising the small-scale fisheries sector;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement aiming to minimize the impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration (MedFish4Ever Declaration), specifically its paragraph 36, requires that, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, all key fisheries should be managed with management plans;

CONSIDERING Decision GFCM/37/2013/1 on guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption of GFCM multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area of application, which provides guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption of GFCM multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries in the GFCM subregions;

FURTHER CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5 establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea, aimed at restoring and maintaining the population of this important stock;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
General objective and scope

General objective

1. This resolution establishes a requirement to adopt a minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) for the GFCM priority species in the Mediterranean listed in the annex to this resolution, by GFCM subregion when relevant, in order to ensure that the MCRS is applied by all contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) with a view to strengthening conservation measures and establishing a level playing field between CPCs.

Scope

2. This resolution applies to all commercial and recreational fishing activities in geographical subareas 1 to 27, taking into account potential differences in MCRS between the GFCM subregions.

PART II
Data collection, monitoring and research

3. The CPCs are encouraged to only harvest species that are above the MCRS in order to minimize the bycatch of juveniles during fishing operations.

4. Following Decision GFCM/37/2013/1, the CPCs shall systematically report information on the catch and undersized specimens of all harvested species, in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF).

5. In order for the SAC to identify the length at maturity, based on literature and on the reporting by CPCs in line with DCRF requirements in each GFCM subregion, and in order to define a uniform basis for an updated MCRS list by GFCM subregion based on the MCRS already adopted on a voluntary basis under Decision GFCM/37/2013/1, the CPCs shall call the attention of the relevant national and international authorities in order to improve the collection of data on the size and location of the catches by species.

6. The provisions referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 are without prejudice to stricter rules implemented by the CPCs.

PART III
Final provisions

7. Not later than 30 June 2022, the SAC is requested to develop a methodology for establishing the best scientific basis for proposing a MCRS for the species listed in the annex to this resolution. Such methodology should be developed in compiling and assessing all available information reported under Decision GFCM/37/2013/1, by GFCM subregion, on the length and maturity stages of all priority species listed in the annex to this resolution. Any other source of additional information, including, but not limited to, scientific literature, surveys at sea and research projects, may be used by the SAC in order to update the existing MCRS list and its extension to all priority stocks of the GFCM area of application, with a view to securing a level playing field in the region.

8. Based on the data collected, the SAC shall propose a list of MCRS by species. The objective of the updated MCRS list is to ensure that all priority stocks exploited during fishing activities have been able to reproduce at least once in their life history and to keep the bycatch of juveniles to the lowest possible level in the entire GFCM area of application.

9. The SAC, at its twenty-third session in 2022 shall report to the GFCM on the progress accomplished thereon and on the knowledge gaps identified and provide the updated MCRS for the compilation of a future MCRS list by GFCM subregion with the objective of minimizing juvenile catch and bycatch in the GFCM area of application.

10. At its forty-fifth session in 2022, the GFCM shall review the SAC advice and consider adopting an updated list of MCRS by subregion allowing for the achievement of the objectives of this resolution.

11. This resolution shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by the CPCs for the vessels flying their flag.

Annex

Under Decision GFCM/37/2013/1, a number of MCRS were suggested for voluntary adoption by CPCs; however this measure is limited in scope. In addition, the GFCM has adopted a MCRS for European hake in the Mediterranean as well as for select species falling under management plans in the Adriatic Sea, the Alboran Sea and the Strait of Sicily.

Minimum conservation reference sizes for priority species in the Mediterranean, by GFCM subregion

Scientific name	Common name	European Union waters	Entire Mediterranean	Adriatic Sea	Alboran Sea	Strait of Sicily
Dicentrarchus labrax	Seabass	25 cm				
Diplodus annularis	Annular seabream	12 cm				
Diplodus puntazzo	Sharpsnout seabream	18 cm				
Diplodus sargus	White seabream	23 cm				
Diplodus vulgaris	Common two-banded seabream	18 cm				
Engraulis encrasicolus (*)	European anchovy	9 cm		9 cm		
Epiphenelus spp.	Groupers	45 cm				
Lithognathus mormyrus	Sand steenbras	20 cm				
Merluccius merluccius (***)	European hake	20 cm	20 cm			
Mullus spp.	Red mullet	11 cm		11 cm		
Pagellus acarne	Axillary seabream	17 cm				
Pagellus bogaraveo	Blackspot seabream	33 cm			30 cm	
Pagellus erythrinus	Common pandora	15 cm				
Pagrus pagrus	Red porgy	18 cm				

Scientific name	Common name	European Union waters	Entire Mediterranean	Adriatic Sea	Alboran Sea	Strait of Sicily
Polyprion americanus	Wreckfish	45 cm				
Sardina pilchardus (**)	European pilchard (=sardine)	11 cm		11 cm		
Scomber spp.	Mackerel (including *S. scombrus*)	18 cm				
Solea vulgaris	Common sole	20 cm		20 cm		
Sparus aurata	Gilthead seabream	20 cm				
Trachurus spp.	Horse mackerel (including. *T. mediterraneus*)	15 cm				
Nephrops norvegicus	Norway lobster	20 mm CL or 70 mm TL		20 mm CL or 70 mm TL		
Homarus gammarus	European lobster	105 mm CL or 300 mm TL				
Palinuridae	Spiny lobsters nei	90 mm CL				
Parapenaeus longirostris	Deep-water rose shrimp	20 mm CL		20 mm CL		20 mm CL
Pecten jacobeus	Mediterranean scallop	10 cm				
Venerupis spp.	Carpet clams	25 mm				
Venus spp.	Venus shells	25 mm[1]				

Notes:

TL = total length; CL = carapace length.

(*) Anchovy: CPCs may convert the MCRS into 110 specimens per kg.

(**) Sardine: CPCs may convert the MCRS into 55 specimens per kg.

(***) European hake: until 31 December 2008 a margin of tolerance of 15 percent of weight will be permitted for European hake between 15 and 20 cm. This tolerance limit shall be complied with by individual vessels, at sea or at the landing place as well as at first sale markets after landing. This limit

[1] Except for fisheries with a derogation granted at CPC level.

shall also be complied with in any subsequent commercial transaction at the national and international level.

Upon request, the SAC will evaluate other species among the GFCM priority species for the Mediterranean and its subregions.

The following species are either commonly collected or have been collected in the past and may require a review by the SAC:

- European edible sea urchin (*Echinus esculentus*)
- Stony sea urchin (*Paracentrotus lividus*)
- Black sea ursin (*Arbacia lixula*)
- Truncate donax (*Donax trunculus*)

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/3 on a roadmap for the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the southern Adriatic Sea (geographical subarea 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply a precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement aiming to minimize the impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement aiming "to establish fisheries restricted areas for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including, but not limited to, nursery and spawning areas ...";

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources" that identifies "new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhances their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats";

FURTHER RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraph 38 whereby the signatories commit to further develop fisheries restricted areas and marine protected areas;

CONSIDERING that an ecologically or biologically significant area under the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity has been identified in the southern Adriatic Sea;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.5 "By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information";

NOTING Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18) and the high overexploitation of these stocks as identified by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-second session (online, June 2021);

FURTHER NOTING in particular the critical state of European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) due to a low biomass in the recent years;

RECALLING the importance of protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and essential fish habitats (EFHs) as well as juvenile phases and areas of spawner aggregations in order to support the objective of reaching maximum sustainable yield by 2026 for the key Adriatic demersal stocks managed under Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5;

RECALLING paragraph 22 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5, which requires that fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) shall be established for the conservation and management of stocks in the Adriatic Sea;

FURTHER RECALLING that relevant contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) should possibly submit the necessary data for the evaluation of FRAs at the latest one month ahead of the session of the Subregional Committee for the Adriatic Sea (SRC-AS) and support the work for the assessment of FRAs in line with the roadmap outlined in Annex 2 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5;

CONSIDERING that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SRC-AS could not be convened in 2020 and the roadmap in Annex 2 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 could not be followed;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the SAC, at its twenty-second session, reiterated the importance of establishing new FRAs in the Adriatic Sea and recommended developing a roadmap to this end;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM Secretariat, with the support of relevant CPCs, should launch, in 2022, a pilot project to underpin the biology and ecology of bamboo coral in the Adriatic Sea, including a quantification of the interactions between *Isidella* and bottom contact fisheries and the determination of their footprint, within the framework of the Working Group on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, including a session on essential fish habitats.

2. The GFCM Secretariat, with the support of relevant CPCs, should support, in 2023, the implementation of the roadmap towards the establishment of an FRA in the southern Adriatic (geographical subarea 18) as outlined in paragraph 3.

3. The CPCs should implement technical actions to advance towards complying with the requirements of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 with a view to establishing additional FRAs in the southern Adriatic, including:

a) investigating the monitoring activities needed to identify a possible FRA (fleet behaviours, impacts on sea bottom, observers on board) in the southern part of geographical subarea 18;

b) implementing an ad hoc socio-economic survey covering the fleets operating in the area;

c) designing an ad hoc scientific survey for a better definition of VMEs to identify a possible FRA; and

d) ensuring that the key components of a future proposal include VMEs, EFHs, spatial fishing fleet dynamics and socio-economic impacts, as provided by the national administrations.

4. In 2023, on the basis of the data collected under paragraph 3, CPCs should jointly evaluate the possibility of establishing an FRA with the aim of protecting relevant VMEs and EFHs identified, following a bottom-up approach and engaging with relevant stakeholders.

5. In 2023, the GFCM Secretariat should organize, ahead of the SRC-AS meeting, a workshop with scientists and stakeholders to discuss the preparation of an FRA proposal, with a view to achieving the objectives of paragraph 4.

6. In 2023, the SAC should evaluate the possible FRA proposal in the southern Adriatic Sea and the GFCM should examine such proposal at its annual session in 2023.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/4 on a pilot project for the control and inspection of common dolphinfish fisheries

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

FURTHER RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.3 "Monitoring, control and surveillance centralized at the regional level;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16);

FURTHERING the objectives established under Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices and Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 on a set of management measures for the use of anchored fish aggregating devices in common dolphinfish fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea;

CONSIDERING the possible interactions of fish aggregating devices (FADs) with other fisheries and the ensuing need to monitor and control these interactions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Article 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
Objectives and scope

1. This resolution establishes a voluntary pilot project (pilot project) for the control and inspection of common dolphinfish fisheries in the GFCM area of application, in accordance with the objectives established under Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/2 and Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1.

2. The GFCM Secretariat should establish the pilot project with a view to facilitating the voluntary exchange of inspection personnel engaged in inspection activities of the fishing vessels of GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application.

3. The pilot project should apply to vessels in areas beyond national jurisdiction exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application.

PART II
Voluntary participation

4. The CPCs interested in participating in the pilot project should inform the GFCM Secretariat and transmit the following information without delay:

a) national authority responsible for at-sea inspections and other supporting maritime agencies as may be appropriate; and

b) designated contact point(s) within the authority responsible for the implementation of the pilot project , including name and contact details.

5. The GFCM Secretariat should make the information referred to in paragraph 4 available on the public section of the GFCM online platforms, taking into consideration national personal data protection rules and consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

6. Participating CPCs should invite their inspection personnel engaged in inspection activities of fishing vessels exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application to:

a) participate as inspectors or as observing members of the inspection party in boarding and inspection activities conducted by the CPCs; and

b) facilitate exchanges to allow the sharing of necessary information, best practices and expertise to strengthen at-sea inspections and related control activities as well as capabilities and capacities, and enhance cooperation and collaboration amongst CPCs to inform future GFCM discussions and decisions.

PART III
Pilot project procedures

7. The CPCs that have communicated their intention to participate in the pilot project should communicate among themselves in order to identify opportunities for the exchange of inspectors and ascertain when their inspection activities will be carried out.

8. Participating CPCs should provide relevant information to other participating CPCs, as appropriate, in order to determine their interest in exchanging inspectors or observers for a particular patrol or period of time.

9. Participating CPCs deploying patrol vessels in fisheries managed by the GFCM should develop patrol plans and strive, where possible, to arrange inspection patrols that can accommodate one or more inspection personnel from other CPCs.

10. Participating CPCs wanting to place inspectors or observers on another CPC's inspection vessels should communicate their interest to the contact point of the CPC that has provided information under paragraph 4.

11. When a participating CPC has notified its interest in an exchange of personnel under paragraph 10, the concerned CPC(s) should consult among themselves to determine whether such an exchange could be accommodated, taking into consideration operational and administrative limitations as well as training, expertise, operations and information on safety, security, medical and physical requirements, authorizations for the venue of the inspections and inspection capacities.

12. Participating CPCs deploying inspection vessel(s) should make special efforts to accommodate requests from developing CPCs in particular.

13. Participating CPCs that have chosen to establish an exchange of inspection personnel under this pilot project should enter into a bilateral agreement to address the relevant details of the deployment of the exchange, including:

a) the dates and duration of the deployment(s);

b) the areas of operational and inspection activities;

c) the operational procedures to follow, including, but not limited to, the inspection report to be used, reporting and the composition of the boarding party/parties; and

d) the information that will be exchanged as well as follow-up actions.

14. The bilateral agreement referred to in paragraph 13 should also determine the role of the inspection personnel deployed under such agreement as well as further provisions for the cooperative deployment of inspectors or observers, for the use of vessels, aircraft or other resources for fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance purposes and for the protection of law enforcement sensitive or otherwise confidential or protected information from inappropriate disclosure.

15. The participating CPC of the inspection personnel deployed should be responsible for all aspects associated to safety, medical and physical requirements during the deployment on the exchange.

PART IV
Pilot project reporting and review

16. Participating CPCs should report on any activities carried out under the pilot project to the GFCM Secretariat, on an annual basis, at least 30 days before the session of the Compliance Committee.

17. The pilot project should be evaluated by the Compliance Committee at its fifteenth session and used for future GFCM decisions in this regard.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/5 on the mitigation of fisheries impacts for the conservation of sturgeons in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

FURTHER RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Target 1 "Fisheries and ecosystems: healthy seas and productive fisheries" and Output 1.3 "Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources";

NOTING that the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure an adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

CONSIDERING that the Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognizes the impaired conservation status of several Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea sturgeon species *(*Acipenseridae) listing them as critically endangered;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the bycatch of sturgeon species in relation to fishing activities may seriously affect sturgeon populations in the Black Sea;

RECOGNIZING that some fishing operations carried out in the Black Sea can adversely affect sturgeon species and that there is a need to better understand the phenomenon in order to develop and implement measures to mitigate such adverse effects;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the need to collect more data and technical information in order to fully assess the advantages and risks associated with the possible adoption of other types of measures modifying the characteristics of fishing gear as well as any other potential impact on fishing activities;

AIMING at improving the conservation status of sturgeons, in line with the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, by reducing the bycatch of sturgeons in fishing operations, complementary to the conservation measures for these species taken at the national, regional and international level and consistently with the knowledge and experience gathered from the implementation of these measures;

CONSIDERING that the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS), at its ninth session (online, July 2021), acknowledged that the critical issues related to the marine part of the sturgeon life-cycle should be addressed through the implementation of a pilot project to be conducted within the BlackSea4Fish project and in collaboration with all relevant partners;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The measures established by this resolution shall apply to fishing operations carried out in the Black Sea (geographical subarea (GSA) 29) and related to the bycatch of sturgeon species (Acipenseridae), which are classified as critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable by the IUCN.

2. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall encourage further actions to improve the conservation status of sturgeon species and agree to implement a GFCM pilot project on sturgeons in the Black Sea, to be conducted under the BlackSea4Fish project, as recommended by the WGBS at its ninth session.

3. The CPCs shall contribute to the effective implementation of the GFCM pilot project on sturgeons in the Black Sea and provide all necessary information to the BlackSea4Fish project in this context.

4. The CPCs shall enhance data reporting information on bycatch rates of sturgeons in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). Particular emphasis should be placed on the reporting of information on the types of fishing gear and methods involved in the bycatch of sturgeons towards ensuring an adequate monitoring and informing a bycatch assessment.

5. The CPCs are invited to communicate to the GFCM Secretariat their national legislation in place as well as relevant information and data on sturgeons, including on the biology, ecology and distribution of the species and on their interactions with fisheries, available from relevant scientific literature, research projects, surveys at sea and monitoring programmes.

6. The CPCs are invited to take the necessary steps to implement existing international, regional and national legislation as well as mitigation measures to minimize and, where possible, eliminate the bycatch of sturgeons during fishing operations.

7. The CPCs shall take appropriate actions to ensure full compliance with existing international, regional and national rules on the conservation of sturgeons by strengthening the monitoring, control and surveillance measures along the supply chain.

8. The CPCs shall ensure the reinforcement of the fight against the illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing of sturgeons in the Black Sea. In view of facilitating the implementation of the pilot project, the CPCs shall report to the GFCM Secretariat any information relevant to IUU fishing towards the qualification and possible quantification of the sources of IUU fishing affecting sturgeons.

9. The WGBS, with the support of the BlackSea4Fish project and via the pilot project, is tasked to compile, assess and evaluate all available data, information and actions reported under the DCRF as well as any other source of additional information including, but not limited to, scientific literature, surveys at sea, research projects and initiatives at the national, regional and international level.

10. The WGBS, at its eleventh session in 2023, shall report to the GFCM on the progress accomplished thereon, the results of the pilot project and the identified gaps in knowledge and provide the necessary elements for setting out future measures, if deemed appropriate, with the objective of conserving sturgeon species populations in the Black Sea by primarily, but not limited to, reducing and mitigating sturgeon bycatch.

11. The GFCM, at its forty-sixth session in 2023, upon receipt of advice from the WGBS, may consider, if appropriate, the adoption of further measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives of this resolution.

12. The provisions contained in this resolution are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that may be adopted by CPCs.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/6 on the application of an International Maritime Organization number, amending Resolution GFCM/41/2017/6

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

EMPHASIZING that the identification of fishing vessels is a necessary step in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and for the management of fishing activities, and that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) number assigned under the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme is an established and reliable unique vessel identifier, which stays permanently assigned to a vessel irrespective of change of name, ownership, flag or marking;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the decision by the IMO Assembly, as its twenty-eighth session, in 2013, to adopt Resolution A.1078(28) extending the application of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to fishing vessels of 100 gross tonnage (GT) and above, and the decision by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its thirty-first session, in 2014, to use the IMO number as the unique vessel identifier for vessels of 100 GT and above to be included in the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels;

FURTHER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the decision by the IMO Assembly, as its thirtieth session, in 2017, to extend the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to all motorized fishing vessels of less than 100 GT down to a size limit of 12 metres length overall that are authorized to operate outside waters under national jurisdiction, and fishing vessels of non-steel hull construction of 100 GT and above;

CONSIDERING that the Compliance Committee, at its fourteenth session (online, May 2021), concurred that it was time to facilitate a broader implementation of the IMO number by the GFCM;

ACKNOWLEDGING the rapid development of requirements for fishing vessels to acquire an IMO number and the need to provide clarity to fishing vessel operators and flag states in this regard;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

Amendment of Resolution GFCM/41/2017/6

1. Paragraph 1 of Resolution GFCM/41/2017/6 shall be amended as follows:

Effective from 31 December 2022, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall authorize their fishing vessels of steel and non-steel hull construction of 20 metres or above to operate in international waters, only if eligible vessels have an IMO number allocated by the manager of the IMO ship identification number scheme. Eligible vessels under the IMO ship identification number scheme that are not identified with this number shall not be included in the record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in international waters in the GFCM area of application.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/7 on the implementation of a winch sensor system for demersal fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas 17 and 18)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and the need for an adequate monitoring of the catches;

RECALLING the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING Resolution GFCM/38/2014/1 on guidelines on vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/5 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable demersal fisheries in the Adriatic (geographical subareas 17 and 18), in particular its paragraph 34 on the launch of a pilot project aimed at installing sensors on the vessel winches so to record and report in real time the shooting and hauling of deployed demersal towed gear;

CONSIDERING the commitments made under the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture;

RECOGNIZING that the operationalization of control systems, including information deriving from these systems, supports enhanced fisheries stock assessment and the identification of fishing grounds and fishing activities, thus contributing to the objectives of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECALLING the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) on advances in fishing gear technology to improve the selectivity and rational exploitation of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

NOTING the conclusions of the fourteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) (online, May 2021) and of the Working Group on Vessel Monitoring Systems and Related Control Systems (WGVMS) (online, May 2021);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
General objectives and scope

1. The objective of this resolution is to provide terms of reference for two voluntary pilot projects aimed at testing the feasibility of the establishment of a winch sensor system (WSS) on fishing vessels exploiting demersal stocks by means of otter-trawling, beam-trawling, bottom-pair trawling and otter twin trawling in the Adriatic Sea (geographical subareas (GSAs) 17 and 18):

a) The first pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of a centralized WSS, as described in Parts II and III.

b) The second pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of a decentralized or regionalized WSS, as described in Parts II and IV.

2. Contracting parties and non-contracting parties (CPCs) may implement, on a voluntary basis, the pilot projects referred to in paragraph 1 to test the feasibility of the establishment of a WSS on vessels exploiting demersal stocks by means of trawling and exceeding an overall length of 15 metres in the Adriatic Sea.

3. This resolution considers the specifications and the state of play of the implementation of a WSS on fishing vessels in the Adriatic Sea, in particular in relation to the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application, ensuring compatibility with international standards and data confidentiality requirements for the exchange of WSS information between CPCs.

PART II
General terms of reference

4. The general terms of reference are applicable to the CPCs participating in the voluntary pilot projects referred to in Parts III and IV.

Winch sensor system requirements

5. Each CPC shall implement a WSS on commercial fishing vessels exceeding 15 metres length overall by mounting a winch sensor device on a winch or a gear, in conformity with the requirements laid down in this resolution and without prejudice to stricter obligations CPCs may have engaged in.

6. The CPCs shall ensure that the WSS installed onboard fishing vessels enable those fishing vessels to continuously collect and transmit automatically to the relevant authority, at least every two hours while out of their base port, the following data:

a) the vessel registration number as recorded in the GFCM fishing fleet register;

b) the geographical coordinates (longitude and latitude) of the location(s) where the vessel deployed its net(s) into the water, with a minimum resolution of 500 metres and a confidence interval of 99 percent;

c) the date and time when the vessel deployed its net(s) into the water;

d) the length of time during which the winch was deployed; and

e) the type and length of the fishing net(s) deployed.

7. The CPCs shall take all the necessary measures to ensure that the relevant authority receives, in electronic format through the WSS, the data referred to in paragraph 6 and is equipped with computer hardware and software enabling automatic data processing and electronic data transmission.

8. The CPCs shall provide back-up and recovery procedures in case of system failures.

9. The CPCs shall ensure, as much as possible, that the WSS onboard their fishing vessels is tamper-proof and is not susceptible to manual data input. To this end, the onboard satellite device must be located within a sealed unit and protected by official seals enabling to reveal whether the unit has been accessed or tampered with. In the event that a CPC has evidence, following an inspection, that the onboard WSS does not meet the above requirements or has been tampered with, it shall immediately notify the flag state of the vessel.

Duties of the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels

10. The masters and/or owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to WSS shall ensure that the devices onboard their vessels are permanently operational and that the information referred to in paragraph 6 is collected at least every two hours. The masters and/or owners/licensees of fishing vessels shall in particular ensure that:

a) WSS data are not altered in any way;

b) the antennas connected to the satellite devices are not obstructed in any way;

c) the power supply of the WSS is not interrupted in any way; and

d) the winch sensor device and the satellite device are not removed from the vessel.

11. In the event of a technical failure or non-operation of the WSS devices fitted onboard a fishing vessel, the masters and owners/licensees of the fishing vessels subject to WSS, or their representative, shall communicate to the flag state, every four hours starting at the time when the technical failure or the non-operation of the WSS was detected, up-to-date information as detailed in paragraph 6, by any available means.

12. Fishing vessels with a defective onboard WSS shall take immediate steps to repair or replace the hardware as soon as possible and, in any event, as soon as the fishing vessels enter a port. Fishing vessels shall not be allowed by the flag state/ port state to commence another fishing trip in the GFCM area of application without the defective part of the WSS being repaired or replaced, unless they are authorized to leave by the competent flag state/ port state authority.

PART III
Specificities of a centralized pilot project

13. This part shall apply to any CPC and its respective fishing vessels participating in the centralized WSS pilot project.

14. Within a centralized WSS, the GFCM Secretariat should serve as the relevant authority as mentioned in Part II. As such, the fishing vessels operating under the conditions of the centralized pilot project shall transmit their WSS data automatically to the GFCM Secretariat.

15. Each CPC shall, notwithstanding stricter national requirements, implement a WSS according to the provisions described in Part II and ensure that the devices fitted onboard the fishing vessels are able to collect and continuously transmit the required data to the GFCM Secretariat, as prescribed in paragraph 6.

16. As such, the GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for the purpose of receiving and storing the reported data. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that any information transmitted to and stored by the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this resolution is maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1.

17. In order to ensure a consistent data collection and sharing throughout the GFCM area of application, the GFCM Secretariat shall provide flag state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their vessels and/or coastal state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their waters.

18. Whenever the GFCM Secretariat does not receive the expected data or has reasons to doubt about the correctness of the data it has received, it shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to WSS, or their representatives, as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the flag state shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether the devices have been tampered with. The outcomes of such investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence and legal proceedings), shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat for consideration/action.

PART IV
Specificities of a decentralized pilot project

19. This part shall apply to any CPC and its respective fishing vessels participating in the decentralized or regionalized WSS pilot project.

20. Within a decentralized WSS, the flag state's fisheries monitoring centre (FMC) should serve as the relevant authority as mentioned in Part II. As such, the fishing vessels operating under the conditions of the decentralized pilot project shall transmit their data directly to the flag state's FMC.

21. Each CPC shall, notwithstanding stricter national requirements, implement a WSS according to the provisions described in Part II and ensure that the devices fitted on board the fishing vessels are able to collect and transmit continuously the required data to the FMC, as prescribed in paragraph 6.

22. In order to ensure a consistent data collection and sharing throughout the GFCM area of application, the FMCs shall transmit their data to the GFCM Secretariat on a regular basis. The GFCM Secretariat shall provide flag state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their vessels and/or coastal state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their waters.

23. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for the purpose of receiving and storing any data transmitted by the FMCs. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that any information transmitted by the FMCs and stored by the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this resolution is maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1.

24. Each CPC shall notify the name, address, email and telephone numbers of the relevant authorities of their FMC to the GFCM Secretariat before the start of the pilot project. Each CPC shall also notify to the GFCM Secretariat, without delay, any change in these contacts. The GFCM Secretariat shall draw and maintain a list of contacts based on the information received from the CPCs.

25. Whenever the FMCs do not receive the expected data or have reasons to doubt about the correctness of the data they have received, they shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of the fishing vessels subject to WSS and the national authorities, as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the CPCs shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether the devices have been tampered with. The outcomes of such investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence and legal proceedings), shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat for consideration/action.

PART V
Final provisions

26. The pilot projects shall be launched by the end of 2022 and have a minimum duration of one year.

27. After the conclusion of the pilot projects, the GFCM Secretariat shall present to the WGVMS, before the next session of the CoC, a final report with all relevant data on WSS as well as a cost analysis of both pilot projects. Based on this final report, the WGVMS shall advise the CoC on a list of recommendations on the future implementation of WSS in the Adriatic Sea.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/8 on the implementation of a vessel monitoring system

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and the need for an adequate monitoring of the catches;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING Resolution GFCM/38/2014/1 on guidelines on vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/43/2019/3 on the implementation of a vessel monitoring system and an electronic logbook in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the commitments made under the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and of the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture;

RECOGNIZING that the operationalization of a centralized vessel monitoring system (VMS) and related control system, including information deriving from this system, supports enhanced fisheries stock assessment and identification of fishing grounds and fishing activities, thus contributing to the objectives of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECALLING the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) on advances in fishing gear technology to improve the selectivity and rational exploitation of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

NOTING the conclusions of the fourteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) (online, May 2021) and of the Working group on VMS and Related Control Systems (WGVMS) (online, May 2021);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement the following resolution:

PART I
Objective

1. The objective of this resolution is to provide terms of reference for two voluntary pilot projects aimed at testing the feasibility of the establishment of a VMS in the GFCM area of application:

   a) The first pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of a centralized VMS, as described in Parts II and III.

   b) The second pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of a decentralized or regionalized VMS, as described in Parts II and IV.

2. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) may implement, on a voluntary basis, the pilot projects referred to in paragraph 1 to test the feasibility of the establishment of a VMS on fishing vessels exceeding 15 metres length overall fishing in waters beyond the jurisdiction of the flag CPCs and operating in the GFCM area of application.

3. This resolution considers the specifications and the state of play of the implementation of VMS in the GFCM area of application, in particular in relation to the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7, ensuring compatibility with international standards and data confidentiality requirements for the exchange of VMS information between CPCs.

PART II
General terms of reference

4. In accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7, the general terms of reference are applicable to CPCs participating in the voluntary pilot projects referred to in Parts III and IV.

Satellite tracking device requirements

5. Each CPC shall implement a satellite-based VMS for its commercial fishing vessels meeting the conditions defined in paragraph 2, in conformity with the requirements laid down in this resolution, without prejudice to stricter obligations CPCs may have engaged in.

6. The CPCs shall ensure that the satellite tracking devices fitted onboard fishing vessels enable those fishing vessels to continuously collect and transmit automatically to the relevant authority, at least every two hours while out of their base port, the following data :

a) the vessel registration number of the vessel as recorded in the GFCM fishing fleet register;

b) the geographical coordinates (longitude and latitude) of the vessel, with a minimum resolution of 10 metres and a confidence interval of 99 percent;

c) the date and time of the fixing the position of the vessel; and

d) the speed and course of the vessel at the time of fixing its position.

7. The CPCs shall ensure that their fishing vessels are equipped with an autonomous system able to automatically transmit messages to the relevant land-based authority, allowing for a continuous tracking of the position of the fishing vessels. If the satellite tracking device is turned off, either deliberately or due to a malfunction, the system must be capable of sending an alarm signal to the relevant authority.

8. The CPCs shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the relevant authority receives, through the onboard satellite tracking device, the data referred to in paragraph 6, in electronic format, and is equipped with computer hardware and software enabling automatic data processing and electronic data transmission.

9. The CPCs shall provide back-up and recovery procedures in case of system failures.

10. The CPCs shall ensure, as much as possible, that the satellite tracking devices onboard their fishing vessels are tamper-proof and are not susceptible to manual input of position data. To this end, the onboard satellite tracking device must be located within a sealed unit and protected by official seals enabling to reveal whether the unit has been accessed or tampered with. In the event that a CPC has evidence, following an inspection, that the onboard satellite tracking devices do not meet the above requirements or have been tampered with, it shall immediately notify the flag state of the vessel.

Duties of the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels

11. The masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS shall ensure that the satellite tracking devices onboard their vessels are permanently operational and that the information referred to in paragraph 6 is collected at least every two hours. The masters and/or owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS shall in particular ensure that:

a) VMS reports and messages are not altered in any way;

b) the antennas connected to the satellite monitoring devices are not obstructed in any way;

c) the power supply of the satellite tracking devices is not interrupted in any way; and

d) the satellite tracking devices are not removed from the vessel.

12. In the event of a technical failure or non-operation of the satellite tracking devices fitted on board a fishing vessel, the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to VMS, or their representative shall communicate to the flag state, every four hours starting at the time when the technical failure or the non-operation of the VMS was detected, the up-to-date geographical position of the vessel by any available means (telephone text-message, email, facsimile, radio, etc.), until they return to port.

13. Fishing vessels with a defective on-board satellite tracking device shall take immediate steps to have the device repaired or replaced as soon as possible and, in any event, as soon as the fishing vessels enter a port. Fishing vessels shall not be allowed by the flag state/port state to commence another fishing trip in the GFCM area of application without the defective device being repaired or replaced, unless they are authorized to leave by the competent flag state and the port state authority.

PART III
Specificities of a centralized pilot project

14. This part shall apply to any CPC and its respective fishing vessels participating in the centralized VMS pilot project.

15. Within a centralized VMS, the GFCM Secretariat should serve as the relevant authority as mentioned in Part II. As such, fishing vessels operating under the conditions of the centralized pilot project shall transmit their vessel monitoring data automatically to the GFCM Secretariat.

16. Each CPC shall, notwithstanding stricter national requirements, implement a VMS according to the provisions described in Part II and ensure that the devices fitted onboard the fishing vessels are able to collect and continuously transmit the required data to the GFCM Secretariat, as prescribed in paragraph 6.

17. As such, the GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for the purpose of receiving and storing any vessel monitoring data. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that any information transmitted to and stored by the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this resolution is maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1.

18. In order to ensure a consistent data collection and sharing throughout the GFCM area of application, the GFCM Secretariat shall provide flag state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their vessels and/or coastal state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their waters.

19. Whenever the GFCM Secretariat does not receive the expected data or has reasons to doubt about the correctness of the data it has received, it shall notify the flag state. The flag state shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of the fishing vessels subject to VMS, or their representatives, as soon as possible and, where appropriate, shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether the equipment has been tampered with. In carrying out its duties as a flag state, it shall take due consideration of Article 19 of the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995. The outcomes of such investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence and legal proceedings) shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat for consideration/action (e.g. inclusion of the vessel in the GFCM list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application).

PART IV
Specificities of a decentralized pilot project

20. This part shall apply to any CPC and their respective fishing vessels participating in the decentralized or regionalized VMS pilot project.

21. Within a decentralized VMS, the flag state's fisheries monitoring centre (FMC) should serve as the relevant authority as mentioned in Part II. As such, fishing vessels operating under the conditions of the decentralized pilot project shall transmit their vessel monitoring data directly to the flag State's FMC.

22. Each CPC shall, notwithstanding stricter national requirements, implement a VMS according to the provisions described in Part II and ensure that the devices fitted onboard the fishing vessel are able to collect and transmit continuously the required data to the FMC, as prescribed in paragraph 6.

23. In order to ensure a consistent data collection and sharing throughout the GFCM area of application, FMCs shall transmit their vessel monitoring data to the GFCM Secretariat on a regular basis and use the FLUX standard where possible. The GFCM Secretariat shall provide flag state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their vessels and/or coastal state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their waters.

24. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for the purpose of receiving and storing any vessel monitoring data transmitted by the FMCs. The GFCM Secretariat shall ensure that any information transmitted by the FMCs and stored by the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this resolution is maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1.

25. Each CPC shall notify the name, address, email and telephone numbers of the relevant authorities of their FMC to the GFCM Secretariat before the start of the pilot project. Each CPC shall also notify to the GFCM Secretariat, without delay, any change in these contacts. The GFCM Secretariat shall draw and maintain a list of contacts based on the information received from the CPCs and shall take the necessary steps to publicize this information.

26. Whenever the FMCs do not receive the expected data or have reasons to doubt about the correctness of the data they have received, they shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of the fishing vessels subject to VMS, and the national authorities, as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the CPCs shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether the equipment has been tampered with. In carrying out their duties as flag states, the CPCs shall take due consideration of Article 19 of the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995. The outcomes of such investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence and legal proceedings), shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat for consideration/action (e.g. inclusion of the vessel in the GFCM list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application).

PART V
Final provisions

27. In accordance with Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/10 on access to information and data related to monitoring, control and surveillance within the framework of joint inspection and surveillance schemes, CPCs engaged in inspection at sea operations in the GFCM area of application within the framework of a joint inspection and surveillance scheme shall request the GFCM Secretariat to make available the vessel monitoring data received for all fishing vessels within 100 nautical miles of the inspection vessel(s) at sea.

28. The pilot projects shall be launched by the end of 2022 and have a minimum duration of one year.

29. After the conclusion of the pilot projects, the GFCM Secretariat shall present to the WGVMS, before the next session of the CoC, a final report with all relevant vessel monitoring data as well as a cost evaluation of both pilot projects. Based on this final report, the WGVMS shall advise the CoC on a list of recommendations on the future implementation of VMS in the GFCM area of application.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/9 on the implementation of an electronic logbook

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and the need for an adequate monitoring of the catches;

CONSIDERING Resolution GFCM/38/2014/1 on guidelines on vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/43/2019/3 on the implementation of a vessel monitoring system and an electronic logbook in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

CONSIDERING the commitments made under the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and of the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture;

RECOGNIZING that the operationalization of a centralized vessel monitoring system (VMS) and related control system, including information deriving from this system, supports enhanced assessment of fisheries stocks and the identification of fishing grounds and fishing activities, thus contributing to the objectives of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the technology used to ensure the electronic reporting of catches, the electronic logbook, has reached an adequate level of development to be operationalized, as demonstrated in various other regional fisheries management organizations around the world;

RECALLING the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Fishing Technology (online, April 2021) on advances in fishing gear technology to improve the selectivity and rational exploitation of fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea;

NOTING the conclusions of the fourteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) (online, May 2021) and the Working Group on VMS and Related Control Systems (WGVMS) (online, May 2021);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
Objective

1. The objective of this resolution is to provide terms of reference for two voluntary pilot projects aimed at testing the feasibility of the establishment of an electronic logbook/electronic reporting system (ERS) in the GFCM area of application:

a) The first pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of a centralized ERS, as described in Parts II and III.

b) The second pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of a decentralized or regionalized ERS, as described in Parts II and IV.

2. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) may, on a voluntary basis, implement the pilot projects referred to in paragraph 1 to test the feasibility of the establishment of an ERS within the GFCM area of application.

PART II
General terms of reference

3. The general terms of reference are applicable to CPCs participating in the voluntary pilot projects referred to in Parts III and IV, without prejudice to the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1.

4. Each participating CPC shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat a list of fishing vessels participating in one of the pilot projects mentioned in paragraph 1. Each modification to this vessel list shall be communicated to the GFCM Secretariat without delay.

5. Each participating CPC shall implement an ERS for its commercial fishing vessels listed in accordance with paragraph 4, in conformity with the requirements laid down in this resolution, without prejudice to stricter obligations CPCs may have engaged in.

6. Each participating CPCs shall require that the masters of participating fishing vessels record and transmit, by electronic means, data on their activities, indicating in particular the quantities above 50 kg in live weight of each species caught and kept on board, whether the catches are weighed or estimated, the date and geographical positions of such catches and the type of gear used, in accordance with the minimum information set out in Annex 1.

7. The minimum quantity referred to in paragraph 6 shall be without prejudice to stricter rules implemented by CPCs, which may define a lower threshold between 0 and 50 kg in the light of further work to be undertaken within the GFCM framework.

8. The masters of participating vessels shall be responsible for the accuracy of the electronic data referred to in paragraph 6, which shall be transmitted at least once a day to the relevant authority. These data shall also be transmitted at the request of the competent authority of the flag state, and after the last fishing operation has been completed and before entering port.

9. The masters of participating fishing vessels that electronically record and report data on their fishing activities shall be exempt by the CPCs from the obligation to complete in paper format a fishing logbook, a landing declaration and a transshipment declaration.

10. The CPCs shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the relevant authority is equipped with computer hardware and software enabling automatic data processing and electronic data transmission to complete the electronic logbooks with the data transmitted by the master.

11. In case of system failures, the CPCs shall provide back-up procedures and the master of the affected vessel shall transmit a bound logbook to the relevant authority, in accordance with the minimum information set out in Annex 1.

12. The competent authorities of a coastal state shall accept electronic reports, in respect of a fishing vessel, containing the data referred to in paragraph 6 and received from or made available by the relevant authority.

PART III
Specificities of a centralized pilot project

13. This part shall apply to any CPC and their respective fishing vessels participating in the centralized ERS pilot project.

14. Within a centralized ERS, the GFCM Secretariat should serve as the relevant authority as mentioned in Part II. As such, the masters of fishing vessels operating under the conditions of the centralized pilot project shall transmit their electronic logbook data to the GFCM Secretariat.

15. As such, the GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for the purpose of receiving and storing any electronic logbook data. The GFCM Secretariat shall use the data received to complete the electronic logbook of the fishing vessel concerned and ensure that any information transmitted to and stored by the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this resolution is maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1.

16. In order to ensure consistent data collection and sharing throughout the GFCM area of application, the GFCM Secretariat shall provide flag state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their vessels and/or coastal state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving waters under their jurisdiction.

17. Whenever the GFCM Secretariat does not receive expected data or has reasons to doubt about the correctness of the data it has received, it shall notify the flag state. The flag state shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of fishing vessels subject to ERS, or their representatives, as soon as possible and, where appropriate, shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether any data has been tampered with. In carrying out its duties as a flag state it shall take due consideration of Article 19 of the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995. The outcomes of such investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence and legal proceedings) shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat for consideration/action.

PART IV
Specificities of a decentralized pilot project

18. This part shall apply to any CPC and their respective fishing vessels participating in the decentralized or regionalized ERS pilot project.

19. Within a decentralized ERS, the flag state's fisheries monitoring centre (FMC) should serve as the relevant authority as mentioned in Part II. As such, the masters of a participating fishing vessel operating under the conditions of the decentralized pilot project shall transmit their electronic logbook data directly to their flag State's FMC. The flag state shall use the data received to complete the electronic logbook of the fishing vessel.

20. In order to ensure consistent data gathering and sharing throughout the GFCM area of application, FMCs shall transmit their electronic logbook data to the GFCM Secretariat on a regular basis and shall use the FLUX standard where possible. The GFCM shall provide flag state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their vessels and/or coastal state CPCs with real-time access to any data involving their waters.

21. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a database for the purposes of receiving and storing any electronic logbook data transmitted by the FMCs. It shall ensure that any information transmitted by the FMCs and stored by the GFCM Secretariat pursuant to this resolution is be maintained in strict accordance with the provisions of Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/.

22. Each CPC shall notify the name, address, email and telephone numbers of the relevant authorities of their FMC to the GFCM Secretariat before the start of the pilot project. Each CPC shall also notify to the GFCM Secretariat, without delay, any changes in these contacts. The GFCM Secretariat shall draw and maintain a list of contacts based on the information received from the CPCs and shall take the necessary steps to publicize this information.

23. Whenever the FMCs do not receive the expected data or have reasons to doubt the about correctness of the data they have received, they shall notify the masters and owners/licensees of the fishing vessels subject to ERS and the national authorities, as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the CPCs shall investigate the matter in order to establish whether any data has been tampered with. In carrying out their duties as flag states, they shall take due consideration of Article 19 of the UN Fish stocks agreement. The outcome of this investigation, including any action taken by the flag state (e.g. fines, withdrawal of fishing licence, legal proceedings), shall be forwarded to the GFCM Secretariat for consideration/action.

PART V
Final provisions

24. The pilot projects shall be launched by the end of 2022 and shall have a minimum duration of one year.

25. After the conclusion of the pilot projects, the GFCM Secretariat shall present to the WGVMS, before the next session of the CoC, a final report on the implementation of the pilot projects as well as a cost evaluation of both pilot projects. Based on this final report, the WGVMS shall advise during the CoC on a list of recommendations on the future implementation of ERS in the GFCM area of application.

Annex 1

Minimum information to be reported in the GFCM electronic logbook

1. Minimum standard information for the GFCM electronic logbook:
   a) name(s) and address(es) of the master(s);
   b) date and time of departure and return from/to port;
   c) vessel name, call-sign, vessel registration number and IMO number (if available);
   d) fishing gear (FAO code and units) and their dimension, mesh size and number of hooks;
   e) operations at sea, with at least one line per day of trip, providing:
      i) the activity (fishing, steaming, etc.);
      ii) the position, including geographical positions recorded for each fishing operation, or at noon when no fishing has been conducted during this day, as well as GFCM geographical subarea and/or the number of the rectangle 30'x30' of the GFCM statistical grid;
      iii) the numbers of a rectangle in the GFCM statistical grid is a five digit code as reported in Annex 2, identified by the following rule:
         - the latitude is covered by a three-digit code composed of a letter and two numbers with a maximum range from M00 (30°N) up to M34 (47°30'N);
         - the longitude is covered by a code composed of a letter from A to J and a number from 0 to 9 with a maximum range from A0 (6°W) up to J5 (42°E).
      iv) the record of catches by species;
   f) species identification:
      i) by FAO code;
      ii) round weight in kg per day for all species; and
      iii) number of fish caught per day (only for tuna, swordfish, and highly migratory shark); and
   g) means of weight measure: estimation, weighing on board and/or counting of containers (boxes, baskets, etc.).
2. Minimum information in case of landing and/or transshipment:
   a) date, time and port of landing and/or transshipment;
   b) products:
      i) species;
      ii) presentation;
      iii) number of fish or containers and quantity in kg;
   c) vessel details (transshipment), including name, call-sign, markings, flag and any other characteristics;
   d) country and port of destination of the receiving vessel; and
   e) the permitted margin of tolerance of 10 percent that shall be expressed as a percentage of the actual determined live weight equivalent of each species retained on board.

Annex 2

Digits for the codification of the rectangles in the statistical grid

Latitude

Digit 1-3		
code	**from**	**to**
M00	30°N	30°30’N
M01	30°30’N	31°N
M02	31°N	31°30’N
M03	31°30’N	32°N
M04	32°N	32°30’N
M05	32°30’N	33°N
M06	33°N	33°30’N
M07	33°30’N	34°N
M08	34°N	34°30’N
M09	34°30’N	35°N
M10	35°N	35°30’N
M11	35°30’N	36°N
M12	36°N	36°30’N
M13	36°30’N	37°N
M14	37°N	37°30’N
M15	37°30’N	38°N
M16	38°N	38°30’N
M17	38°30’N	39°N
M18	39°N	39°30’N
M19	39°30’N	40°N
M20	40°N	40°30’N
M21	40°30’N	41°N

M22	41°N	41°30’N
M23	41°30’N	42°N
M24	42°N	42°30’N
M25	42°30’N	43°N
M26	43°N	43°30’N
M27	43°30’N	44°N
M28	44°N	44°30’N
M29	44°30’N	45°N
M30	45°N	45°30’N
M31	45°30’N	46°N
M32	46°N	46°30’N
M33	46°30’N	47°N
M34	47°N	47°30’N

Longitude

Digit 4-5		
code	**from**	**to**
A0	6°W	5°30’W
A1	5°30’W	5°W
A2	5°W	4°30’W
A3	4°30’W	4°W
A4	4°W	3°30’W
A5	3°30’W	3°W
A6	3°W	2°30’W
A7	2°30’W	2°W
A8	2°W	1°30’W
A9	1°30’W	1°W
B0	1°W	0°30’W
B1	0°30’W	0°W
B2	0°E	0°30’E
B3	0°30’E	1°E
B4	1°E	1°30’E
B5	1°30’E	2°E
B6	2°E	2°30’E
B7	2°30’E	3°E
B8	3°E	3°30’E
B9	3°30’E	4°E
C0	4°E	4°30’E
C1	4°30’E	5°E
C2	5°E	5°30’E
C3	5°30’E	6°E
C4	6°E	6°30’E
C5	6°30’E	7°E
C6	7°E	7°30’E
C7	7°30’E	8°E
C8	8°E	8°30’E
C9	8°30’E	9°E
D0	9°E	9°30’E
D1	9°30’E	10°E
D2	10°E	10°30’E
D3	10°30’E	11°E
D4	11°E	11°30’E
D5	11°30’E	12°E

Digit 4-5		
code	**from**	**to**
D6	12°E	12°30’E
D7	12°30’E	13°E
D8	13°E	13°30’E
D9	13°30’E	14°E
E0	14°E	14°30’E
E1	14°30’E	15°E
E2	15°E	15°30’E
E3	15°30’E	16°E
E4	16°E	16°30’E
E5	16°30’E	17°E
E6	17°E	17°30’E
E7	17°30’E	18°E
E8	18°E	18°30’E
E9	18°30’E	19°E
F0	19°E	19°30’E
F1	19°30’E	20°E
F2	20°E	20°30’E
F3	20°30’E	21°E
F4	21°E	21°30’E
F5	21°30’E	22°E
F6	22°E	22°30’E
F7	22°30’E	23°E
F8	23°E	23°30’E
F9	23°30’E	24°E
G0	24°E	24°30’E
G1	24°30’E	25°E
G2	25°E	25°30’E
G3	25°30’E	26°E
G4	26°E	26°30’E
G5	26°30’E	27°E
G6	27°E	27°30’E
G7	27°30’E	28°E
G8	28°E	28°30’E
G9	28°30’E	29°E
H0	29°E	29°30’E
H1	29°30’E	30°E

Digit 4-5		
code	**from**	**to**
H2	30°E	30°30’E
H3	30°30’E	31°E
H4	31°E	31°30’E
H5	31°30’E	32°E
H6	32°E	32°30’E
H7	32°30’E	33°E
H8	33°E	33°30’E
H9	33°30’E	34°E
I0	34°E	34°30’E
I1	34°30’E	35°E
I2	35°E	35°30’E
I3	35°30’E	36°E
I4	36°E	36°30’E
I5	36°30’E	37°E
I6	37°E	37°30’E
I7	37°30’E	38°E
I8	38°E	38°30’E
I9	38°30’E	39°E
J0	39°E	39°30’E
J1	39°30’E	40°E
J2	40°E	40°30’E
J3	40°30’E	41°E
J4	41°E	41°30’E
J5	41°30’E	42°E

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/10 on flag state performance

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular the development of actions related to Output 2.1 "Full compliance with GFCM recommendations achieved";

CONSIDERING that the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance establish performance assessment criteria whose objectives are to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing aiming to avoid harmful practices that deplete fish stocks, destroy marine habitats and weaken coastal communities;

NOTING that Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application reflects the strong commitment of the GFCM to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black sea;

BEARING IN MIND that the regional plan to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application is an important link between national and international actions taken to fight IUU fishing;

RECALLING that the GFCM has not launched any exercise on flag state performance until now;

NOTING that IUU fishing undermines international efforts to promote ocean governance and that Target 14.4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals aims, among other things, to end IUU fishing by 2020;

RECOGNIZING the necessity to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by all available means;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties are called upon to carry out self-assessments in accordance with the performance assessment criteria set in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, whose objective is to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

2. Reports of the self-assessments may be submitted to the fifteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) in order for it to present a summary report to the forty-fifth session of the GFCM.

3. Contracting parties choosing to perform a flag state assessment shall inform the CoC of any delays in their self-assessment exercise that would jeopardize the timely presentation of its report to the annual session of the GFCM.

4. The CoC shall further analyse the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance in order to submit appropriate proposals to ensure the consistency of GFCM recommendations with the performance assessment criteria set out in the FAO guidelines.

5. The GFCM Secretariat should elaborate a report template, in line with paragraph 2, and should transmit it to the contracting parties.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/11 on the follow up of the second performance reviewThe General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that the second performance review of the GFCM was carried out in 2019 by an external panel of experts;

NOTING that the panel of experts highlighted a number of areas where the GFCM made progress since the first performance review;

FURTHER NOTING that the panel of experts also drew up a number of recommendations to improve the performance of the GFCM;

RECOGNIZING the necessity to follow-up on the conclusions of the second performance review with a view to further strengthening the GFCM;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

Sole paragraph

The GFCM and the contracting parties are encouraged to put in place the actions provided in the annex to this resolution.

Annex

Draft-follow up of the GFCM performance review

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
Review process	1. The GFCM should establish a process to review annually progress against the recommendations formulated in the performance review process. This will facilitate future reviews and assist CPCs in prioritizing actions needed to strengthen GFCM performance.	Commission	L	At GFCM annual sessions, Commission to task the GFCM Secretariat to propose a list of priorities for GFCM performance as well as a report to evaluate the functioning of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.	Clarity on how the GFCM has responded to the outcomes of the first GFCM performance review.	
Decision-making	2. The GFCM should keep under review how the decision-making rules under the Agreement, as revised, allow it to take timely and effective decisions, and consider revising them further, in which case it should seek to make the rules more expedient, provide for procedures to be applied in	Commission	L			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	case urgent measures are needed, adopt the principle of consensus decision to reflect its established practice, clarify the rules applicable to the adoption of non-binding measures, and regulate more strictly the use of objections in line with current best practices.					
	3. The GFCM should include in its open website pages a summary of information pertaining to the relevant FAO projects and provide links for direct access to the specific websites of these projects.	GFCM Secretariat	M			
	4. The GFCM should consider the possibility of placing preparatory documents for its various meetings in the open pages of the GFCM website, subject to confidentiality rules. Where this would not be considered feasible for the time	Commission	S			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	being, it should at least clarify in its website the criteria applied for granting access to the extranet and ensure that such criteria are not unduly restrictive.					
	5. The GFCM should keep under review the need to revise the Agreement further in respect of the dispute settlement procedures to bring them in line with the requirements of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA).	Commission	M			
Relationship with contracting/non-contracting parties	6. The CPCs should carry out a robust mapping of all the projects and programmes in place or foreseen to provide funding, support and technical assistance, including a gap analysis. This should also include the work carried out by the Secretariat, as appropriate. Particular attention should be	SAC+ WGBS + CPCs + GFCM Secretariat	S	Improved coordination in provision of scientific advice through strengthened cooperation between the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and the Scientific Advisory	Complements panel recommendation 38	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	paid to identify overlapping projects in order to maximize the benefits and returns of the funding available.			Committee on Fisheries (SAC) to ensure common understanding of the state of Mediterranean stocks and avoid duplication of work		
	7. The GFCM should continue to explore with FAO practical means to ensure close cooperation and coordination regarding the management of the FAO regional projects. For transparency and visibility, it would be beneficial to include information on these projects and how they help the GFCM's work in pursuit of its objectives in the GFCM website, including links to each project's specific webpages for further information.	GFCM Secretariat	M			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
Cooperation with regional fisheries management organizations and other relevant organizations	8. The GFCM should consider concluding memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and other fisheries organizations of western and central Africa.	Commission	L		Already 16 MoUs concluded	
	9. It would be beneficial to publish the information regarding the MoUs concluded by the GFCM with other fisheries, regional or international organizations in the open pages of its website, this information, reflecting GFCM's commitment to cooperate closely with relevant organizations, should include the texts of the MoUs in question and links to the websites of such organizations.	GFCM Secretariat	S			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	10. The GFCM should consider participating officially in the meetings of all United Nations relevant bodies such as the State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (SPLOS) and the UNFSA Informal Consultation meetings, as well as in the ongoing negotiations for a new internationally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). It should also consider participating officially in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties of international conventions, in particular the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).	Commission	L			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
Implementation of a subregional approach	11. The GFCM should consolidate and formalize the implementation of the subregional approach, finalize the deployment of its subregional technical units and encourage further a close involvement of the FAO regional projects in the work of the SAC subregional committees.	Commission	S			
Financial and administrative issues	12. The GFCM should consider tasking the Secretariat to develop a strategic plan for the management of its services and staff, including performance objectives, milestones and criteria for assessing workload distribution, staff performance and consistency with the GFCM mid-term strategic priorities and the associated timelines.	GFCM Secretariat	L	Adoption of a strategic plan that evaluates both the financial and human resourcing strategic needs for the GFCM and its Secretariat		

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	13. The GFCM should develop a mid-to-long-term planning of activities funded via extra-budgetary funds outlining in a comprehensive way the availability/requirements of funds against an identification of priority projects and activities, as well as the timelines required to ensure their completion, to facilitate donors' commitments and ensure the overall cohesion and consistency of the programme with GFCM's strategies, work plans and outputs. The panel believes it would be beneficial to consider this recommendation alongside recommendation 12, possibly as one strategic plan that evaluates both the financial and human resourcing strategic needs for the GFCM and its Secretariat.	GFCM Secretariat	L	As above		

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
Status of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application	14. The SAC should give high priority to the identification of meaningful biological units, which may include more than one species, as already recommended by the first performance review in 2011. Furthermore, the utility of the recent and intended habitat and species mapping work should be explored and integrated alongside existing fisheries and stock data to help identify meaningful biological units.	SAC	S	Improved communication between STECF/DG MARE and the GFCM Secretariat through periodic technical meetings between bodies; sharing tasks between the GFCM and the STECF to: i) ensure annual assessments for all priority stocks; ii) ensure that as many stocks as possible are assessed; and iii) avoid duplications of effort and advice; ensuring a common understanding between the STECF and the GFCM in terms of i) frequency of assessment of non-priority stocks; ii)	Improved coordination in provision of scientific advice through strengthened cooperation between the STECF and the SAC to ensure common understanding of the state of Mediterranean stocks and avoid duplication of work	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
				benchmarks frequency; and iii) data quality and data requirements for benchmarks; improving data collection and streamlining of surveying and observer programmes (between EU Data Collection Framework and FAO regional projects)		
	15. The SAC should provide more multidisciplinary and integrated advice, taking into consideration biological, environmental, socio-economic and institutional aspects. Combining biological and socio-economic information in bio-economic models is of prime importance to evaluate different management scenarios. When official data for	SAC	S	As above. Regional Plan of Action for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF): adopted in 2018, in line with this, the SAC has as priority the production of a full analysis of the socio-economic		

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	a particular priority species is lacking, expert groups should provide advice based on the information available and the SAC should recommend the adoption of precautionary measures based on that advice.			characteristics of small-scale fisheries by 2021		
	16. Increased capacity building should be ensured in the subregions to perform quantitative assessments of management scenarios, including the use of socio-economic models, with particular attention to the need to improve the assessment coverage of eastern Mediterranean stocks.	SAC	M			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	17. The GFCM should establish a list of non-target species and related essential fish habitats (EFHs) for which protection measures should be implemented as a matter of priority.	SAC	S		See comments in 14 above	
	18. The available information to identify fisheries with incidental catches of vulnerable species is currently limited and therefore the GFCM should give priority to collecting existing data and identifying additional/alternative sources of information to guide any possible revision of the monitoring schemes.	SAC	S		See comments in 14 above	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	19. The GFCM should promote capacity building through training workshops to improve knowledge on age determination of sharks to be used in quantitative analysis (VPA).	Commission	S		See comments in 14 above	
	20. The GFCM should consolidate its use of the technical elements template for the development of conservation measures and management plan, making full use of the science-policy interface used to produce these templates. The GFCM should complete the adoption of measures so developed for the remaining five priority fisheries, four of which have already a technical elements template available for use by the Commission.	SAC	S		See comments in 14 above	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	21. The GFCM should continue supporting the implementation of scientific surveys at sea that are helpful for data collection. The GFCM protocols for surveys should take into consideration the priorities set by the SAC and the Commission, especially those in relation to data collection under the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as requested by the GFCM Working Groups on Stock Assessment (WGSAs).	SAC	S		EU supports regional surveys at sea via technical subregional FAO projects (MARE work programme for 2020)	
	22. The SAC advice should be multidisciplinary and take into consideration biological, environmental, socio-economic and institutional aspects, as already recommended by the first performance review.	Commission	S			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
Data collection and sharing	23. The CPCs should intensify efforts to collect socio-economic data systematically to allow the GFCM to assess the causes of overfishing and the economic implications of the different management options available for the fisheries it seeks to regulate.	GFCM Secretariat	S	Ensure quality of data through data quality indicators via the DCRF online platform requesting socio-economic data		
Adoption of management measures	24. The implementation of a traceability scheme for red coral should be expedited.	Commission	S			
	25. Multiannual management plans for the priority list of species should continue to be developed in line with the mid-term strategy and the subregional approach.	Commission + SAC working groups + WGSASP + WGSAD + WGBS	S	Adoption of a strategy for scientific fisheries advice, especially stock assessments, to be validated by the SAC and endorsed by CPCs		

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	26. The GFCM should initiate appropriate interim management measures (within five years) to conserve fisheries, stocks and habitats targeted by the different fisheries which comprise the SSF sector.	Commission	M			
	27. With regard to deep-sea fisheries, the GFCM should expedite: i) the determination of the bottom fishing footprint; ii) the implementation of encounter reporting protocols and VME indicator taxa/features; iii) the implementation of exploratory fishing protocols; and iv) the development of a GFCM geodatabase of VME indicator taxa.	Commission	M			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	28. The GFCM should develop appropriate methods for the assessment of significant adverse impacts and the risk of bottom fishing impacts on sensitive species and habitats (e.g. vulnerable marine ecosystems and EFHs).	Commission	M			
	29. The GFCM should extend the scope of its geodatabase of sensitive species and habitats to include areas of known essential fish habitat and any records of sensitive species and habitats in addition to vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME) indicator species occurring at depths > 300m.	Commission	M			
	30. The GFCM should consider making a clearer distinction between the processes and evidence used to define the two types of fisheries restricted area (EFHs and VMEs) in order to	Commission	S			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	avoid unnecessary confusion and ambiguity when discussing evidence in support of fisheries restricted area (FRA) proposals at the SAC and Commission meetings.					
	31. The GFCM should consider limiting the designation of VME FRAs to deep-water habitats (e.g. water depths of 300 metres or more) in accordance with the definition of deep-sea fisheries and associated management measures specific to deep-sea fisheries in the GFCM area of application.	Commission	M			
Fisheries control, compliance and enforcement	32. The GFCM should consider building on the experience gained through the implementation of the joint inspection scheme for the Strait of Sicily to develop a set of minimum standards and cooperation requirements for	WGVMS	S	Continue developing a culture of compliance with zero tolerance for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action	Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/6 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	inspections at sea at the regional level, without prejudice to the development of subregional schemes adapted – without derogating to minimum standards – to the specific needs of the fisheries and/or subregions concerned.			for the fight against Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing (RPOA-IUU) and the strengthening of the Compliance Committee (CoC), in particular: Ensure the implementation and submission of data through annual compliance tables; Ensure the quality of data through data quality indicators via the DCRF online platform; Guarantee the implementation of the compliance assessment scheme adopted at the 2019 annual session of the GFCM.	of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), amending Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8	
	33. The GFCM should consider operating a regional vessel monitoring system (VMS) to enhance its own ability to react quickly in instances of non-compliance, particularly with spatiotemporal management measures.	WGVMS	S		Refer to Resolution GFCM/43/2019/3 on the implementation of a vessel monitoring system and an electronic logbook in the GFCM area of application	
	34. The GFCM should commit to increasing the scope of its MCS regulatory framework to cover vessels below 15 metres in length, fixing a target timeline for this extension within a reasonable period between five and ten years.	Commission	L			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	35. The process for the identification of non-compliance set forth in Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 should be improved by establishing criteria to rank instances of non-compliance as a function of their seriousness, and by requiring CPCs to inform the GFCM of actions intended and planned to resolve their instances of non-compliance. The GFCM Secretariat should be empowered to carry out at least basic checks on whether the information reported by CPCs as to their implementation of GFCM measures into national law is accurate and based on a correct interpretation of their obligations.	Secretariat	S	Propose and adopt a list of proportionate measures to address categories and gravity of non-compliance cases identified by the CoC; Continue establishing new and implementing current joint schemes of international inspection by sub regional area to ensure adequate monitoring; Ensure that all CPCs have an adequate legal framework and necessary human and technical capabilities to meet their control and inspection	Refer to Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5 on a compliance assessment scheme for the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance Recommendation 40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	36. The GFCM should assess whether the timeline used for the operation of the identification process is fit for purpose and allows CPCs to prepare well for their participation. The GFCM Secretariat should aim at distributing its tables to CPCs sufficiently in advance of CoC meetings. CPCs should, in turn, make every effort to submit the required information timely, and if necessary, agree to move the deadlines to an earlier date as well.	Secretariat	S	responsibilities, including national control and sanctioning systems such as VMS, electronic reporting system (ERS) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers; Propose the deterrence of IUU activity through the implementation of catch certificate schemes in the Mediterranean (e.g. red coral) and the Black Sea (e.g. turbot); The WGVMS to provide the CoC with technical options for such VMS and to establish terms of reference for pilot		
	37. The CoC and Commission reports should be more transparent and informative regarding the conduct of the identification process, its outcomes and results.	Commission + CoC	S			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	38. The GFCM should consider undertaking a robust mapping of technical assistance and capacity building projects and initiatives underway, including a gap analysis, so as to direct investment towards strengthening CPCs' capacity to fulfil their responsibilities as flag, port and inspection states, as well as to collect and report compliance data. The multidisciplinary nature of subregional committees could be put to good use to help implement this review and allow CPCs to co-develop appropriate strategies that respond to specific subregional requirements and needs. This recommendation complements recommendation 6.	Commission	S	projects (model to other RFMOs) + voluntary pilot project on ERS (as proposed by the EU); and Self-assessment of the CPCs of their state flag performance (like in NEAFC)	Joint inspection and surveillance schemes: ongoing in the Strait of Sicily, and the pilot projects in the Adriatic, Levant, and Ionian Seas. For the turbot in the Black Sea, the joint scheme is complemented with a catch certification scheme to fight IUU and improve traceability Link to panel recommendation 6	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	39. The GFCM should define a framework for the reporting of compliance and enforcement information and data by CPCs, specifying in a clear way the data required and the deadlines for reporting. CPCs should report the number of port and at sea inspections carried out, the infringements detected and the follow-up given (sanctions included) to such infringements. CPCs should also regularly report to the GFCM on the state of their national laws instituting sanctions applicable to fisheries infringement.	CoC	S			
	40. On the basis of the information reported by CPCs (see above), the GFCM should consider implementing a process to review compliance by CPCs with their control obligations under GFCM	Commission	L			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	measures, along the lines of the existing clarification and identification procedures under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2, or extending the scope of the existing process to cover also these issues.					
Fishing capacity management	41. The GFCM should maintain its efforts at a pace to ensure the full implementation and consolidation of Resolution GFCM/41/2017/6 and to work with CPCs in need of most support to implement reliable data recording and monitoring schemes to establish accurate and reliable data on fishing capacity.	Commission	S		Refer to Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 and Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal,	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
					unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application repealing Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/4	
Aquaculture	42. The GFCM should consider remodelling the working method of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), including, as appropriate the structure of its working groups, by reorienting activities to specific targets.	Commission	S	Revision of the CAQ and WGs through a GFCM recommendation		
	43. CPCs should promote opening up to new markets, through marketing campaigns and investments.	Commission	M			
	44. CPCs should aim at ensuring better monitoring and reporting of some cultured species for which data are currently reported in aggregated form.	Commission	S	Aquaculture roadmap action (see panel recommendation 50 below)		

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	45. CPCs should increase their efforts to reduce the environmental impacts caused by aquaculture to improve its image among consumers	Commission	S			
	46. The GFCM should promote awareness regarding the introduction of non-indigenous species through aquaculture, including exotic pathogens.	CAQ	L			
	47. The GFCM should continue providing technical assistance to CPCs regarding aquaculture. This assistance should be tailored to the needs of each CPC as a function of their level of development, with priority attention to Northern African and eastern Mediterranean countries. This should include the introduction of modern culture techniques and technologies that can lead to improvements in quality and	CAQ	M			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	production performance, and the training of aquaculture farmers on such techniques and technologies.					
	48. Given the importance of the Aquaculture Demonstration Centres (ADCs) in the Black Sea for the sharing of knowledge and experience, it would be beneficial to create more ADC units to cover CPCs whose cultures need to be developed further or CPCs that are embarking on new culture projects.	Commission	S			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	49. The GFCM should foster aquaculture research while strengthening collaboration between researchers, farmers' associations, and decision-makers. The GFCM Aquaculture Multistakeholder platform as well as national multi-stakeholder platforms provide a suitable framework to this end.	CAQ	S			
	50. CPCs should take advantage of the forum provided by the GFCM to coordinate the monitoring of markets in order to support traceability of exports, balance supply and demand and create synergies to promote aquaculture product marketing and consumption. To this end, the GFCM should develop common standards for aquaculture market data collection and reporting.	CAQ	S	Adoption of a common methodology for points customs information and nomenclature of various species. Clarify whether data on the classification of trading partners is to be sent by volume or value. Possible GFCM resolution at the next	Refer to aquaculture roadmap EU identified issues: Customs information based on the EU nomenclature does not allow distinguishing between a product from fisheries or from aquaculture. Nomenclature groups together various species (e.g. mussels; there is no	

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
				annual session of the GFCM	distinction between different species like *Mytilus edulis* and *Mytilus galloprovincialis*). Regarding data on the classification of trading partners, there is a need to clarify whether this is according to volume or value.	
	51. CPCs should be encouraged to implement allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs) within their national waters, while monitoring AZAs in the vicinity. The lack of space is identified as a constraint for the expansion of marine aquaculture.	CAQ	M			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	52. The GFCM guidelines on management of coastal lagoons should be adopted by all CPCs having aquaculture activities within lagoons and should be implemented to avoid further degradation of these ecosystems.	Commission	M			
	53. All CPCs should use the indicators to assess the sustainable status of aquaculture activities within their territories. The indicators should be updated with new mechanisms, strategies and management practices. The GFCM should provide training sessions on the use of indicators and other capacity building activities to CPCs, whenever needed.	Commission	M			

Report chapter	Recommendations	Lead	Term (L=long term, M=medium term, S=short term)	Actions	Observations	Contracting parties comments
	54. The GFCM should encourage decision makers at national level to raise the importance of the aquaculture sector, increase their commitment to its development and promote a participatory approach to this end.	Commission	M			
	55. CPCs should coordinate with each other to create efficient aquaculture authorization processes.	Commission	M			

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/12 on a GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources and the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (UN headquarters, New York, September 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development", SDG 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", SDG 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", SDG 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", SDG 12 "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns", SDG 13 "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts", SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss" and SDG 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development";

RECALLING that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment", highlighting besides that "the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment" and that "states should establish, maintain and develop an appropriate legal and administrative framework which facilitates the development of responsible aquaculture";

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture both reflect the strong commitment of the GFCM to ensure the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture;

REAFFIRMING that the quest for productive, sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture to achieve food security is enshrined in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and captured in the four betters (better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), is a renewed call for action to achieve the sustainable management of aquatic resources;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the post-2020 global biodiversity framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

CONSIDERING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECOGNIZING to have a mutual interest in the development and the proper utilization of the marine living resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECOGNIZING that the overexploitation of scientifically assessed resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and the threats to the biodiversity of these two semi-enclosed basins remain a challenge;

RECOGNIZING the importance to pursue the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the GFCM area of application by strengthening compliance and enforcement as well as progressing in the field of monitoring, control and surveillance, in a coordinated and transparent way;

RECOGNIZING the need to ensure the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector and its contribution to sustainable food systems, working towards its resilience against global challenges;

RECOGNIZING the importance of promoting resilient fisheries-based livelihoods while fully and efficiently implementing the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECOGNIZING the need for capacity development and technical support at the national and subregional levels to ensure policy commitments are met;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM shall establish, in line with the global agenda, a GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM 2030 Strategy) to support the GFCM in fulfilling its mandate, as presented in the annex to this resolution.

2. The GFCM 2030 Strategy aims to preserve the heritage of fisheries and aquaculture as pillars of Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal communities, ensuring their transformation into a productive and sustainable food production system that contributes to thriving economies and healthy ecosystems. It offers a common vision and guiding principles to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the region, federating all efforts to deliver on national, regional and global commitments.

3. The GFCM 2030 Strategy is articulated around five targets:

    1) Fisheries and ecosystems: healthy seas and productive fisheries;
    2) Compliance and enforcement: a level playing field to eradicate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
    3) Aquaculture: a sustainable and resilient sector growing to its full potential;
    4) Livelihoods: decent employment and engaged fishers towards profitable fisheries; and
    5) Capacity development: Technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and efficient partnerships in a subregional perspective.

Each target is composed of expected outputs and strategic actions. The strategy is supported by a living document (action plan) detailing the activities to be executed to achieve its objectives.

4. A mid-term review of the strategy's objectives and outcomes shall assess the progress made in its implementation, review the lessons learnt and provide recommendations on possible readjustments and improvements to ensure targets are met efficiently. The action plan shall be regularly updated by GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, who are both the strategy's main stakeholders and direct beneficiaries.

Annex

GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

BACKGROUND

Fisheries and aquaculture are part of the cultural fabric of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. For millennia, they have been the key social and economic drivers of the region, providing essential coastal livelihoods and the basis for the so-called Mediterranean diet.

In recent years, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have made numerous positive strides in supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. However, several challenges remain before they can be assured of a sustainable future and contribute to their full potential to the well-being of coastal communities. While today's catch levels are lower compared to those of decades past, the exploitation rates of shared assessed stocks are largely still high. On the other hand, aquaculture production continues to grow, making the overall sustainability of the sector even more important. From increasing human pressures on the marine environment to the global impact of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, the region faces a critical turning point. To turn the tide, action is needed on several fronts, taking into account the semi-enclosed nature of the basins and the predominantly small-scale features of fisheries and aquaculture in the region:

- fisheries management measures, including technical and spatio-temporal measures, need to be extended to all main fisheries, including small-scale and recreational fisheries;
- discards and the incidental catch of vulnerable species must be reduced and mitigated;
- anthropogenic-driven impacts, such as climate change, non-indigenous species and pollution in all its forms, including eutrophication and underwater noise, need to be urgently addressed;
- monitoring, control and surveillance need to be enhanced, and management measures need to be fully enforced, towards the eradication of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
- aquaculture production needs to meet demand and grow sustainably, capitalizing on innovation, digitalization and knowledge sharing, and enhancing its attractiveness for investment; and
- greater social support and decent working conditions are required to assist an ageing workforce and foster youth employment, ensuring an adequate balance between resources and fleet capacity.

It is crucial to move forward and address these priorities, consolidating the progress made and enhancing coordination with organizations interacting with these sectors. Concerted efforts are in fact essential to maximize GFCM action and address the social, economic as well as environmental aspects of sustainability in the region, in line with the ecosystem approach, and build resilience to respond to global challenges and crises.

The GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM 2030 Strategy) offers a common vision and guiding principles to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the region, federating all efforts to deliver on national, regional and global commitments. To ensure tangible results, the GFCM acts as the driving force behind regional cooperation and partnerships, bringing together different stakeholders, working in synergy with existing strategies at the national and subregional levels and promoting a multidisciplinary approach.

While addressing the priorities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as a whole, the GFCM 2030 Strategy foresees interventions tailored to local needs and specificities through a subregional approach. In this respect, the GFCM subregional technical units play a critical role, organizing local action, sharing expertise and coordinating technical assistance work.

On a global scale, the GFCM 2030 Strategy is expected to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to end poverty, achieve food security, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, is of particular relevance. The GFCM 2030 Strategy decisively contributes, at the regional level, to the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also aims to integrate actions proposed within the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit towards more inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems.

The quest for productive, sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture to achieve food security is enshrined in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and captured in the four betters (Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life), as well as in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The GFCM 2030 Strategy supports and contributes to these efforts, including the Blue Transformation programme aiming to achieve better production of quality wild captured and farmed fish through integrated, sustainable and socio-economically sensitive processes. Acknowledging the critical importance of fisheries and aquaculture for global agrifood systems transformation, the 2021 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries, is a renewed call for action to achieve the sustainable management of aquatic resources. This vision is enshrined in the GFCM 2030 Strategy and accompanies its implementation.

Implementation mechanisms

In line with the global agenda, the strategy covers a ten-year span running until 2030. A mid-term review of its objectives and outcomes will assess the progress made in its implementation, review the lessons learnt and provide recommendations on possible readjustments and improvements to ensure targets are met efficiently. The strategy is supported by an action plan detailing the activities to be executed to achieve its objectives. This living document is expected to be regularly updated by the GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, who are both the strategy's main stakeholders and direct beneficiaries. The vision and commitment of the GFCM Membership in adopting and implementing relevant decisions will be instrumental in achieving the targets set by the GFCM 2030 Strategy and in supporting the GFCM to effectively fulfil its mandate.

Five targets, one vision

The GFCM 2030 Strategy aims to preserve the heritage of fisheries and aquaculture as pillars for the livelihoods of Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal communities, ensuring their transformation into a productive and sustainable food system that contributes to thriving economies and healthy ecosystems. To fulfil its overarching sustainability vision, the GFCM 2030 Strategy is articulated around five targets. Each target is composed of expected outputs and strategic actions:

Target 1. Fisheries and ecosystems: healthy seas and productive fisheries

Target 2. Compliance and enforcement: a level playing field to eradicate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Target 3. Aquaculture: a sustainable and resilient sector growing to its full potential

Target 4. Livelihoods: decent employment and engaged fishers towards profitable fisheries

Target 5. Capacity development: technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and efficient partnerships in a subregional perspective

Technical knowledge and expertise in the region underpin all actions while fully integrating cross-cutting themes such as gender, governance, nutrition, marine pollution, non-indigenous species, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. The work towards achieving the five targets is supported by appropriate knowledge sharing, through the production of publications and informative materials that provide scientific and methodological insights into priority topics, and by a fully encompassing communication mechanism, with cross-cutting and specific communication strategies.

TARGET 1. Fisheries and ecosystems: Healthy seas and productive fisheries

The overexploitation of scientifically assessed resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and threats to the biodiversity of these two semi-enclosed basins remain a challenge. Target 1 tackles the sustainability of fisheries from a broad perspective, integrating social, economic and environmental principles, with the objective to reach exploitation at maximum sustainable yield while addressing the conservation of biodiversity. Its achievement is supported by four expected outputs.

1.1. Technical advice on the status of fisheries and potential management scenarios improved to provide a solid basis for decision-making

Output 1.1 enhances fishery-related data collection, monitoring and analytical capacity at the national, subregional and regional levels, in order to facilitate the formulation of sound advice for the sustainable management of fisheries. This output prioritizes stock assessments and simulations on the biological and socio-economic impacts of alternative management scenarios, including a focus on data-limited situations and small-scale fisheries. It uses multispecies approaches and integrated ecosystem assessments.

Actions

A. Build, in the context of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), a regional scheme for the collection and analysis of relevant national fisheries data, and develop innovative tools to facilitate the integration of such information into comprehensive scientific advice.

B. Consolidate scientific evaluations of the status of marine living resources, particularly priority species as well as vulnerable species and ecosystems, with the aim to further strengthen the formulation of technical advice for management.

C. Provide advice on alternative potential management options for key fisheries, including through management strategy evaluation.

D. Establish research programmes addressing specific needs for the management of key fisheries and the conservation of vulnerable species and ecosystems.

1.2. Evidence-based adaptive fisheries and ecosystem management implemented

Output 1.2 foresees the design and implementation of efficient multiannual adaptive management plans addressing key fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Based on the best available scientific advice, a combination of quantitative harvest control rules for data-rich stocks and precautionary measures for data-limited resources can feed existing management plans as well as inform new ones, guiding the management framework towards increased sustainability.

Actions

A. Develop multiannual management plans for key fisheries, including small-scale fisheries, based on solid scientific advice and incorporating measures to address social, economic and ecological aspects.

B. Monitor the effectiveness of management plans, by assessing related developments in the state of resources as well as fisheries socio-economic indicators; ensure management plans are regularly adjusted to meet objectives, in line with internal changes or external pressures.

C. Manage and adapt fishing capacity to ensure an adequate balance between the productivity of marine living resources and that of the fishing fleet.

1.3. Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources

Output 1.3 identifies, including on the basis of environmental and socio-economic evidence, new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhances their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats. This output also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species.

Actions

A. Establish effective area-based measures to minimize and mitigate impacts on vulnerable species, sensitive habitats and essential fish habitats to meet international spatial conservation targets.

B. Assess, through adequate monitoring plans, the efficiency of area-based measures, in particular fisheries restricted areas, in contributing to the sustainability of fisheries and the conservation of biodiversity.

C. Develop a regional plan of action to mitigate bycatch (including both discards and the incidental catch of vulnerable species, particularly elasmobranchs) and depredation through adequate monitoring, testing and implementation of mitigation and selectivity measures.

D. Determine the fishing footprint of bottom contact fisheries and their potential interactions with essential fish habitats, sensitive habitats and vulnerable marine ecosystems.

1.4. Threats to fisheries and the marine environment, including plastic pollution, climate change and the expansion of non-indigenous species, prevented and mitigated

Output 1.4 aims to minimize and mitigate any form of pollution deriving from the activities of the fishing sector, in particular abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, *inter alia* by involving the sector in testing new technologies to remove litter, in particular plastics, from the marine environment. This output also consolidates the work on climate change and non-indigenous species, improving the initial assessments of the potential impacts of these threats on the sector, reinforcing monitoring programmes and integrating adaptive measures within management plans.

Actions

A. Establish a regional observatory of non-indigenous species, exchanging information with other GFCM monitoring tools and interacting with relevant partners' platforms.

B. Implement an adaptation strategy to address the potential effects of climate change and non-indigenous species on fisheries and on the marine environment and ecosystems, including by integrating adequate mitigation and adaptation measures within management plans.

C. Develop, in collaboration with relevant partners, a regional adaptation strategy to cope with the potential effects of pollution on marine ecosystems, including pollution from land and sea sources of plastics, underwater noise, abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear as well as nutrients and contaminants.

TARGET 2. Compliance and enforcement: A level playing field to eradicate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

In pursuing the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action to Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, Target 2 aims to end illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by strengthening compliance and enforcement as well as progressing in the field of monitoring, control and surveillance in a coordinated and transparent way. Its achievement is supported by four expected outputs.

2.1. Full compliance with GFCM recommendations achieved

Output 2.1 endows the GFCM Compliance Committee with the necessary means to level the playing field in the GFCM area of application, using the existing solidarity mechanism to provide technical assistance to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties found to be non-compliant with GFCM decisions. It also tackles the root causes currently undermining such a crucial endeavour.

Actions

A. Reinforce the procedure for the categorization of non-compliance within the framework of the Compliance Committee, to enable the identification of appropriate deterrent measures, depending on the severity of detected infringements.

B. Streamline the GFCM Authorized Vessel List, as well as other subregional vessel lists and related monitoring, control and surveillance data, ensuring transparency, cross-checking of information and preventing non-compliance.

C. Develop, in line with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, a methodology for the regular assessment of actions taken by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties to ensure their fishing vessels do not engage in IUU fishing activities.

D. Adopt a sanction scheme targeting cases of non-compliance, including reported infringements by fishing vessels operating in fisheries restricted areas.

2.2. Common system of enforcement consolidated

Output 2.2 identifies and reduces the main risks of potential illegal activities in critically important marine areas, and facilitates the implementation of a common system of enforcement by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, based on the common methodology to assess IUU fishing. It also capitalizes on the progress made in enforcing fisheries management measures, particularly multiannual management plans.

Actions

A. Support the transposition of GFCM recommendations into national legislation across Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, including those related to investigation procedures and sanctions for non-compliance with conservation and management measures.

B. Support risk assessments in the fisheries sector, based on the regular estimation and quantification of IUU fishing activities at the regional and subregional levels.

C. Contribute to the prevention of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear and the reduction of their harmful impacts on the marine environment, by establishing a regional framework in line with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

2.3. Monitoring, control and surveillance centralized at the regional level

Output 2.3 capitalizes on the establishment and testing of a centralized/regional Vessel Monitoring System and related control system to strengthen and expand monitoring, control and surveillance across the region on a modular basis and taking into account regional specificities. Taking

advantage of the most recent technological advances, it plans to integrate tracking solutions to monitor the presence of fishing vessels operating inside or in the proximity of fisheries restricted areas, and to further support contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties in using spatio-temporal data to back up the scientific work of the GFCM.

Actions

A. Establish and maintain a GFCM centralized/regional vessel monitoring system and related control system.

B. Strengthen capacity building to assist countries in using new technologies for monitoring, control and surveillance on all fleet segments, based on national specificities.

C. Implement common sighting procedures, based on established mechanisms, enabling countries to gather and report information on fishing vessels operating in contravention with GFCM recommendations.

D. Conduct permanent and voluntary international joint surveillance and inspection schemes across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and organize, together with relevant partners, a fisheries inspection virtual academy for the regular training of practitioners.

2.4. Coordination to address illegal practices in the fishery sector bolstered

Output 2.4 recognizes the importance of allowing market access to legally caught fishery products only, regulating harvesting activities and monitoring the value chain following the “from bait to plate” approach. It promotes interagency coordination to exchange relevant information towards improved certification, traceability and market-oriented actions to regulate the sector.

Actions

A. Enhance port state data exchange and information, including in the context of the mutual assistance mechanism, meeting the requirements of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

B. Promote the use of catch documentation schemes to improve traceability of fishery products and the monitoring of their trade, including by using innovative technology tools.

C. Address transshipment in the GFCM area of application.

D. Develop appropriate measures to regulate recreational fisheries.

TARGET 3. Aquaculture: A sustainable and resilient sector growing to its full potential

Target 3 ensures the sustainable development of aquaculture and its contribution to sustainable food systems in line with the GFCM Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture, working towards the resilience of the sector against global challenges such as climate change and pollution. Its achievement is supported by four expected outputs.

3.1. Efficient governance promoted in support of responsible investment

Output 3.1 plans to establish an effective and efficient aquaculture governance framework to attract investors who look beyond short-term financial return and take a responsible stance towards the overall impact of their investment, notably social and environmental sustainability. This output promotes strengthened collaboration with contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, towards developing regulatory and administrative frameworks based on responsible production and due diligence, as well as on sustainable and impactful investment.

Actions

A. Develop principles and guidelines for responsible investment in Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture.

B. Promote environmental, social and governance investment in aquaculture.

C. Collaborate with contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties as well as stakeholders to create enabling legal and administrative frameworks.

3.2. Practices supporting the sustainability of the aquaculture industry fostered

Output 3.2 addresses the blue transformation of the aquaculture industry, following an ecosystem approach and through science- and nature-based solutions, effective spatial planning tools, digitalization and innovation. Monitoring and reducing the sector's environmental footprint, dealing with climate change and pollution, and securing animal health and welfare are also crucial in achieving the sustainability of the sector. This output also focusses on diversification, towards aquaculture with lower environmental impact, alternative feeds, a reduction of the use of plastic and the provision of environmental services, promoted through the GFCM Aquaculture Demonstrative Centres.

Actions

A. Improve the footprint of the aquaculture industry through applied research and capacity building, focussing on responsible practices and state-of-the-art techniques.

B. Continue to promote allocated zones for aquaculture within marine spatial planning tools, through increased technical assistance.

C. Promote environmentally friendly blue farming systems in Mediterranean lagoons in order to protect their valuable ecosystems and cultural heritage.

3.3. Perception of aquaculture improved

Output 3.3 ensures the competitiveness, resilience and social acceptability of the aquaculture sector, providing consumers with an easy and affordable choice of healthy and sustainable proteins while enhancing the image of aquaculture and its products. It focusses on awareness of blue food's health benefits, information and consumer understanding of the environmental value of low impact aquaculture, certifications as well as new business solutions and opportunities. This output also seeks to ensure that the sector is fair and inclusive, by providing opportunities for small-scale farmers in the supply chain, supporting the empowerment of women and youth, and promoting a better integration of aquaculture activities in local communities.

Actions

A. Promote a market-oriented aquaculture sector by building capacity in business planning and marketing.

B. Increase awareness, improve the image of the aquaculture sector and its products and encourage responsible aquaculture practices.

C. Promote aquaculture certification as a sustainability driver, through capacity building, appropriate regulatory frameworks and awareness.

D. Focus on social issues, gender and inclusiveness in the aquaculture sector by stimulating relevant policies.

3.4. Technology and information systems maximized

Output 3.4 aims at providing contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties, producers, stakeholder platforms and other relevant institutions with all the necessary tools and information on aquaculture production, trade and markets. It facilitates the provision of reliable data for decision making, capitalizing on innovative, flexible and affordable technologies – the cornerstone of quality-controlled data products – in support of a sustainable, market-oriented sector. The GFCM Aquaculture Market Observatory, once fully operational, plays a central role in this respect, as an information hub for aquaculture stakeholders in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Actions

A. Create and further promote GFCM subregional knowledge sharing hubs, including new and existing Aquaculture Demonstrative Centres, the Aquaculture Market Observatory and other relevant technology platforms, fostering and advancing research, innovation and hands-on training.

B. Improve aquaculture information systems through the use of modern technologies, reinforcing production and market data management practices through streamlined data collection, analysis and dissemination processes.

C. Utilize innovative data management technologies, coupled with ad hoc capacity building and the creation of relevant regulatory frameworks, to ensure the traceability of aquaculture products from sea to plate.

D. Enhance inter-administrative communication and cooperation on aquaculture development as well as harmonized information technology standards and tools.

TARGET 4. Livelihoods: Decent employment and engaged fishers towards profitable fisheries

Recognizing the importance of promoting resilient fisheries-based livelihoods while fully and efficiently implementing the GFCM Regional Plan of Action for small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, Target 4 aims to address, in an integrated way, issues such as employment, socio-economic knowledge, value chains and participatory decision-making. Its achievement is supported by four expected outputs.

4.1. Productive and resilient employment supported along the fisheries value chain

Output 4.1 enhances sustainable livelihoods by fostering decent working conditions, including health and safety standards in the workplace, as well as productive employment opportunities for men and women in the fisheries sector, particularly youth. Access to social protection programmes and financial services are a central component of this output, supporting the resilience of fishers and enhancing their capacity to prepare for and respond to crises. Finally, linkages with other blue economy sectors are encouraged to promote livelihood diversification, including through specific training, upskilling and reskilling programmes.

Actions

A. Advance the principle of decent work in the Mediterranean and Black Sea fishing sector, including through fair and safe working conditions and access to social protection.

B. Promote policies that support and recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security, employment and income for coastal communities.

C. Support equal opportunities for women and promote youth development to ensure generational knowledge is transferred to a renewed workforce.

4.2. Socio-economic information enhanced in supporting decision-making processes

Output 4.2 strengthens the understanding of the socio-economic impact of fisheries, including recreational fisheries, along the value chain. Socio-economic data collection and analysis are enhanced to better integrate this information into decision-making processes. This output also sheds light on the role of women in fisheries, including in gleaning activities as well as pre- and post-harvest activities.

Actions

A. Support the collection of accurate, timely, complete and gender-disaggregated social and economic data on fisheries-based livelihoods, including vessel and shore-based fisheries, the pre- and post-harvest sectors, as well as recreational fisheries.

B. Facilitate the integration of socio-economic information into decision-making processes for fisheries management.

C. Assess interactions between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries at a subregional level and identify opportunities for livelihood diversification and new revenue.

4.3. Dynamic and innovative fisheries value chains fostered

Output 4.3 identifies and implements innovative solutions to enhance the profitability of fisheries, making value chains more efficient and responsive to market demand, while ensuring food security and easy access to fresh, local products. The actions promote innovation to facilitate sustainable direct selling initiatives, minimize food waste, enhance traceability, promote the certification of local and sustainable products, heighten consumer awareness and improve the integration of fisheries in a circular economy.

Actions

A. Enhance fisheries value chains, particularly for small-scale fisheries, to increase profitability and reduce food waste, in the context of sustainable and inclusive ocean economies.

B. Support capacity development to strengthen and valorize short value chains for small-scale fisheries products, including by leveraging technological innovations for direct selling and by raising consumer awareness on the benefits of buying local.

C. Empower market value chain operators and consumers to make informed choices to support the sustainability of fish stocks, including through product certification and the use of digital technologies facilitating traceability.

D. Facilitate the participation of fishers in a circular economy, including through innovative livelihood diversification activities.

4.4. Engagement of fishers in participatory management processes promoted, facilitating their role as guardians of the sea

Output 4.4 enhances the capacity of all producer organizations, notably small-scale fisher organizations, to engage as active contributors in management, through a multi-level participatory process. In particular, this output integrates fishers into knowledge building activities, capturing their local ecological knowledge, empowering them to advocate for their needs through management consultations, and partnering with them to institute participatory management models, such as co-management arrangements. The participatory approach is developed in a tailored and adaptive manner and is recognized, in particular, as an important governance tool for the identification, implementation and management of fisheries restricted areas.

Actions

A. Raise awareness with fishers about the impacts their fishing methods have on the ecology of the ecosystems when operating in specific maritime areas.

B. Disseminate information about good participatory management practices that reduce the impact of fisheries on the environment.

C. Make the most of fishers' local and traditional knowledge to support and enhance fisheries management.

TARGET 5. Capacity development: Technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and efficient partnerships in a subregional perspective

Building capacity and providing technical support at the national and subregional levels ensure policy commitments made by the GFCM Membership are met. Target 5 builds upon past technical assistance achievements and successful cooperation mechanisms, capitalizing on the implementation of the subregional approach to fisheries management as well as on the experience of ad hoc GFCM technical assistance projects. Broad and inclusive partnerships underpin the overarching principle of solidarity. Its achievement is supported by three expected outputs.

5.1. Capacity development streamlined at the subregional level

Output 5.1 delivers, through the GFCM subregional technical units, on the ground technical and scientific support adapted to the various needs of each subregion, tailoring capacity development and assisting contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties in fulfilling their untapped potential.

Actions

A. Ensure effective and targeted capacity building, including shared cooperative research, to support national plans in implementing the GFCM 2030 Strategy.

B. Consolidate, following the subregional approach and with the support of the BlackSea4Fish and MedSea4fish projects, national expertise and scientific capacity to ensure a level playing field across the region.

C. Continue strengthening aquaculture know-how and competencies at the regional level, through Aquaculture Demonstrative Centres and other such hubs.

5.2. Technical cooperation promoted, scientific research and innovation boosted

Output 5.2 fills gaps in knowledge regarding specific cross-cutting themes, by capitalizing on the research of the wider community of scientists and stakeholders working in fisheries, aquaculture and the conservation of marine ecosystems, including through research programmes and consolidated scientific networks. This output accelerates innovation and cost-efficient interventions to improve livelihoods and competitiveness in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Actions

A. Capitalize on existing knowledge and research, as well as on scientific collaboration and best practices in fisheries and aquaculture, by consolidating technical networks and promoting the role of the GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science.

B. Improve technological capacities within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, targeting, among others, the modernization of fishing fleets, aquaculture facilities and select infrastructures along the fisheries and aquaculture value chains.

C. Promote cross-sector initiatives addressing ocean-based livelihoods and marine biodiversity conservation.

5.3. Role of partnerships in fisheries and aquaculture enhanced under a blue transformation perspective

Output 5.3 expands and reinforces the comparative advantage of strategic cooperation between the GFCM and its current and potential partners, involving countries, international organizations and programmes, academia and research institutions, civil society organizations, professional associations and cooperatives as well as the private sector. This output seeks to boost the progressive integration of fisheries and aquaculture into a wider perspective, by building alliances that address common environmental, economic and social priorities. It also supports the participation

and involvement of the GFCM in relevant global fora and initiatives, ensuring a concerted response to international calls and adopted policies, towards effectively meeting common goals and targets.

Actions

A. Establish and consolidate partnerships with relevant organizations to create synergies that further support the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

B. Continue to address the priorities under Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other relevant Sustainable Development Goals as part of a regional contribution to the global sustainability challenges for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

C. Take into account relevant policy developments under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the targets of the United Nation Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030).

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/13 on appropriate measures to deter non-compliance

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the reference framework of the Compliance Committee (CoC) provided in Annex 1 to the GFCM Rules of procedure;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance, amending and repealing Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/3;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5 on a compliance assessment scheme for the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance;

RECOGNIZING that compliance with GFCM conservation and management measures is critical to the success of the GFCM;

RECALLING that the CoC may provide information in addition to its activities to address issues of non-compliance with or lack of cooperation on GFCM conservation and management measures, in accordance with the GFCM Rules of procedure;

RECALLING that the CoC can undertake other functions or responsibilities as may be conferred by the GFCM, in accordance with the GFCM Rules of procedure;

RECOGNIZING that cases of non-compliance should be addressed in a concrete, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, in accordance with the principle of proportionality and taking into account the need to remain flexible in dealing with the individual situations of each contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party (CPC);

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that not all non-compliance cases have the same level of severity and impact on the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures or on the work of the GFCM;

AWARE of the need to assist in providing a consistent, fair, and transparent approach for considering and applying appropriate actions and proportionate response to improve compliance with and enforcement of the GFCM decisions;

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular the development of actions related to Output 2.1 “Full compliance with GFCM recommendations achieved”;

NOTING that the CoC, at its fourteenth session (online, May 2021), recommended to promote the assessment of operational compliance by CPCs through the matrix on a compliance assessment scheme, both for the status of implementation of GFCM decisions and the submission of data);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I
Objective

1. The purpose of the present resolution is to adopt measures with regard to the categories and the gravity of non-compliance, as referred to in the annex to Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5 on a compliance assessment scheme for the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance.

PART II
Role of the GFCM Secretariat

2. As referred to in Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5, the GFCM Secretariat should produce a compliance assessment for each CPC concerned. The result of this assessment may lead to a sanction according to the gravity of the non-compliance, as presented in this resolution.

3. For CPCs falling under non-compliance categories A and B as defined in the annex of Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5, the GFCM Secretariat should send letters of identification in relation to the recurrent situation of non-compliance or the lack of information submitted to the CoC.

4. For CPCs falling under non-compliance categories A and B as defined in the annex of Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5, the GFCM Secretariat should assist the concerned CPCs in developing a roadmap for the adequate implementation of their obligations under GFCM decisions, as reported in the latest compliance tables. This roadmap should be submitted by CPCs to the GFCM Secretariat, at least three months before the next session of the CoC.

5. For CPCs falling under non-compliance category C as defined in the Annex of Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5, the GFCM Secretariat should inform the CoC session and the GFCM annual sessions about the efforts of CPCs in ensuring full compliance.

6. The CoC will discuss, at its fifteenth session, on the appropriate measures that the GFCM should recommend in relation to cases of confirmed non-compliance, in order to adopt an annex containing these measures as relating to the relevant category and gravity of non-compliance.

PART III
Role of the Compliance Committee

7. For cases of confirmed non-compliance, the CoC should recommend to the GFCM the adoption of appropriate measures in relation to the category and the gravity of non-compliance among those listed in the annex to Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5 to ensure the effective implementation of GFCM decisions by CPCs.

8. The CoC should develop a compliance scoreboard that reflects the compliance assessments produced by the GFCM Secretariat. This scoreboard should take into account both the category and the gravity of situations of non-compliance by CPCs and be made publicly available on the GFCM website, in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

9. In accordance with Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2, the GFCM Secretariat and the CoC shall investigate all possible cases of non-compliance before they are categorized as confirmed cases of non-compliance. The GFCM Secretariat shall consult with the concerned CPCs on the cause of such incidences and on possible solutions before proceeding with the final categorization of non-compliance.

10. The CoC should categorize under category A with a “significant non-compliance” any confirmed incidence of non-authorized vessels operating within fisheries restricted areas (FRAs), and adopt deterrent sanctions accordingly, including listing the non-compliant vessels in the provisional GFCM list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application (GFCM IUU vessel list). When a sanction has already been adopted, the vessel involved may be removed from the GFCM IUU vessel list, in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application repealing Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/4.

11. The CoC should categorize under category B with a “significant non-compliance” any confirmed incidence where, after being consulted by the GFCM Secretariat on such incidence, the CPCs still do not provide the required information about the implementation of monitoring, control

and surveillance measures in FRAs or still do not report information about vessels operating in FRAs in the list of authorized vessels.

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/14 on abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and Target 14.1 "By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution";

RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.4 "Threats to fisheries and the marine environment, including plastic pollution, climate change and the expansion of non-indigenous species, prevented and mitigated", which aims at minimizing and mitigating any form of pollution deriving from the activities of the fishing sector, in particular abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear constitute a significant part of marine pollution;

RECOGNIZING that abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear presents a hazard to the navigation of surface and subsurface vessels and to fishing operations, poses a significant adverse impact to critical, vulnerable or otherwise sensitive habitats as well as a risk of entanglement, entrapment or ingestion for marine wildlife, and potentially entails ghost fishing;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/11 on the regional marking of fishing gear;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Each contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) shall ensure that its fishing vessels authorized to fish species managed by the GFCM in the GFCM area of application are prohibited from abandoning and discarding fishing gear except for reasons of *force majeure*.

2. For the purpose of this resolution, the following definitions should apply:

   a) "Fishing gear" means fishing gear that poses a significant risk of ghost fishing when abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded in the GFCM area of application.[1]

   b) "Abandoned fishing gear" means fishing gear over which the operator/owner has control and that could be retrieved by the owner/operator but has been deliberately left at sea due to force majeure or other unforeseen reasons.

   c) "Lost fishing gear" means fishing gear over which the owner/operator has accidentally lost control and that cannot be located and/or retrieved by the owner/operator.

[1] The provisions in this resolution do not apply to longlines.

d) “Discarded fishing gear” means fishing gear that is released at sea without any attempt for further control or recovery by the owner/operator.

3. Each CPC shall ensure that:

a) vessels of 20 metres length overall (LOA) and above entitled to fly its flag and fishing for GFCM species in the GFCM area of application have equipment on board to retrieve lost fishing gear; and

b) the master of a fishing vessel of 20 metres LOA and above that has lost fishing gear, or part of it, shall, to the extent possible, make every reasonable attempt to retrieve it as soon as possible.

4. The CPCs may exempt fishing vessels of less than 20 metres LOA flying their flag from the provisions set out in paragraph 1 if they operate exclusively in the territorial waters of the flag CPC.

5. If the lost fishing gear cannot be retrieved, the master of the vessel shall notify the flag CPC, which shall then notify the coastal CPC, within 24 hours, of the following:

a) name and call sign of the vessel;

b) type of lost fishing gear;

c) quantity of lost fishing gear ;

d) date and time when the fishing gear was lost;

e) position where the fishing gear was lost; and

f) measures taken by the vessel to retrieve the lost fishing gear.

6. The flag CPC shall, without delay, notify the GFCM Secretariat of the information referred to in paragraph 5.

7. In line with Resolution GFCM/43/2019/7 amending Resolution GFCM/41/2017/3 on the reactivation of the Working Group on Fishing Technology, the Working Group on Fishing Technology shall include, among its objectives, improving the understanding of the adverse effects of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear and the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/1 on the mapping of measures applicable to fisheries restricted areas in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) ii) of the GFCM Agreement "to minimize impacts of fishing activities on marine living resources and their ecosystems";

HAVING REGARD to Article 8 b) iv) of the GFCM Agreement "to establish fisheries restricted areas [FRAs] for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems [VMEs], including but not limited to nursery and spawning areas […]";

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, particularly its Target 4, Output 4.2 a) on "the promotion of the identification and establishment of new FRAs to protect priority areas within ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), VMEs, etc. from harmful fishing activities, and the implementation of monitoring and control systems to ensure the efficiency of these spatial measures, also in relation to Target 3";

RECALLING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraph 38, as well as Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deep-water species and the establishment of a fisheries restricted area below 1000 metres, Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lion to protect spawning aggregations and deep-sea sensitive habitats, Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/3 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit in the Adriatic Sea and Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/3 on the establishment of fisheries restricted areas to protect the deep-sea sensitive habitats;

NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5 that specifically calls for conserving at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law;

UNDERLINING that FRAs are recognized as an area-based management tool that contributes to the maintenance and/or recovery of marine living resources to a healthy state and to the conservation of marine biodiversity, which is important for sustainable exploitation within an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, and that the GFCM has already taken action in this regard through the establishment of FRAs;

NOTING the importance of enhanced monitoring of these areas;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the conclusions of the Working Group on VMS and related Control Systems held in Albania in July 2019;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. In 2019, the GFCM Secretariat should establish a mapping of all existing conservation measures and monitoring control and surveillance (MCS) measures that are currently in force and implemented in the FRAs established by the GFCM in its area of application.

2. On the basis of such mapping, the Working Group on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Mediterranean and Back Sea should establish a report assessing these measures in 2020.

3. This report should be communicated to the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties before the sessions of the Compliance Committee (CoC) and the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries for their consideration in 2020.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/2 on enhancing the conservation of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management;

CONSIDERING that the incidental catch of cetacean species in relation to fishing activities may seriously affect cetacean populations in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING that some fishing operations carried out in the GFCM area of application, as well as the risk of unaccounted catch of cetaceans due to the loss of gear at sea (so-called "ghost fishing"), can adversely affect cetaceans and that there is a need to better understand the phenomenon in order to conceive and implement measures to mitigate such adverse effects;

RECALLING the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) whose objectives include the mitigation of negative impacts between cetaceans and fishing activities;

RECALLING the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the listing of several cetacean species occurring in the convention area therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/22/1997/1 on the limitation of the use of driftnets in the Mediterranean and Recommendation GFCM/36/2020/2 on the mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, in particular its Target 4 "Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment" and the development of actions related to output 4.2 "Healthier marine ecosystems and more productive fisheries";

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration commits signatories, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

CONSIDERING the memorandum of understanding between the GFCM and the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP) which aims for a closer strategic and operational cooperation among regional sea conventions, including for the mitigation of impacts from fisheries on marine habitats and species;

AIMING to reduce the bycatch of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application, thus contributing to improve the conservation status of these animals, in line with an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) on the need to endorse measures for the reduction of the bycatch of cetaceans;

RECOGNIZING, also, the need to collect more data and technical information in order to fully assess the advantages and risks associated with the possible adoption of other types of measures modifying the characteristics of fishing gear, as well as any other potential impact on fishing activities;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2 on the mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries exploiting turbot and for the conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) should encourage further actions to improve the conservation status of cetacean species.
2. The CPCs should enhance data reporting information on incidental catch rates of cetaceans in line with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF).
3. The CPCs are invited to take the necessary steps to implement existing legislation and mitigation measures to eliminate incidental catch of cetaceans during fishing operations.
4. The SAC is requested to compile, assess and evaluate all available data, information and actions reported under Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2, under the DCRF and any other source of additional information including scientific literature, surveys at sea, research projects etc.
5. The twenty-third session of SAC should report to the GFCM on the progress accomplished thereon, the identified gaps in knowledge, and provide the necessary elements for setting future measures with the objective of conserving cetacean species populations in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.
6. At its forty-fifth session, upon receipt of advice from the SAC, the GFCM may consider, if appropriate, the adoption of further measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives of this resolution.
7. The provisions of this resolution are without prejudice to additional or stricter measures adopted or that could be adopted by CPCs.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/3 on the implementation of a vessel monitoring system and an electronic logbook in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the GFCM area of application and the need for adequate monitoring of catches;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING Resolution GFCM/38/2014/1 on guidelines on vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the provisions of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

CONSIDERING the commitments of the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and of the 2018 Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture;

RECOGNIZING that the operationalization of a centralized vessel monitoring system (VMS) and control systems, including information deriving from this system, supports enhanced assessment of fisheries stocks, identification of fishing grounds and fishing activities, thus contributing to the achievement of the mid-term strategy established by Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries;

CONSIDERING that the technology to ensure the electronic reporting of catches ("electronic logbook") has reached an adequate level of development to be operationalized, as demonstrated in various other regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) around the world;

NOTING the conclusions of the thirteenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC);

ADOPTS in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement the following resolution:

PART I
Implementation of VMS in the GFCM area of application

1. The objective of this resolution is to provide GFCM with options for the establishment of a VMS in the GFCM area of application so that VMS and automated identification system (AIS) data could be used in support of monitoring and control of fisheries activities.

2. In 2020, on the basis of the results of voluntary pilot projects, the Working Group on VMS (WGVMS) should provide the CoC with recommendations including technical options for establishing such VMS.

3. The WGVMS should establish the terms of reference for pilot projects taking into consideration different types of centralised and regionalised VMS as currently deployed in other RFMOs.

4. The WGVMS should submit its recommendations to the fifteenth session of the CoC.

5. The WGVMS may also consider providing recommendations for other satellite VMS such as AIS in order to effectively monitor fishing activities in the GFCM area of application.

6. Based on the conclusions of the CoC, the forty-fifth session of the GFCM should consider adopting a recommendation in view of the implementation of a centralised/regionalised VMS and associated requirements in the GFCM area of application.

7. Access to centralised/regionalised VMS should comply with regulations and principles related to property and sovereignty.

8. Any development of a VMS for the GFCM should be without prejudice to and consistent with the existing CPCs' regulations on VMS. Any access to VMS data will be established in accordance with confidentiality rules in place.

9. The terms of reference for the WGVMS are provided in Annex 1 of this resolution.

10. This resolution repeals Resolution GFCM/38/2014/1 on guidelines on vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application.

PART II

Implementation of an electronic logbook in the GFCM area of application

11. The WGVMS should provide the CoC with recommendations on strengthening the implementation of an electronic logbook (electronic recording and reporting system [ERS]) with a view to establishing a voluntary pilot project on ERS for certain vessels fishing in the GFCM area of application.

12. The extended terms of reference for the WGVMS are provided in Annex 2 of this resolution.

13. The WGVMS should submit its recommendations and technical specifications to the fourteenth session of the CoC.

14. Based on the conclusions of the CoC, the forty-fourth session of the GFCM should consider adopting a recommendation in view of the implementation of a voluntary pilot project on ERS.

15. Any access to the electronic logbook data should be established in accordance with confidentiality rules in place.

Annex 1

Terms of reference of the WGVMS for the formulation of recommendations, options and technical specifications towards the implementation of VMS in the GFCM area of application

The recommendations, options and technical specifications drafted by the WGVMS should, *inter alia:*

1. consider the specifications and the state of play of implementation of VMS systems in the GFCM area of application, in particular in relation with the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7; and

2. propose concrete and technical improvements to current VMS as considered necessary in view of a centralised VMS, and in particular rules to ensure efficient VMS data.

The WGVMS should:

1. prepare the terms of reference of two pilot projects aimed at testing the feasibility of the establishment of a centralised/regionalised VMS system in the GFCM area of application, on the basis of existing VMS schemes deployed in other RFMOs;

- the first pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of the VMS currently deployed at the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).
- The second pilot project should, in particular, be based on the experience and results of the VMS currently deployed at the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

2. Define limited zones/areas of the GFCM area of application and targeted fleet or fleets to which the pilot projects should apply. Each CPC should identify the vessels belonging to these fleets that will participate in the pilot projects.

3. Establish clear technical options (centralised or regionalised VMS) and a roadmap for the operationalization of a the most suitable VMS for the GFCM as well as related measures;

4. Analyse and present the costs and benefits of the various options, based on the experience of other RFMOs, for the pilot projects, taking into account the specificities of the GFCM area of application and of the fleets, including small-scale fisheries;

5. Define rules and procedures for the operationalization of a VMS in the GFCM of application, having regard to the safety of information storage, the confidentiality and the integrity of data;

6. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities/duties for VMS reporting (by operators, flag states and the GFCM Secretariat);

7. Establish minimum standards and requirements, including to ensure that VMS is operational at all times as well as for data reporting, rates of transmission, rules on data sharing. Such standards should in particular:

- ensure that the GFCM Secretariat receives in real time the position of vessels in the GFCM area of application;
- ensure that the data received from the fishing vessels of CPCs to which VMS applies are recorded in computer-readable form; and
- ensure that data are automatically transmitted to the fisheries monitoring centre of the flag/port/coastal/inspection contracting party.

8. Ensure compatibility with international standards and data confidentiality requirements for the exchange of VMS information between CPCs and ensure consistency with the existing regulations on VMS of CPCs.

Annex 2

Terms of reference of the WGVMS for the implementation of ERS

The recommendations drafted by the WGVMS should, *inter alia*:

1. provide a technical definition and specifications for ERS in the GFCM area of application on the basis of an analysis of the state of play of ERS implementation in CPCs and RFMOs;

2. ensure full compatibility of the technical specifications with international standards and data confidentiality requirements, in line with existing regulations of CPCs;

3. establish minimum standards and procedures concerning, *inter alia*, the functioning and maintenance of ERS, catch reporting data, landing and transshipment declarations and various phases of fishing activities,

4. identify which fisheries/fleets in the GFCM area of application would best benefit from pilot activities/testing;

5. define a clear roadmap and calendar for the deployment of the pilot project based on the above provisions; and

6. provide a cost analysis.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/4 on the ban of single-use plastics in all GFCM meetings

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that, as a semi-closed basin, the Mediterranean Sea is particularly sensitive to marine pollution, including pollution due to the discharge of plastic litter in the marine environment, and that making every effort in preserving the marine environment would help fulfilling the objectives of the GFCM Agreement;

RECALLING ongoing international efforts in fighting marine litter and plastic pollution;

AWARE of its responsibility both in advocating for the preservation of the marine environment and in leading by example;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

Sole paragraph

The GFCM resolves to discontinue, as of 2020, the use of single-use plastics in all the meetings it holds, including those of its subsidiary bodies, and encourages the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties to the GFCM Agreement and its partners to implement the same policy.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5 on a compliance assessment scheme for the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING the terms of reference of the Compliance Committee (CoC) provided in Annex 1 of the GFCM Rules of procedure;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance, amending and repealing Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/3;

RECOGNIZING that compliance with GFCM conservation and management measures is critical to the success of the GFCM;

RECALLING that the CoC may provide information in addition to its activities to address issues of non-compliance or lack of cooperation with GFCM conservation and management measures, in accordance with the GFCM rules of procedure;

RECALLING that the CoC can undertake other functions or responsibilities as may be conferred by the GFCM, in accordance with the GFCM rules of procedure;

RECOGNIZING that a reinforced analysis of non-compliance cases should be established in order to reinforce the assessment of the CoC, in respect of GFCM conservation and management measures, reporting obligations and control measures;

RECOGNIZING that cases of non-compliance should be addressed in a concrete, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, in accordance with the principle of proportionality and taking into account the need to remain flexible in dealing with the individual situations of each contracting party and cooperating non-contracting party *(*CPC);

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that not all non-compliance cases are of the same level of severity and impact on the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures or on the work of the GFCM;

COGNIZANT of the need to assist in providing a consistent, fair, and transparent approach for considering and applying appropriate actions and proportionate response to improve compliance with and enforcement of the GFCM decisions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution

PART I
Objective

1. The purpose of the present resolution is to adopt implementing rules for the process of identification of cases of non-compliance and the appropriate measures to deter non-compliance by CPCs as referred to in paragraphs 1 and 5 b) of Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2 concerning the identification of non-compliance*,* amending and repealing Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/3.

PART II
Establishment of the compliance assessment scheme

2. In preparation of the session of the CoC, the GFCM Secretariat should produce a compliance assessment scheme for each CPC concerned. The compliance assessment scheme should include, for each individual case of non-compliance, a categorization and evaluation of severity, based on the criteria set in Annex 1:

a) The criteria listed under item 1 of Annex 1 should be used to determine the category of non-compliance with GFCM decisions; and

b) The level of severity of each individual case of non-compliance by CPCs should be assessed in accordance with the definitions provided under item 2 of Annex 1, taking into account mitigating or aggravating considerations.

3. The compliance assessment scheme should be distributed to CPCs for discussion during the CoC session. The compliance assessment scheme could be updated up to one week prior to the session.

4. The compliance assessment scheme should be integrated in the process of identification of cases of non-compliance referred to in paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/2. The CoC should review the compliance with GFCM decisions by each CPC on the basis of the compliance assessment scheme.

PART III

Appropriate measures to deter non-compliance

5. Highest priority should be given to determining and addressing significant non-compliance, although responsive action may also be warranted in other cases.

6. Cases of non-compliance should be examined in consideration of the applicability of GFCM decisions to relevant CPCs.

7. In 2020, the CoC should propose appropriate measures with regard to the categories and gravity of non-compliance (among those listed in Annex 1 of this resolution) and submit proposals to the GFCM. On the basis of CoC advice, the forty-fourth session of the GFCM may adopt a list of appropriate measures.

Annex 1

Criteria for the establishment of compliance assessment schemes

1. Determination of the category of non-compliance(s)

Category A: Conservation and/or management measures, including, inter alia:

- failure to respect effort/catches/landings limits;
- failure to restrict fleet size or other capacity measures;
- failure to implement spatio-temporal closures;
- failure to implement minimum conservation reference size restrictions; and
- failure to implement gear restrictions.

Category B: Reporting requirements, including, inter alia:

- failure to report or delay in reporting data and other required data; and
- failure to submit or delay in submitting reports.

Category C: Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures, including, inter alia:

- failure to exercise port state control, including port inspection requirements;
- failure to exercise flag state control; and
- failure to implement MCS measures, including, *inter alia*, catch documents /statistical document programmes (transshipment control), and vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements.

2. Determination of the level of severity of non-compliance types

Minor non-compliance

Failures are first time or infrequent and do not significantly impact the work of the CoC or diminish the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management decisions.

Significant non-compliance

Non-compliance issues reflect a systematic disregard by the relevant CPCs of GFCM measures or infrequent (and even first time) violations that individually or collectively have a significant impact on the objectives of the GFCM or its subsidiary bodies or diminish the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures. These non-compliance issues could include frequent non-reporting or insufficient reporting that impact on CoC ability to effectively evaluate the compliance of a CPC.

Mitigating and aggravating considerations

Both mitigating and aggravating considerations, as indicated below, should be taken into account when determining the significance of non-compliance:

- Mitigating considerations may include, *inter alia:* 1) the extent to which available capacity-building and assistance programmes have been used by a CPC to improve its ability to meet its GFCM obligations; and 2) any action taken by a CPC to address its non-compliance or by a third party CPC in response to the non-compliance of another CPC's vessel.
- Aggravating considerations may include, *inter alia:* 1) non-compliance that is repeated, frequent, numerous, and/or severe in degree, scope, and/or effect, individually or cumulatively; and 2) lack of effective corrective action by the flag CPC or by the third party CPC, if appropriate.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/6 on the establishment of a set of measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems formed by cnidarian (coral) communities in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995 and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

RECALLING the responsibility of the GFCM, as regional fisheries management organization, to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and to ensure management measures are established consistent with the precautionary approach;

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states "should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment";

RECALLING the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, namely its Target 4 "Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment" and in particular the implementation of actions related to Output 4.2 "Healthier marine ecosystems and more productive fisheries";

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

CONSIDERING the memorandum of understanding between the GFCM and the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP) which aims for a closer strategic and operational cooperation among regional sea conventions, including mitigation of impacts from fisheries on marine habitats and species;

CONSIDERING that Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention resolved, at the 2017 Conference of the Parties, that new cnidarian species should be included in Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol);

CONSIDERING the advice expressed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-first session on the need to adopt binding decisions on mapping the fishing footprint of deep-sea fisheries according to existing agreed protocols;

CONSIDERING that demersal fisheries, in particular towed gear, present an important threat to the conservation of threatened cnidarian species;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) should encourage, within the zones identified by the SAC, the progressive implementation of a set of transitional measures to prevent significant adverse impacts (SAIs) of deep-sea fisheries activities on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) formed by cnidarian (coral) communities protected under Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention, which are known to occur in the Mediterranean Sea (geographical subareas [GSAs] 1–28).

2. These measures should be consistent with the precautionary approach and ensure, pending formal scientific advice by the SAC and the adoption of permanent measures, a low risk of SAIs on VME indicator species listed in Annex 2 of this resolution.

3. These measures should be in line with the protocols for the protection of VMEs in the GFCM area of application endorsed by the forty-second session of the GFCM and reported in Appendix 17 of its report.

4. The CPCs whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 1–28 should agree upon a progressive calendar to implement such transitional measures for the fisheries concerned, in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this resolution and provided in Annex 1.

5. With a view to protecting VME indicator taxa from SAIs, the SAC is invited to provide, in 2021, advice on the status of the VME indicator species included in Annex 2 of this resolution, based on the information received from CPCs following the adoption of the protocols mentioned in paragraph 3 and on additional pilot research projects as suggested in Annex 1, paragraphs 12 and13, of this resolution as well as any other source of information.

6. This resolution is without prejudice to the implementation of stricter national measures.

Annex 1

General and specific objectives and transitional set of measures

1. The present resolution should apply to the Mediterranean Sea (GSAs 1–28).

2. The management measures should consider the following categories of fishing vessels, in line with the protocols for the protection of VMEs in the GFCM area of application endorsed by the GFCM at its forty-second session:

a) all fishing vessels above 15 metres (length overall [LOA]) operating with bottom contact fishing gear and fishing for *Aristaeomorpha foliacea, Aristeus antennatus,* or *Plesionika martia*; and

b) all fishing vessels above 15 metres (LOA) operating with bottom contact gear (bottom trawls, longlines, gillnets and pots and traps) deeper than 300 metres and on all offshore seamounts.

3. For the purpose of this resolution:

- "vulnerable marine ecosystems" (VMEs) refers to paragraphs 42 and 43 of the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas;
- "VME indicator taxa" refers to the species or group of species used as signal of VME occurrence. The list of Mediterranean VME indicator taxa is defined in Annex 1 of Appendix 17 of report of the forty-second session of the GFCM;
- "VME protocol" refers to the protocols for the protection of VMEs in the GFCM area of application as endorsed by the GFCM at its forty-second session (Appendix 17);
- the fisheries described above in 2 a) and 2 b) should be referred to as "deep-sea fisheries", until possible revision of the current VME protocol according to SAC advice;
- "significant adverse impacts" (SAIs) are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e. ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: i) impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; ii) degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or iii) causes, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types;
- "encounter" refers to an encounter with VME indicator taxa and is defined as any catch of VME indicator taxa by any deep-sea fisheries, until possible revision of the current VME protocol, which may establish threshold levels in line SAC advice, based on data and information gathered upon the implementation of the protocols and measures established in this resolution;
- "fisheries restricted area" (FRA) refers to the spatial protection measures in the GFCM area of application; and
- "key species" or "indicator species" mean marine organisms pertaining to the species defined in Annex 2 of this resolution.

4. The operational objective shall be to ensure the progressive implementation of transitional measures to prevent SAIs from deep-sea fisheries activities on VME formed by cnidarian (coral) communities which are known to occur in the GFCM area of application (GSAs 1–28) as listed in Annex 2 to this resolution.

5. The ultimate objective of the transitional measures for VME indicator species occuring in the Mediterranean Sea is to prepare for future management measures while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific advice, SAIs on VMEs occur due to deep-sea fisheries activities.

6. Deep-sea fisheries vessels, as described in paragraph 2a) and b), flying the flag of a CPC should be restricted from operating where a VME has been identified, according to an assesment based on

the criteria provided in the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

7. The SAC Working Group on VME/MPA should, in 2021: i) collate and analyse all available data sources; ii) identify where VME indicator taxa are known to occur or are likely to occur; iii) reflect on additional measures (including threshold levels, move-on rules, level of scientific observer coverage) for the protection of the VME indicator species included in Annex 2 of this resolution; and iv) provide inputs to the SAC.

8. The twenty-third session of the SAC should assess the status of VME indicator species listed in Annex 2 and propose to the GFCM elements for setting management and control measures.

9. At its forty-fifth session, the GFCM should adopt long-term management measures allowing for the achievement of the objectives set out in this resolution.

10. As from 2021, the SAC should assess, on an annual basis, the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios (including FRAs), with the objective of maintaining VME indicator species populations of Annex 2 above critical levels.

11. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives are not being met, the GFCM should decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to contribute to achieving those objectives.

12. For the purpose of providing advice, CPCs and the SAC should facilitate the collation of existing relevant data and the collection of additional relevant data (including research survey data) and organize adequate workshops. For this purpose, the SAC should promote scientific cooperation and a harmonised approach amongst all Mediterranean Sea riparian countries.

13. The CPCs may establish, on a volunary basis, pilot research projects in selected areas targeting VME indicator taxa. The research projects may include, *inter alia*, observer coverage to ensure the collection of relevant, timely and accurate data, following a standardised protocol on the presence, distribution, catch and bycatch of VME indicator taxa and on encounters with VMEs, and of any other relevant information for the effective implementation of this resolution.

14. The GFCM Secretariat should assist CPCs in establishing pilot research projects and should provide technical guidelines (“protocols”) for standardised data collection requirements.

15. The CPCs should transmit information and data collected from the pilot projects to the GFCM Secretariat and the GFCM geodatabase.

16. VME indicator taxa taken as a bycatch during fishing activities targeting other species should be reported to the competent national authorities, in order to contribute to a better knowledge of VME indicator taxa occurrence.

17. In order to ensure a collection of representative data that is adequate for the conservation of VMEs indicator species, CPCs having vessels carrying out deep-sea fisheries activities should endeavour to establish an adequate level of scientific observer programme coverage, in particular if during an exploratory deep-sea fisheries stage.

18. The CPCs may designate additional spatial/temporal restrictions to those already established, where fishing activities may be banned or restricted in order to protect VME indicator taxa, including the species listed in Annex 2. Where applicable, CPCs should notify to the GFCM Secretariat, by the end of each year, the list of these areas and of the restrictions applied.

19. The CPCs should establish a mechanism to ensure that deep-sea fisheries vessels actively fishing in the Mediterranean Sea record VME Indicator Taxa catch and bycatch following the protocols for the protection of VMEs in the GFCM area of application endorsed by the forty-second session of the GFCM.

20. The CPCs should carry out inspections on the basis of a risk analysis.

21. The CPCs should engage in cooperation for the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, in particular by sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

22. This resolution is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application.

23. A working group should be established to develop integrated monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures, in accordance with this resolution. The tasks of the working group are defined in Annex 3 of this resolution.

Annex 2

Key species or indicator species: cnidarian species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention and impacted by fisheries

1. *Antipathella subpinnata* (Ellis & Solander, 1786)
2. *Antipathes dichotoma* (Pallas, 1766)
3. *Antipathes fragilis* (Gravier, 1918)
4. *Callogorgia verticillata* (Pallas, 1766)
5. *Dendrophyllia cornigera* (Lamarck, 1816)
6. *Dendrophyllia ramea* (Linnaeus, 1758)
7. *Desmophyllum dianthus* (Esper, 1794)
8. *Ellisella paraplexauroides* (Stiasny, 1936)
9. *Errina aspera* (Linnaeus, 1767)
10. *Isidella elongata* (Esper, 1788)
11. *Leiopathes glaberrima* (Esper, 1792)
12. *Lophelia pertusa* (Linnaeus, 1758)
13. *Madrepora oculata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
14. *Parantipathes larix* (Esper, 1790)
15. *Savalia savaglia* Nardo, 1844 (synon. *Gerardia savaglia)*

Annex 3

Terms of reference for the Working Group on integrated MCS measures for fisheries having impact on key species in the Mediterranean Sea

The Working Group referred to in paragraph 23 of Annex 1, should:

1) be supported by the GFCM Secretariat;
2) establish a schedule for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting in 2020, before the next meeting of the Compliance Committee (CoC);
3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, the FAO, and other regional fisheries organizations to participate in its meetings; and
4) report on its conclusions and opinions to the CoC.

The mandate of the Working Group covers the elements described in Annex 1 of this resolution.

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/7 amending Resolution GFCM/41/2017/3 on the reactivation of the Working Group on Fishing Technology

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that, in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, there remains a high level of catch of juvenile fish and bycatch of unwanted fish species, as well as incidental catch of vulnerable and sensitive marine species such as marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that appropriate mitigation measures should be adopted so to minimise and, where possible, eliminate catch of such species by fishing gear and not to threaten their conservation status;

ACKNOWLEDGING that increasing the selectivity of fishing gear would help mitigate this adverse impact and help achieve the objectives of the GFCM Agreement;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/41/2017/3 on the reactivation of the Working Group on Fishing Technology;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The Working Group on Fishing Technology (WGFiT) should hold a meeting in 2020.

2. The 2020 meeting of the WGFiT should establish a draft work programme spanning over three to five years and submit it to the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) for adoption.

3. The terms of reference for such meeting are provided in Annex 1 of this resolution.

4. On the basis of the report prepared by 2020 meeting of WGFiT, the twenty-second session of the SAC should adopt the work programme prepared by the WGFiT and advise the GFCM on suitable selectivity measures that may be implemented as soon as possible, and preferably by 2021, for selected fisheries and gear, while taking into account relevant socio-economic considerations.

5. The forty-fourth session of the GFCM should review the measures advised by the SAC and consider adopting suitable selectivity and mitigation measures to minimise and, where possible, eliminate the catch of juvenile fish and bycatch of unwanted fish species, as well as incidental catch of vulnerable and sensitive marine species such as marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles.

6. The GFCM should designate a coordinator for the WGFiT and for the 2020 WGFiT meeting. The tasks of the coordinator of the 2020 WGFiT meeting are listed in Annex 2.

Annex 1

Terms of reference for the 2020 WGFiT meeting

1. The objective of the 2020 WGFiT meeting is to advise the SAC on concrete and directly implementable selectivity measures that would allow mitigating the adverse effects of fisheries on:
    - juvenile fish;
    - bycatch of unwanted fish species; and
    - incidental catch of vulnerable and sensitive species, such as seabirds, cetaceans and marine reptiles.
2. The WGFiT should base its advice on the results of past and ongoing selectivity studies undertaken by GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties and on any other scientific information pertinent to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
3. The outcomes of the WGFiT should aim at maximizing the impact of the proposed measures focusing on:
    - the priority species listed in the GFCM mid-term strategy (2017–2020), in particular those with poorest conservation status according to the latest SAC advice;
    - fishing gear responsible for most catches in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;
    - fishing gear having most impact on juvenile fish and bycatch of unwanted fish species, as well as on the incidental catch of vulnerable and sensitive marine species such as marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles; and
    - fishing gear for which scientific knowledge is mature enough to rapidly translate into selectivity devices fitted to the fishing gear, including acoustic deterrent devices and other technical means to prevent the incidental catch of vulnerable and sensitive marine species such as marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles.

Annex 2

Terms of reference for the WGFiT coordinator in 2020

1. Draft the agenda of the 2020 WGFiT meeting, on the basis of the terms of reference included in Annex 1 of the present resolution.

2. Identify relevant experts and ongoing projects in the region and secure their participation in the meeting, as well as their relevant contribution (presentations).

3. Prepare relevant meeting documents, including background documents.

4. Chair the 2020 meeting of the WGFiT.

5. Coordinate the elaboration and presentation of meeting conclusions, including the preparation of relevant recommendations for the consideration of the SAC (in line with the terms of reference of the 2020 WGFiT meeting).

Resolution GFCM/41/2017/1 on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (New York, September 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources", SDG 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", SDG 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", SDG 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", SDG 12 "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns", SDG 13 "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts", SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss" and SDG 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development";

RECALLING that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched the Blue Growth Initiative with the aim of addressing food security and poverty alleviation, namely by promoting the production of quality capture and aquaculture fish through integrated and sustainable processes that take into account socio-economic aspects;

RECALLING that the FAO has enshrined its quest for securing a productive and sustainable aquaculture to achieve food security in its Strategic Objective 2;

RECALLING that, according to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, states should establish, maintain and develop an appropriate legal and administrative framework which facilitates the development of responsible aquaculture;

RECALLING the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention);

RECALLING the subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development as enshrined in the GFCM Agreement, with a view to better addressing the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region;

CONSIDERING the Task Force established in 2015 in charge of preparing a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (Aquaculture Task Force), and the extensive consultation process it has launched;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM shall establish a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (the strategy) aimed at supporting the fulfilment of its mandate, as reproduced in Annex.

2. The implementation of the strategy is expected to ensure that, by 2030, the aquaculture sector delivers its full potential.

3. The strategy is divided into the following three targets, with selected outputs and proposed activities:

a) build an efficient regulatory and administrative framework to secure sustainable aquaculture development;

b) enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment while ensuring animal health and welfare; and

c) facilitate market-oriented aquaculture and enhance public perception.

4. The GFCM shall review the contents of the strategy in due course.

Annex

Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture

Executive summary

Aquaculture is a flourishing industry which plays a key role in Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, under a blue growth perspective. According to current trends in aquaculture production and to some national aquaculture strategies, the production of farmed seafood is expected to substantially increase in the region over the next decades. This needs careful planning for the long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability of the sector. At the international level, crucial steps have been made to promote sustainable development and cooperation, in light of emerging global challenges. In particular, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and more specifically SDG 14, underscore the importance of a "sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism". At the level of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) supports responsible aquaculture practices while the attainment of a productive and sustainable aquaculture is enshrined in FAO Strategic Objective 2 (SO2). In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the need to promote blue growth and develop sustainable aquaculture to ensure food security has been reiterated on several occasions. Acknowledging this growing trend and in line with its mandate to ensure the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) has established, in 2015, a dedicated Task Force in charge of preparing a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (Aquaculture Task Force). The strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (the strategy) has been developed as part of an extensive consultation process and building upon the key elements provided by the Aquaculture Task Force. It is aimed at helping countries accomplish their national production plans in order to enable the sector to efficiently reach its potential by 2030. This strategy envisages a future for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture where a level playing field is achieved and the promotion of the sector is ensured so that it becomes more competitive, sustainable, productive, profitable and equitable. It is structured around three main targets addressing key transboundary vulnerabilities and cross-cutting issues, based on the pillars of sustainable development. These targets will be instrumental in achieving the overarching objective of the strategy through a number of outputs and activities.

Target 1: Build an efficient regulatory and administrative framework to secure sustainable aquaculture development

Output 1.1: Improved aquaculture regulatory frameworks and streamlined public sector management

Output 1.2: Integrated aquaculture in coastal zones

Target 2: Enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment while ensuring animal health and welfare

Output 2.1: Mitigated impacts on the environment and improved environmental protection

Output 2.2: Responsible aquatic animal health and welfare management

Output 2.3: Enhanced research and knowledge sharing on aquaculture

Target 3: Facilitate market-oriented aquaculture and enhance public perception

Output 3.1: Market-driven aquaculture sector development

Output 3.2: Improved safety and quality of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture products

Output 3.3: Enhanced aquaculture and aquaculture products marketing and communication

BACKGROUND

This integrated regional aquaculture strategy is the fruit of an extensive consultation process started after the thirty-ninth session of the GFCM, when it was decided to establish a task force to develop a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture, building in particular on the outcomes of the Regional Conference "Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security" (Italy, December 2014). These outcomes underlined that good governance implies that aquaculture management should be participative, effective, accountable and coherent and be based on sound and effective regulatory frameworks.

The co-construction process launched for the development of the strategy aimed at securing equal terms of competition and discussing minimum common criteria in order to address cross-cutting and transboundary issues in relation to aquaculture in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries. It involved national focal points and experts, who met on various occasions. The two meetings of the Aquaculture Task Force held so far are the main milestones. The first meeting of the Aquaculture Task Force (Italy, May 2016) reviewed the recent progress made and the priorities for the aquaculture sector in the region, and agreed on preliminary key elements, working areas, practical actions, management tools and a roadmap for the strategy. The outcomes of this first meeting were endorsed by the fortieth session of the GFCM. The second meeting of the Aquaculture Task Force (Italy, November 2016) reviewed existing national and supranational aquaculture strategies and development plans in the region and discussed the structure and contents of the strategy, with particular emphasis on priority actions and technical assistance needs. The meeting agreed on fine-tuning the strategy, in particular its structure, timeframe, cooperation and technical assistance components. A revised version of the strategy was brought to the attention of the tenth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) (Turkey, March 2017) which agreed to keep working towards its finalization so that it could be submitted to and adopted by the forty-first session of the GFCM.

The strategy is in line with the strategic areas of the GFCM Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform (AMShP) and has been enriched with the outcomes of other aquaculture projects carried out so far under the GFCM Framework Programme. It is structured in three parts: i) a general introduction describing the vision, mission, nature, scope and guiding principles of the strategy; ii) a section dedicated to the three targets of the strategy, with their associated outputs and activities; and iii) a section addressing the operationalization of the strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The need for a regional strategy

In Mediterranean and the Black Sea, aquaculture is an active and growing sector which plays a major role in achieving food security, employment and economic development while reducing the dependence on often overexploited wild stocks. In 2014, the production of Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries reached 2 381 954 tonnes

[1], for an economic value estimated at about USD 6.8 billion. According to some national aquaculture strategies, the production in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries is expected to exceed 4 600 000 tonnes in 2020–2030.

However, this rapid growth poses challenges for the overall sustainability of the sector in the long term and raises concerns from different points of view. Sustainable aquaculture means ensuring not only that the industry is economically and environmentally sustainable but also that farms operate in a socially and culturally responsible manner. Current challenges in terms of governance, spatial planning, economic and market issues, ecological and environmental concerns as well as the

[1] Including production from all environments (marine, brackish and freshwater) and from the Atlantic.

globalization of aquaculture production market have highlighted the need for a regional strategy towards the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries.

In a blue growth perspective, aquaculture constitutes a strategic sector for future development. It holds great potential for many coastal countries and communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. If managed and governed properly, it can provide multiple benefits in terms of nutritious food and positive socio-economic outcomes. Since Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture consists of various culture systems at varying stages of development, a holistic approach is needed to ensure that aquaculture is developed in a way that reconciles all the principles of sustainable development, taking into account the complexity and specificities of aquaculture across the region.

The implementation of this regional aquaculture strategy should help achieve this objective by facilitating cooperative processes and fostering synergies so that the sector delivers its full potential by 2030.

Vision and mission

The strategy envisages a future for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture where the industry will be globally competitive, sustainable, productive, profitable, and equitable. At the same time, it should help Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in formulating harmonized aquaculture activities and action plans with particular attention to current regional, subregional, national and local aquaculture priorities and emerging challenges and taking into account existing national and supranational strategies and existing legal requirements.

International and institutional context

The international community recently recognized that, in light of emerging global challenges, further progress needs to be achieved in order to secure an efficient cooperation towards sustainable development. On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – adopted by world leaders at an historic United Nations Summit in September 2015 – officially came into force. The SDGs should mobilize efforts over the next fifteen years towards a more prosperous and sustainable world. The conservation and sustainable use of marine environment have an important role to play in this respect, and this is reflected in particular by SDG 14 which aims to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. Its Target 7, in particular, aims “by 2030, [to] increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”. This target acknowledges the significant role of good governance in aquaculture in the context of comprehensive efforts to improve life conditions, and stresses the need to “balance priorities between growth and conservation, and between industrial and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, ensuring equitable benefits for communities.” Other SDGs such as SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible production and consumption), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals), are also important for aquaculture. Back in 2012, “The Future We Want” outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) had already renewed international commitment for sustainable development and cooperation. Along with these efforts, the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) concluded with the historic adoption, in December 2015, of the Paris Agreement. For the first time in history, 174 nations and the European Union (EU) jointly committed to undertake ambitious actions to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, thereby outlining a new course in global climate efforts.

In support of these efforts, the FAO has launched the Blue Growth Initiative with the aim of addressing food security and poverty alleviation by producing quality capture and aquaculture fish through

integrated, sustainable, and socio-economically sensitive processes. The FAO has enshrined its quest for securing a productive and sustainable aquaculture to achieve food security in its Strategic Objective 2 (SO2) which is to "make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable". The FAO programme of work for fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO strategic framework, elaborated by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)[2], highlights that "some of the Blue Growth Initiative activities contributing to SO2 involve cross-sectoral technical work, including […] reducing the impact of agriculture intensification on aquatic eco-systems, improving aquatic animal health, and promoting coastal zone management". Furthermore, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) tackles the promotion of responsible aquaculture. In particular, Article 9.1.1 indicates that "states should establish, maintain and develop an appropriate legal and administrative framework which facilitates the development of responsible aquaculture", while Article 9.2 clearly addresses the protection of transboundary aquatic ecosystems by supporting responsible aquaculture practices and Article 11 puts forward the right of consumers to safe and quality products encouraging states to set minimum standards in this regard and promoting certification.

In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, other international legal instruments have been adopted and are contributing to these efforts, such as for instance the 1995 Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean.

At the regional level, the need to pursue the sustainability of the aquaculture sector is enshrined in the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement). The Agreement clearly affirms that "responsible aquaculture reduces stress on living marine resources and plays an important role in the promotion and better use of aquatic living resources, including food security". The development of a regional strategy is fully in line with Article 5 e) of the GFCM Agreement, which states that the GFCM shall "foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea".

1. NATURE AND SCOPE

The strategy is linked to SDG 14 and to SO2. It is multiannual (2017–2020) and provides guidance to unlock the potential of the sector in the region by ensuring that it meets the growing need for aquaculture products and contributes to food security and poverty reduction, with particular attention to coastal communities. Responsibility and sustainability constitute the cornerstones of the strategy, which is also in line with the principles and approaches enshrined in modern international legal instruments governing fisheries and aquaculture.

The strategy does not apply to fisheries since the challenges associated with this sector are specifically addressed in a dedicated mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.

The three targets of the strategy address a range of transboundary key vulnerabilities and cross-cutting issues, based on the pillars of sustainable development. For each target, proposed outputs and activities are instrumental towards its efficient achievement.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the strategy will be guided by the following principles, which are enshrined in the GFCM Agreement and in place at the FAO level:

Sustainability: the FAO vision for sustainable food and agriculture is "that of a world in which food is nutritious and accessible for everyone and natural resources are managed in a way that maintain ecosystem functions to support current as well as future human needs". According to this vision, rural

[2] FAO. 2016. FAO'S programme of work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework. Thirty-second session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 11–15 July 2016. Document COFI/2016/9.

communities "have the opportunity to actively participate in, and benefit from, economic development, have decent employment conditions, […] work in a fair price environment, […] live in security, and have control over their livelihoods and equitable access to resources […]"[3]. This is particularly reflected in SO2 and in the GFCM Agreement, which states that the Commission shall consider "aquaculture, including culture-based fisheries, as a means to promote the diversification of income and diet and, in so doing, ensure that marine living resources are used responsibly, that genetic diversity is conserved and adverse impacts on the environment and local communities are minimized" (Article 5 d).

Best available knowledge: the implementation of the strategy should be based on the best available knowledge, including on aquaculture trends, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as on relevant information from a variety of sources. Efforts to collect all information available shall be ensured, and standards for ensuring its quality information should be applied whenever practicable and appropriate.

Objectivity and transparency: the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of aquaculture, ecosystems and marine environment should respect confidentiality requirements. Transparency in decision-making processes and related activities should be promoted. Uncertainty associated with information on aquaculture status and trends should be expressed, without detracting from the application of the precautionary approach in accordance with the 1995 United Nations (UN) Fish Stocks Agreement and the CCRF when data and information are incomplete.

Timeliness: the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of aquaculture, ecosystems and marine environment should be ensured as timely as possible.

Participation and cooperation: cooperation among relevant stakeholders and existing structures and mechanisms should be promoted in order to create synergies and avoid duplications of existing knowledge and initiatives. The implementation of the strategy should follow the same participatory and consultative approach process applied in the preparation phase. Relevant participants in the process may include, *inter alia*, representatives of Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian states, as well as international, non-governmental and civil society organizations.

Adaptability and level playing field: activities should be adaptive enough to permit adjustments, as necessary, and take into account the different stages of maturity in the sector as well as the different legal frameworks in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. In this respect, the capacity of developing states in the region should be duly taken into account during the implementation and a level playing field should be sought in order to guarantee parity, impartiality and equal opportunities to all parties involved.

3. TARGETS, OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

TARGET 1: BUILD AN EFFICIENT REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK TO SECURE SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

The international community has acknowledged on several occasions that good governance in aquaculture would contribute to increase the social acceptability of the sector and improve confidence of stakeholders, hence unlocking its socio-economic potential and enabling the various actors to benefit from new development opportunities.

It is widely recognized that, in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, the main challenges for aquaculture development are: the lack of streamlined administrative management and of dedicated regulatory frameworks accounting specifically for coordinated spatial planning and enabling the selection of suitable areas for aquaculture (e.g. implementation of allocated zones for aquaculture [AZAs]), the overlapping of numerous legislations and authorities, insufficient long-term planning strategies and the lack of participatory and transparent decision-making processes. These bottlenecks

[3] FAO. 2014. Building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture. Principles and approaches.

result in excessive bureaucracy, scarce coordination among authorities, lengthy and cumbersome authorization and leasing processes, conflicts over competing uses, misallocation of resources, stagnation of the industry and irreversible environmental damage in transboundary aquatic ecosystems.

In light of this, improvements need to be made in order to build efficient regulatory and administrative frameworks to secure the sustainability of aquaculture growth and better integrate aquaculture into coastal zones. Hence, in the context of its Target 1, the strategy aims at ensuring that aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is: a) regulated by a sound and functioning system and by the implementation of specific regulations governing the sector, in line with the principles of the CCRF and with the support of strategic plans; b) based on the existence of functioning and transparent participatory mechanisms in decision-making processes; and c) developed in a consistent way based on maritime and coastal spatial planning principles and integrated with the activities of other coastal users. In order to advance towards good aquaculture governance in the region, the strategy aims at supporting Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in achieving enabling conditions, such as: improved and dedicated regulatory frameworks, streamlined administrative and public sector management, and participatory, transparent and accountable policy-making processes (Output 1.1); improved and sustainable integration of aquaculture in coastal and marine zones and enhanced compatibility of the sector with other existing and future human activities (Output 1.2).

Output 1.1: Improved aquaculture regulatory frameworks and streamlined public sector management

Recent data[4] suggest that the main challenges for good aquaculture governance in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are related to the lack of comprehensive regulatory frameworks, clear leadership structures and space allocated to aquaculture.

Legal frameworks often do not encompass a comprehensive vision of aquaculture activities nor do they consider the specificities connected with the location of aquaculture activities (land, offshore, inshore), the type of production (intensive, extensive) or the type of enterprises (small, medium or large scale). This is also reflected in the difficulty experienced by managers in the administration in applying aquaculture regulations themselves. According to recent surveys in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, 62 percent of the countries apply a national development plan dedicated to aquaculture, while only 25 percent have specific regulations on aquaculture. In countries where no specific regulations on aquaculture exist, aquaculture is regulated by laws on fisheries or agriculture that are not designed to meet the specific needs of the sector[5].

According to the Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture (2013), the licensing time for aquaculture farms exceeds 17 months in the majority of EU countries, while in some countries licences for aquaculture activities at sea have a limited duration (less than 10 years). Furthermore, the time needed to build facilities and begin the production is often quite long (2.5–3.5 years) before the first sale. Finally, only a limited number of countries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea have functioning participatory fora such as multi-stakeholder platforms or equivalent mechanisms (mirror platforms, aquaculture committees, etc.) enabling dialogue and having a participatory role in decision-making processes.

[4] Chapela, R. 2016. Review of current approaches to spatial planning for aquaculture in marine and freshwater environments in Europe, non-EU Mediterranean and Black Sea countries. Report prepared for the EU funded project AquaSpace – Ecosystem Approach to making Space for Sustainable Aquaculture (http://www.aquaspace-h2020.eu/).
[5] Chapela, 2016.

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

Activities to support the improvement of regulatory frameworks and enhance administrative efficiency

a) Preparation of **regional guidelines for sound regulatory systems**, including guiding principles, good practices and key elements for a sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector (e.g. specific laws and measures on social rights and fair working conditions). This activity is expected to provide Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries with minimal basic requirements for governance-related issues, such as licensing, spatial planning, and competitiveness and ensure a level playing field.

b) Compilation of **successful practices on licensing processes simplification at the regional and global level** in order to carry out a benchmarking of models and options for good governance**.** This activity will offer the necessary support and practical solutions to help Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries improve their administrative procedures.

c) Organization of **training and national capacity building programmes** for operators and decision-makers, at the local and regional level. This activity will enhance the role of aquaculture in national and regional development plans (e.g. human health, local and national economy) and raise awareness on good governance systems and procedures in aquaculture. Workshops may be also organized to improve interinstitutional cooperation.

d) **Monitoring progress of aquaculture development** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea area. This activity is aimed at monitoring the implementation of sustainable aquaculture development according to the sustainability indicators so far identified by the CAQ as well as within the InDAM project[6].

e) Establishment of **a regional network (or/and forum/workshop) on aquaculture governance** among Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries and partner organizations in order to address regulatory issues in a coordinated manner and to share experience and knowledge. This activity is expected to provide an enabling environment for cooperation among key decision-makers on aquaculture-related issues with a view to strengthening efforts towards a regional harmonization of regulations

Activities to enhance accountability of policy-making and implementation processes

f) Preparation of **guidelines to enhance the involvement of aquaculture farmers' organizations (AFOs) in aquaculture management**. These guidelines will include provisions aimed at strengthening stakeholder participation mechanisms in decision-making processes so to ensure proactive inputs and enhanced accountability of the actors involved.

g) S**upport to the establishment of national and regional participatory tools** such as multi-stakeholder platforms. These participatory tools are expected to foster a strong regional network involving national aquaculture experts, partners and research organizations, to stimulate dialogue, and to facilitate knowledge sharing at different geographic levels in order to provide regional solutions to the main gaps and priorities identified at the national level.

Output 1.2: Integrated aquaculture in coastal zones

The spatial development of marine aquaculture should be considered within the broader context of marine spatial planning in order to minimize the negative impacts on coastal areas, avoid competition with other users and conserve ecosystem services provided by the environment. In the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, the lack of sound spatial planning seriously hinders aquaculture development. At the local level, the major source of conflicts stems from the struggle over marine space and from competing coastal utilizations and users; as a result, the available space for new mariculture

[6] Project on "Indicators for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Guidelines for their use in the Mediterranean".

development in coastal zones is being seriously limited. Conflicts usually reported by Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries relate to interactions with tourism, local communities, environmental conservation, small-scale fisheries as well as oil and gas industry[7].

The need for marine spatial planning has been acknowledged by the international community on several occasions. The COFI[8] also emphasised the crucial importance of marine spatial planning to ensure the allocation of space for aquaculture and integrate aquaculture activities within other coastal uses in a concerted manner. At the GFCM level, Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1 on Guidelines on Allocated Zones for Aquaculture, adopted in 2012, highlights that aquaculture development along coastal areas goes beyond the zoning concept and that marine spatial planning, environmental impact assessment and monitoring programmes are essential for the implementation of a regional strategy addressing AZAs. The resolution considers that the implementation of AZAs is a priority for the responsible development and management of aquaculture activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It also includes social and economic provisions aimed at reducing negative aquaculture externalities while allowing a harmonious development of various types of activities in the same area. Moreover, it stresses that the implementation of AZAs should usually be accompanied by a management plan in which aquaculture is developed.

In the region, countries are considering to frame aquaculture activities in the context of marine spatial planning, especially for the spatial and temporal allocation of maritime space to different activities with a view to preserving the ecological services provided by ocean ecosystems. For example, at the EU level, the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive[9] sets overarching principles and common requirements for human activities in the EU maritime space in order to achieve environmental, economic and social objectives. The directive requires the implementation of maritime spatial planning in all EU waters and the establishment by EU Member States of cross-sectoral maritime spatial plans by 2021. All activities foreseen in the strategy are in line with existing international, regional, supranational and national spatial planning processes.

From a recent survey carried out in 21 Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, it emerged that 14 countries have implemented site selection for aquaculture development. However, several barriers (conflict for space, environmental concerns, aquaculture priorities not accounted for, etc.) are still limiting the establishment of AZAs. Moreover, it is worth underlining that site selection *per se* does not imply the establishment of AZAs nor the planning and creation of zones that are specifically dedicated to aquaculture. The respondents to the survey also indicated that only 8 countries had established AZAs or aquaculture management areas. Therefore, there is a need to promote the implementation of these tools in order to enhance the integration of aquaculture in coastal zones[10].

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

a) **Implementation of technical cooperation projects and mechanisms to support the effective implementation of AZAs** in the region. This activity will include capacity-building and training to support Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in achieving an effective implementation of AZAs and to facilitate proactive planning (based on Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1). Upon request, this activity could be tailored to specific requirements, as appropriate and should be integrated in the broader EU marine spatial planning process.

b) **Preparation and dissemination of an AZA toolkit.** The AZA toolkit will illustrate the benefits of AZAs and provide information on their implementation and management in order to maximize existing scientific knowledge on AZAs in the region. It will be based on existing

[7] Chapela, 2016.

[8] FAO Committee on Fisheries. 2014. Report of the seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 7–11 October 2013. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 1064. Rome, FAO. 53 pp.

[9] Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning.

[10] Chapela, 2016.

technical achievements and knowledge outputs and tailored to the specificities of the region. The toolkit will include a guide as well as informative materials such as graphics, summary sheets, short leaflets and a training handbook for public managers.

TARGET 2: ENHANCE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN AQUACULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE ENSURING ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

The need to enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment has been highlighted in several international and regional fora. The 2012 Rio+20 Conference has acknowledged that healthy sea ecosystems are more productive and are essential for sustainable sea-based economies. In light of this, the 2016 COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture suggested that the FAO Blue Growth Initiative should not only focus on strategies aimed at reducing the negative impacts of aquaculture, but also contribute to maximizing positive effects of aquaculture, such as those of shellfish farming, on the environment[11]. At the regional level, the GFCM has recognized the importance of striking a balance between minimizing effects on the environment and supporting a growing aquaculture production in coastal zones.

The Mediterranean and the Black Sea share a unique aquatic ecosystem and are characterized by complex aquaculture-environment interactions. Aquaculture impacts on the environment at the local scale could negatively influence ecological services provided by the environment and have an effect at wider scales. In this regard, the lack of regional cooperation in addressing transboundary issues and the poor harmonization of norms and standards increase the difficulty to monitor such interactions. Other factors contribute to hampering these efforts: the lack of applied and harmonized environmental monitoring programme (EMP) dedicated to aquaculture, little capacity in and application of risk analysis, scarce guidelines on control and prevention (diseases, alien species, escapees, climate change and ocean acidification stressors), the lack of applied standards for prevention and control of contaminant procedures along the value chain, and poor harmonized regulatory and monitoring frameworks.

In light of this, efforts need to be made to enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment while ensuring animal health and welfare. In the context of Target 2, the strategy aims at ensuring that aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is: a) fully integrated into an environment where the ecological services provided are preserved; b) able to secure adequate health and welfare to farmed aquatic animal; and c) supported by a thriving cooperative research and technological development (RTD) based on industry needs, the results of which are efficiently transferred to farmers. In order to progress towards enhanced interactions between aquaculture and the environment and ensure animal health and welfare, the strategy aims at supporting Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in mitigating impacts on and improving protection of the environment. This should be attained through actions promoting: traditional and smart aquaculture activities (Output 2.1); a more efficient management of production activities and improved aquatic animal health and welfare (Output 2.2); enhanced research and knowledge sharing in support of sustainable aquaculture development (Output 2.3).

Output 2.1: mitigated impacts on the environment and improved environmental protection

Aquaculture relies on clean and healthy marine waters. Therefore, the implementation of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) prior to the establishment of aquaculture operations is critical to address environmental impacts before they occur; moreover, monitoring the environment surrounding farming facilities at sea is essential to evaluate the effects and impacts on the environment and on aquaculture itself. In line with Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1, an allowable zone of effect of aquaculture activities should be defined in the close vicinity of each farm and accompanied

[11] FAO. 2016. Decisions and recommendations of the eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Brasilia, Brazil, 5–9 October 2015. Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 11-15 July 2016. Document COFI/2016/4.

by an EMP. Based on this need, the GFCM has developed guidelines on EMP for marine finfish cage farming. The recent findings of a survey carried out within the SHoCMed project[12] have highlighted that in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, 8 out of 12 respondent countries – representing 80 percent of the riparian countries which practice cage culture at sea – do not have a permanent environmental monitoring system. These findings also showed that, when an environmental monitoring system exists, there is a lack of cooperation with farmers in monitoring activities. In many cases, environmental monitoring data exist but they are not accessible due to a lack of cooperation among the different institutions and farms.

Another recent study carried out at the European level[13] has reported that escapee accidents are also relatively frequent – in six countries where 242 incidents were reported, three of which were bordering the Mediterranean, approximately 8.9 million fish escaped. This situation is mainly due to scarce preventive measures undertaken at the farm level and entails risks of spreading pathologies and biosecurity threats. Strict procedures should be in place to regulate the introduction of alien species and other locally absent species. At the EU level, a Council Regulation on alien species in aquaculture[14] establishes a framework governing aquaculture practices in relation to alien and non-indigenous species [NIS] in order to assess and minimize the possible impacts of those species and of associated non-target species on aquatic habitats. The strategy also takes into account this EU context. At the farm level, the implementation of well-designed best management practices can support producers in their efforts to reduce or mitigate impacts on the environment, increase efficiency and productivity, improve food safety and quality of farm products, maximize the social benefits from aquaculture farming and improve its social acceptability and sustainability.

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

a) Preparation of **guidelines on risk analysis methods and data recording.** These guidelines will highlight the importance of monitoring and collecting data on specific aspects of aquaculture activities. Environmental issues that are usually not subject to monitoring and recording could also be taken into consideration (e.g. on alien and NIS, escapees, pathogens, drugs and feeds, etc.).

b) Provision of **training and technical assistance on the implementation of EMP.** This activity aims at fostering national capacity-building on the implementation of EMP within AZAs and at increasing awareness on the practical use of management and monitoring tools.

c) **Production and dissemination of a toolkit for the harmonization of minimum common criteria** on allowable zones of effects and environmental quality standards. This toolkit will complement and update existing standards and requirements for environmental monitoring produced by the CAQ, taking into consideration climate change and related phenomena which could represent threats to aquaculture.

d) Implementation of **plans oriented to "climate-smart aquaculture activities"**. This activity aims at supporting aquaculture activities that have a positive effect on global warming, contributing to the preservation of ecological services provided by the environment and maximizing the positive effects of aquaculture on the environment. It could leverage on initiatives implemented at the local, national and regional level – such as extensive aquaculture in lagoon areas, marine protected areas and mussel culture – that take into

[12] Result from the survey on the "Implementation feasibility at the national level of the guidelines on a harmonized environmental monitoring programme (EMP) for marine finfish cage farming in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea" (SHoCMed project).

[13] Jackson, D., Drumm, A., McEvoy, S., Jensen, Ø., Mendiola, D., Gabiña, G., Borg, J.A., Papageorgiou, N., Karakassis, I., Black, K.D. (2015) A pan-European valuation of the extent, causes and cost of escape events from sea cage fish farming. Aquaculture. (436):21–26.

[14] Council Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 of 11 June 2007 concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture.

consideration carbon footprint and sustainable models for bioremediation with a view to securing carbon sequestration and preserving the environment.

e) **Preparation of guidelines on the promotion of aquaculture best management practices**. This activity aims at increasing awareness and responsibility among farmers on the conservation of environmental integrity. Best management practices will focus on minimum standards related to the farming of the main reared species, including stocking density, feed management, water quality and monitoring, harvest calendar, drugs management, disease and implementation of surveillance plans.

Output 2.2: responsible aquatic animal health and welfare management

Concerns have been recently expressed on antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance, and this worldwide issue calls for the responsible use of successful treatments and for the prevention of diseases. The urgent need to address aquatic animal health and welfare management is contemplated in SO2 which sets the improvement of aquatic animal health as a priority for 2016–2017 and beyond. At the international level, the FAO and World Health Organization (WHO) Codex Alimentarius specifically addresses health issues based on the principle that animals and crops must be healthy throughout the entire food chain. In addition, the Aquatic Animal Health Code of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) provides important highlights, in particular on infections.

In this context, the goal is to harmonize actions aiming at tackling the challenges related to aquatic animal health and welfare following an approach that takes into account existing specificities of aquaculture in the region. Managing the health and welfare of farmed fish, including disease prevention and the responsible use of veterinary medicines, biological products and chemicals, depends on the overall management of the farm. Good farm management should ensure fish health while maintaining food safety and food quality and minimizing potential impacts on human health and the environment.

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

a) Provision of **capacity-building for aquaculture farmers** in the field of risk analysis (including risk assessment, management and communication), adaptive management, diagnosis, biosecurity measures, sanitary and food security (responsible use of registered, recorded and traceable medicaments and vaccines). This activity will improve the capacities of farmers to tackle disease prevention and the potential risks and hazards posed by farming operations.

b) Development of **systems and protocols for the early diagnosis of pathogens** with the support of certified, equipped and competent laboratories. This activity will strengthen the capacity to contain the spread of diseases.

Output 2.3: Enhanced research and knowledge sharing on aquaculture

The COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture has recently acknowledged the important role of education and research on aquaculture as well as their potential contribution to the development of sustainable aquaculture[15]. RTD plays a key role since it brings innovation, fosters rapid technological advance and is a crucial aspect of competitiveness for farmers and the industry as a whole.

In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, research is well developed, as highlighted by the AquaMed project[16] which has been carried out in 12 Mediterranean riparian countries. The findings of this project indicate that, in 2013, there were 115 research institutes and 1 155 researchers involved in aquaculture research and that 547 aquaculture research projects had been implemented from 2005 to 2010. To be effective, the selection of research topics should be based on the actual needs of the

[15] FAO Committee on Fisheries. 2014. Report of the seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 7–11 October 2013. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 1064. Rome, FAO. 53 pp.

[16] www.aquamedproject.net

sector and outputs should be transferred to the industry. Moreover, dialogue between the industry (in particular small-scale farms with limited funding resources) and the research community should be improved. Efficient networks should be established and research cooperation should be facilitated to strengthen dialogue between stakeholders, enhance synergies and achieve a better coordination on research activities so as to avoid duplication or fragmentation.

The Mediterranean and the Black Sea is considered as an area that is vulnerable to climate change; this entails likely changes in temperature, eutrophication, harmful algae blooms, water stress, sea level rise, acidification and diseases. These threats could have an impact on the aquaculture sector, especially for shellfish farming; specific science-based information is therefore necessary to evaluate the degree of vulnerability to climate change as well as associated phenomena, taking into account locations, production segments, farming systems and cultured species, with a view to identifying suitable adaptation and mitigation measures.

As the principal objective of aquaculture is to produce food for human consumption, nutritional aspects are considered essential for the promotion and evolution of the sector. In this regard, cooperation with researchers and experts on human nutrition should be reinforced to promote the benefits of aquaculture products in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

a) **Preparation of a research work plan to strengthen aquaculture-driven research and technical development**. This plan should foster the establishment of pilot demonstrative centres in the region, showcasing different production methods in aquaculture for the attention of potential investors, as well as cooperative research and knowledge sharing on cross-cutting and transboundary issues. It should also include a programme to transfer the results of applied research supporting the use of RTD patents and research performance assessment. The selection of research priorities should be based on end-user needs as well as on strategic research and innovation priorities (for example, epidemiology of aquatic animal pathologies, vaccines, feed technologies, good practices in restocking, efficient water resources use and maintenance of water quality, integrated multitrophic aquaculture, recirculating aquaculture, etc.).

b) Provision of **technical assistance and cooperation to implement innovative farming technology** (such as recirculation systems, integrated systems of aquaculture production and processing). This activity will ensure that applied research results are regularly transferred to farmers.

c) Organization of a **workshop on challenges posed by climate change and ocean acidification to Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture**. This activity is aimed at taking stock of new challenges brought about by climate change and ocean acidification, based on the current body of knowledge and ongoing projects, and at discussing best practices to integrate climate change adaptation, mitigation and innovative options into aquaculture activities which could be adjusted to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

d) Implementation of **a regional research to assess the vulnerability of aquaculture to climate change and to map risks** and associated phenomena, including ocean acidification. This should enable to identify context-specific adaptation and mitigation measures and implement a regional monitoring system.

e) Set-up of **a database of aquaculture experts** to be made available to public administrations and aquaculture farmers.

TARGET 3: FACILITATE MARKET-ORIENTED AQUACULTURE AND ENHANCE PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Market-oriented production strategies are key to secure a sound, attractive and fair market for aquaculture products and to build a positive image of aquaculture and its products in the region. This

would help enhance the competitiveness of the industry and capitalize on the increasing demand for high quality and value-added seafood products.

However, in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, aquaculture remains a highly fragmented sector with uneven negotiation power along the value chain as the retail sector seems to benefit from a disproportionate share of the value created. Producers still lack the ability to proactively face to emerging market challenges and respond to government regulatory initiatives due to the absence of coordinated marketing strategies and promotional initiatives and to scarce collective actions and cooperation in production. In addition, there is a general lack of market data collection and dissemination for production planning, marketing plans and supply-demand forecasts. Mediterranean and Black Sea industries also suffer from competition within domestic and global markets. Finally, there is insufficient awareness in the industry and its related sectors on corporate social responsibility[17].

In light of this situation, actions are needed to improve food safety and quality, marketing strategies for aquaculture products, and public perception of aquaculture. Hence, in the context of Target 3, the strategy aims at ensuring that aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is: a) a flourishing industry based on a level playing field and producing safe and healthy food products sold to informed consumers; b) a market-oriented sector based on well-structured market data as well as efficient dissemination tools; and c) integrated into modern supply chains and supported by efficient AFOs through advocacy, technical and economic services. In order to help the aquaculture sector gain a strong foothold on national and global markets and to enhance public perception, the strategy aims at supporting Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in achieving: a market-driven aquaculture sector (Output 3.1), improved safety and quality of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture products (Output 3.2), and enhanced marketing and communication capacity to promote aquaculture and aquaculture products (Output 3.3).

Output 3.1: Market-driven aquaculture sector development

The Mediterranean and Black Sea region is characterized by a predominance of small-scale producers. According to a survey carried out by the GFCM in 2007[18], there were approximately 575 fish farms producing European seabass and gilthead seabream in the Mediterranean, 82 percent of which produced less than 500 tonnes per year. In 2015, it was estimated that about 1 000 shellfish farms (mussels and oyster) existed in the region and generally produced less than 50 tonnes per year per farm[19]. This situation is that of a family-based and labour-intensive aquaculture farming, with a majority of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), mostly family owned. The characteristics and trends of the industry differ between finfish (generally large-scale, moving towards a capital-intensive and vertically-integrated structure, generally producing more than 1 000 tonnes per year and up to 5 000 tonnes in some cases) and shellfish enterprises (generally small or medium-scale, often family-run and labour-intensive, with small volumes of product concentrations obliging farmers to market their products through middlemen, which results in low profit margins).

The fragmentation of primary production has traditionally contributed to a decreasing bargaining power of farmers in the supply chain. As a response to this, small-scale producers have established AFOs, which can play a key role in facilitating the integration of SMEs into modern supply chains.

[17] Regional Aquaculture Conference (Italy, December 2014); regional FAO/Eurofish/GFCM workshop on Predicting the market for seabass and seabream (Turkey, November 2014,); GFCM CAQ Working Group on Marketing of Aquaculture Products Technical meeting on marketing (Morocco, October 2009) and MedAquaMarket project "Development of a strategy for marketing and promotion of Mediterranean aquaculture", 2010.

[18] Barazi-Yeroulanos, L. 2010. Synthesis of Mediterranean marine finfish aquaculture – a marketing and promotion strategy. Studies and Reviews. General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. No. 88 Rome, FAO. 198p.

[19] Report of the expert meeting on sustainable shellfish aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Cattolica, Italy, 23–25 November 2015). (https://gfcm.sharepoint.com/CAQ/Report/2015/InDAM/1/Cattolica%20shellfish-FinalReport.pdf).

Capitalizing on the industry and market opportunities could easily translate into efficiency gains and this would in turn multiply positive socio-economic returns in the region.

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

Activities to respond to market requirements shifting from a production-oriented to a market-oriented approach

a) **Enhancement of national and regional aquaculture data collection and statistical systems**. This activity foresees a regular assessment of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture production, trade and general market data. It will leverage on the current information system for the promotion of aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) in place at the GFCM and address the socio-economic implications of aquaculture. It is expected to be carried out in cooperation with relevant AFOs, national aquaculture multi-stakeholder platforms and GFCM partner organizations such as Eurofish and Infosamak. Cooperation will be also sought with national and supranational institutions involved in aquaculture and market data collection (e.g. EUMOFA).

b) Organization of **training and capacity-building for aquaculture farmers on market requirements and innovation in shellfish and finfish aquaculture** in order to increase competitiveness, especially in the case of SMEs. Topics may include financial management, production planning, credit access, aquaculture insurance, aquaculture market and trends monitoring, appropriate logistics and packaging practices, food safety and quality, certification and traceability, species diversification and product differentiation, added value and processed products, integration of aquaculture with other business activities such as tourism, restaurant industry, non-food aquaculture activities and blue biotechnologies).

Activities to enhance the role of aquaculture farmers' organizations and multi-stakeholder platforms in marketing and promotion

c) Organization of **cooperative pilot actions with aquaculture farmers and AFOs at the national level** for the implementation of concerted activities (collection and dissemination of market data and information, provision of technical assistance, technology transfer and training, promotion sales, etc.). The results of this activity as well as the information from the CAQ preliminary survey on AFOs[20] are expected to be widely disseminated with a view to enhancing the visibility of AFOs.

d) Facilitation of **the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms at the national level** to foster dialogue and cooperation.

Output 3.2: Improved safety and quality of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture products

Consumers are now devoting more attention to seafood safety, quality, freshness and traceability. While compliance with standards on food safety and hygiene and an adequate monitoring would help minimize the risk of food-borne health hazards, certification and traceability could serve as mechanisms for food quality assurance, contribute to consumer-responsive aquaculture production in order to meet the growing demand for sustainable and high quality aquaculture commodities.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission has developed harmonized international food standards to protect consumer health, and Codex Alimentarius documents often serve as a basis for country-specific laws and regulations drafted by national food control agencies.

Certification in aquaculture could be considered as a market-based tool to reduce negative impacts while increasing social acceptability and consumer confidence in aquaculture and aquaculture

[20] Preliminary survey completed by the CAQ in May 2013 to understand the current status, structure and function of these organizations.

products. The 2011 FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification[21] provide minimum criteria for developing aquaculture certification standards (animal health and welfare, food safety, environmental integrity, and socio-economic aspects). One of the principles underpinning the guidelines is that a certification scheme "should include adequate procedures for maintaining chain of custody and traceability of certified aquaculture products and processes", which highlights the fact that certification and traceability are strictly intertwined.

In aquaculture, traceability should take into account all stages of the production process: source of feed, use of vaccines and medicines, production environment, source of eggs and seed, transportation of goods and products, treatment and labelling of final products ready for sale.

Several private aquaculture certification schemes exist; however, the fifteenth session of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (Morocco, February 2016) noted that they could become potential trade barriers, and called upon the FAO to pursue efforts within the Codex Alimentarius and continue cooperating within the framework of the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement to ensure that a distinction is made between mandatory and voluntary standards.

This output will require the execution the following activities:

a) Preparation and dissemination of **guidelines and technical protocols on seafood safety** for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture products. This activity will take into account existing international standards to ensure compliance with responsible aquaculture practices and food safety.

b) Provision of **technical assistance to countries on compliance with international standards**. This activity aims at improving national legal frameworks related to aquaculture food products safety and hygiene, in line with the Codex Alimentarius and WTO principles.

c) Provision of **technical assistance to countries** on food quality, aquaculture certification and traceability, in line with the Codex Alimentarius and the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.

Output 3.3: Enhanced aquaculture and aquaculture products marketing and communication

Marketing initiatives are strictly connected to the public perception of aquaculture and aquaculture products, which depends on many factors, including personal experience, preconceived ideas, and demographic and regional contexts[22]. Over the last decade, important efforts have been made in the region to educate consumers and enact new legislation that contributes to improve public opinion on aquaculture products[23]. Building a positive image of aquaculture is key to the social acceptability of the sector, which is in turn closely linked to social responsibility.

Marketing strategies should be supported at the national and regional levels to promote Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and aquaculture products, both in the region and worldwide. Coordinated marketing efforts would enhance consumer knowledge and improve the image of farmed products, thus fostering increased consumer demand. To achieve corporate social responsibility, aquaculture production should comply with existing standards and reflect a high level of social accountability; at the same time, socially responsible practices should be effectively communicated to consumers.

[21] FAO. 2011. Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. Rome, FAO. 122 pp.

[22] Bacher, K. 2015. Perceptions and misconceptions of aquaculture: A global overview. Globefish Research Programme, Vol. 120, Rome, FAO. 35 pp.

[23] Barazi-Yeroulanos, L. 2010. Synthesis of Mediterranean marine finfish aquaculture – a marketing and promotion strategy. Studies and Reviews. General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. No. 88 Rome, FAO. 198p.

This output will require the execution of the following activities:

Activities to develop a marketing and communication strategy to promote Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and aquaculture products

a) Development of **regional communication and marketing initiatives**. This activity will possibly envisage collaboration within business-to-business segments (producers, traders, retailers, organizations and media) through joint marketing or cooperation initiatives between industry and the largest retailers. Promotional campaigns targeting the general public, especially younger generations, could also be foreseen, together with the production of promotional material leveraging on the attractive attributes of the region and highlighting the nutritional and healthy characteristics of aquaculture products, as well as aquaculture positive externalities. Such campaigns would need to be preceded by a market analysis to ensure that the messages and target groups are correctly identified.

b) Provision of **technical assistance on developing and implementing national communication and marketing plans**. This activity will contribute to boost domestic consumption of aquaculture products in Mediterranean and Black Sea countries. It will include joint promotion campaigns, training of relevant stakeholders and their participation in national and regional initiatives.

Activities to promote aquaculture corporate social responsibility

c) Organization of **training and national capacity-building on aquaculture corporate social responsibility** and social risk management for farmers and decision-makers. This activity will contribute to promoting health and welfare schemes as well as safe working environment, in line with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and related guidance.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND WAY FORWARD

The implementation of the strategy is intended to be part of a process that is consistent with national and supranational aquaculture strategies in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries. The work plan of the CAQ will be aligned to the targets and expected outputs of the strategy.

The strategy will be implemented through knowledge and result sharing with institutions as well as national and supranational projects. Bilateral initiatives will be also considered and technical assistance provided where there is a need to build national capacities so that existing commitments can be fulfilled equally.

The GFCM, through its relevant subsidiary bodies, should regularly assess the progress made by monitoring the achievement of the strategy targets, activities and outputs, reviewing, revising and updating expected outputs, as appropriate, and providing guidance to reach more effectively the objectives. The implementation of the strategy will also benefit from the support of the CAQ working groups and the AMShP.

The terms used for the purpose of this strategy are defined in the CAQ glossary and the FAO Aquaculture Glossary (available online).

Resolution GFCM/41/2017/2 on guidelines for the streamlining of aquaculture authorization and leasing processes

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING the important contribution of aquaculture to economic development and its essential role as a source of food and income for coastal communities of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs);

CONSISTENT WITH the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in particular Article 9, which, *inter alia*, calls upon states to develop and regularly update strategies and plans, as required, with a view to ensuring that the development of aquaculture is environmentally sustainable and to enabling the rational use of shared resources between aquaculture and other activities;

CONSIDERING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more specifically SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development", of which Target 7 aims "by 2030, [to] increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism";

ACKNOWLEDGING the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration that commits signatories to implement actions in support of sustainable aquaculture development to contribute to food security through the implementation of a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture which will support, *inter alia*, sustainable farming, as well as enhanced market access and trade environment, thereby creating employment opportunities and reducing the current stress on marine capture fisheries;

ACKNOWLEDGING that, at its thirty-ninth session (Italy, May 2015), the GFCM agreed to develop regional guidelines on the simplification of administrative procedures to streamline aquaculture authorization processes;

RECOGNIZING the need to have a regulatory and administrative framework dedicated to aquaculture in order to ensure a sound development of the sector;

AWARE of the necessity to adopt a common terminology related to the aquaculture authorization and leasing processes in CPCs;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the need to support the development of the sector also during applications for licences and leases to operate an aquaculture activity;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The CPCs should facilitate the implementation of the guidelines for the streamlining of aquaculture authorization and leasing processes as reproduced in Annex.

GUIDELINES FOR THE STREAMLINING OF AQUACULTURE AUTHORIZATION AND LEASING PROCESSES

BACKGROUND

Aquaculture production in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea has steadily grown over the past decades and this trend is projected to continue. The industry is a key player to achieve food security, employment and economic development and it is characterized by a wide range of production systems, farmed species and technologies in use.

Authorization and leasing processes are among the main constraints hampering the development of the sector in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Indeed, they tend to be lengthy and cumbersome, and constitute de facto barriers to the industry development.

The regulatory constraints facing aquaculture and the need for coordination to streamline authorization and leasing processes were acknowledged at the regional and international levels, including at the Regional Conference "Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security" (Italy, December 2014) organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

SCOPE

The overall objective of the guidelines is to support contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) in streamlining authorization and leasing processes in order to facilitate the development of aquaculture (Figure 1 illustrates such streamlined processes). This should be achieved through the provision of guiding principles and minimum common in order to: i) create an enabling environment for aquaculture development and foster viable investments; ii) facilitate the harmonious development of aquaculture; and iii) help achieving a level playing field in the region.

The guidelines specifically aim to:

- propose common definitions, concepts, standards and reference documents to support enabling regulatory frameworks;
- support coordination among the various bodies responsible for aquaculture-related matters; and
- promote soft law mechanisms to simplify administrative procedures for authorization and leasing processes.

NATURE

The guidelines are advisory in nature and consistent with existing national, supranational and international instruments. They should be considered a tool at the disposal of CPCs to enhance existing processes.

Competent bodies should assess and monitor the implementation of the guidelines.

PRINCIPLES

The guidelines rely on the principles of good governance, efficiency, transparency, accountability and social responsibility. They are based on the best available knowledge in terms of good practices in administrative and public sector management, efficient regulatory and administrative frameworks and participatory policy-making processes.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of the guidelines, the following definitions shall apply:

- "**Aquaculture**": the farming of aquatic organisms that implies some sort of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production. Farming also implies individual or corporate ownership of the stock being cultivated (adapted from the FAO glossary of aquaculture).
- "**Aquaculture authorization process**" (or "**authorization process**"): the series of procedures that are necessary to obtain an aquaculture licence.
- "**Aquaculture licence**": authorization for the installation and operation of a facility in water describing the activity that can be undertaken. An aquaculture licence usually specifies the species and the production limit (maximum allowed biomass) or the stocking density that are authorized for a defined area.
- "**Aquaculture leasing process**" (or "**leasing process"**): the series of procedures that are necessary to obtain an aquaculture lease.
- "**Aquaculture lease**": exclusive right to use an area in water or state-owned submerged land for marine aquaculture. An aquaculture lease is usually granted for a defined period of time, in exchange of some form of payment.
- "**Aquaculture consenting process**": procedure that includes authorization and leasing processes. The aquaculture consenting process refers to all actions to be undertaken by an investor through aquaculture consenting bodies, within a given administrative and regulatory framework, in order to perform an aquaculture activity.[1]
- "**Aquaculture consenting bodies**": any entity that is responsible for decision-making and, where applicable, for providing advice on the aquaculture consenting process.
- "**Marine spatial planning**": a public process of analysing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process.[2]
- "**Allocated zone for aquaculture (AZA)**": a marine area where the development of aquaculture has priority over other uses, and therefore will be primarily dedicated to aquaculture. The identification of an AZA results from zoning processes through participatory spatial planning, whereby administrative bodies legally establish that specific spatial areas within a region have priority for aquaculture development.[3]
- "**Environmental impact assessment (EIA)**": a set of activities designed to identify and predict the impacts of a proposed action on the bio-geophysical environment and on human health and well-being, and to interpret and communicate information about the impacts and potential mitigation measures (adapted from the FAO glossary of aquaculture).
- "**Environmental monitoring programme (EMP)**": for marine cage finfish farming, a flexible and adaptable functional tool at the disposal of authorities and aquaculture industry to monitor aquaculture management practices in order to ensure the environmental sustainability of the sector (adapted from the CAQ glossary).

[1]Wherever applicable, leases and licences could also be renewed, amended, transferred, suspended or revoked. However, these guidelines address specifically the authorization and leasing processes for a new investor.

[2] Ehler, Charles, and Fanny Douvere. *Marine Spatial Planning: a step-by-step approach toward ecosystem-based management.* Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Man and the Biosphere Programme. IOC Manual and Guides No. 53, ICAM Dossier No. 6. Paris: UNESCO. 2009 (English).

[3] Sanchez-Jerez, P., Karakassis, I., Massa, F., Fezzardi, D. and others. 2016. Aquaculture's struggle for space: the need for coastal spatial planning and the potential benefits of Allocated Zones for Aquaculture (AZAs) to avoid conflict and promote sustainability. *Aquacult Environ Interact* 8:41-54.

INSTITUTIONAL BENCHMARKS

The guidelines take into account relevant international instruments and milestones, in particular those related to sustainable aquaculture development and responsible fisheries, such as:

- The Codex Alimentarius, developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) since 1963, which is a collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines and recommendations relating to food, food production and food safety.[4]
- The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, unanimously adopted by the 1995 FAO Conference, which provides the first outline of a framework for international cooperation aimed at ensuring the sustainable exploitation of marine resources, in particular its Article 9.1.1: "States should establish, maintain and develop an appropriate legal and administrative framework which facilitates the development of responsible aquaculture".[5]
- The 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which commits its member states to respect and promote principles and rights associated to the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.[6]
- The ecosystem approach to aquaculture (EAA), formalized in 2007 at an FAO expert workshop as "a strategy for the integration of aquaculture within the wider ecosystem in such a way that it promotes sustainable development, equity, and resilience of interlinked social and ecological systems".[7]
- Marine spatial planning, in particular the document "Marine Spatial Planning: a step-by-step approach toward ecosystem-based management" prepared in 2009 by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Man and the Biosphere Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which aims at setting up a successful marine spatial planning initiative that can help achieving ecosystem-based management.[8]
- Environmental impact assessment (EIA), in particular the FAO technical paper on "Environmental impact assessment and monitoring in aquaculture", which highlights the role of EIA in regulating the assessment of the environmental effects of a wide range of public and private projects, including aquaculture, which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.[9]
- The twenty-ninth session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (31 January–4 February 2011), which provided recommendations on the role of FAO in the improved

[4] FAO/WHO. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Codex Alimentarius.
[5] FAO. Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Rome, FAO. 1995. 41 p.
[6] ILO. Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Geneva, International Labour Office. 1998. 13 p.
[7] Soto, D.; Aguilar-Manjarrez, J.; Hishamunda, N. (eds). Building an ecosystem approach to aquaculture. FAO/Universitat de les Illes Balears Expert Workshop. 7–11 May 2007, Palma de Mallorca, Spain. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Proceedings*. No. 14. Rome, FAO. 2008. 221p.
[8] Ehler, Charles, and Fanny Douvere. Marine Spatial Planning: a step-by-step approach toward ecosystem-based management. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Man and the Biosphere Programme. IOC Manual and Guides No. 53, ICAM Dossier No. 6. Paris: UNESCO. 2009 (English).
[9] FAO. Environmental impact assessment and monitoring in aquaculture. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper*. No. 527. Rome, FAO. 2009. 57 p.

integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.[10]

- The FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, adopted in 2011 at the twenty-ninth session of the COFI, which provide advice on developing, organizing and implementing credible aquaculture certification schemes.[11]
- Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1 on guidelines on allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs), which invites CPCs to include, in their national marine spatial planning strategy for the development and management of aquaculture, schemes for the identification and allocation of specific zones reserved for aquaculture activities, and introduces the concepts of allowable zone of effect and environmental monitoring programme.[12]
- The International Standard ISO 14004:2016 of the International Organization for Standardization, which provides guidance on the establishment, implementation, maintenance and improvement of a robust, credible and reliable environmental management system.[13]

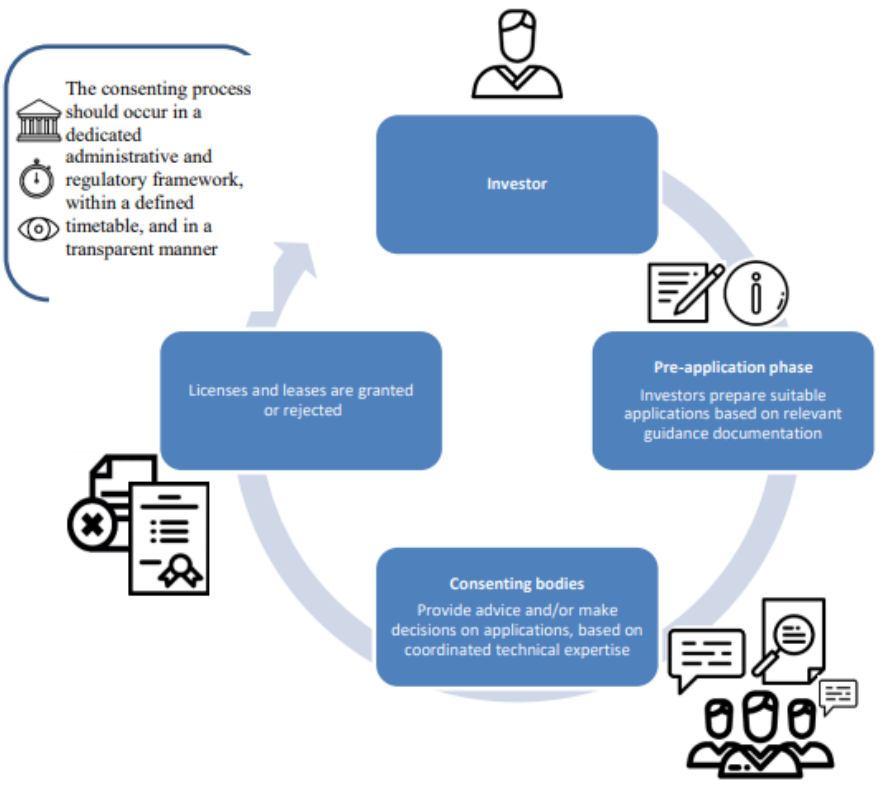


Figure 1. Streamlined aquaculture authorization and leasing processes

[10] FAO. Report of the twenty-ninth session of the Committee on Fisheries. Rome, 31 January–4 February 2011. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 973. Rome, FAO. 2011. 59 pp.
[11] FAO. Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. Rome, FAO. 2011. 122 pp.
[12] FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. Report of the thirty-sixth session. Marrakech, Morocco, 14–19 May 2012. GFCM Report. No. 36. Rome, FAO. 2012. 71 pp.
[13] ISO 14004:2016. Environmental management systems — General guidelines on implementation.

REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

A regulatory and administrative framework dedicated to aquaculture should be ensured in order to reinforce the legal certainty of the aquaculture industry and enshrine its development, in a sustainable manner, within an appropriate governance framework.

Wherever necessary, a specific law or regulation on aquaculture should be issued and/or amended to improve the existing regulatory and administrative framework, with specific provisions on:

- the administrative procedures and processes for granting licences and leases, possibly included in a single authorization, ensuring the legal certainty of the investor and the granting body;
- the use of the public domain for aquaculture, with specific reference to aquaculture planning (for new areas for aquaculture development and for areas with pre-existing aquaculture development) and to aquaculture site selection, with associated criteria and requirements;
- the use of coordinated spatial planning and associated tools (e.g. geographic information system);
- the harmonization of aquaculture development plans with other national and supranational spatial planning and plans, policies and programmes;
- the mandatory establishment of AZAs;
- the quality of the environment where aquaculture takes place, including in particular water quality requirements and defining the levels of chemical and ecological quality and of ecosystem and biodiversity protection as well as environmental monitoring modalities; and
- the establishment of mechanisms for communication, cooperation and coordination among national authorities involved in planning, development, conservation and management of coastal areas.

The consistency of policy and legislation among different authorities, at different scales and levels and among diverse sectors should be promoted.

Soft and secondary law tools, such as guidelines and voluntary schemes, should be developed and adopted to simplify administrative procedures while ensuring a legally robust process for granting licences and leases.

CONSENTING BODIES

Consenting processes are associated with a number of rules and procedures involving various consenting bodies.

The number of bodies involved in the consenting process should be kept to a minimum in order to reduce the time lapse between application and final decision, minimize consultation processes, and avoid duplication of efforts by investors and overlapping of competences among consenting bodies.

The number of consenting bodies should guarantee sufficient expertise to obtain decisive advice and informed decisions, based on the best available knowledge, for the implementation of aquaculture activities.

A coordinating body could be established at the national level to enhance institutional and administrative coordination. It could comprise representatives from different competent public institutions or departments where specific expertise on aquaculture would be concentrated, and be linked to existing national initiatives on aquaculture.

REFERENCE CONTACT POINTS

The establishment of a reference contact point for the aquaculture consenting process, such as in the "one-stop-shop" or "single-window" approach, should be considered. Such reference contact point could be hosted by an existing competent authority at the national level (or at the appropriate first-level administrative division according to competences over aquaculture in the country, e.g. regions, provinces or municipalities); this could then require the consent of other authorities, as appropriate. The establishment of an online platform for the submission, analysis and processing of licence and lease applications could be envisaged; this platform could work in an interoperational manner with other systems in use among all relevant consenting bodies.

The reference contact points could bring the following benefits:

- act as a single contact that drives the whole aquaculture consenting process and eases the submission of applications by investors;
- provide a general view on legislations and regulations governing aquaculture activities, thus enabling a streamlined and coordinated process from submission to decision, so that consents are granted at the same time or in an appropriate sequence;
- provide an overview and proactive guidance on all stages of the consenting process from the pre-application phase to the decision phase, for all types of licences and leases (marine finfish, marine shellfish, algae or seaweed farm, etc.) as well as on the zones, production techniques and environmental requisites for aquaculture development;
- provide and make available consent application forms to investors, who could download them and complete them electronically; and
- facilitate efficient dialogue between investors and aquaculture consenting bodies, if and when additional information is required, and inform investors on contact details of key people in the aquaculture consenting bodies.

CONSENTING PROCESS

The consenting process includes a series of procedures, ranging from the preparation of administrative documentation to the release of licences and leases.

The consenting process is applied, but not limited, to the following decisions:

- granting of an aquaculture licence or lease in a designated AZA;
- amendment of an aquaculture licence or lease;
- renewal of an aquaculture licence or lease;
- assignment of an aquaculture licence or lease;
- granting of a special experimental licence or lease; and
- reallocation of an aquaculture site.

The consenting process should be facilitated by the formal establishment of AZAs, which are considered as a management tool for the sound integration of aquaculture within marine spatial planning and coastal areas. AZA establishment should be pursued to shorten the duration of the consenting process.

Criteria and parameters to identify suitable areas for aquaculture should be adopted, including through:

- the analysis of technical, logistical, social, economic and environmental parameters for the definition of ecosystem boundaries and the selection of areas;
- the assessment of carrying capacity;

- the assessment of the risks associated to aquaculture activities on specific aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity (e.g. alien species, escapees and use of chemicals);
- the assessment of the management measures identified and associated to the prevention of risks;
- the identification of appropriate aquaculture farming technologies to be adapted to each site and species farmed; and
- the review of existing users in the area in order to avoid competition among them.

Pre-application phase

Before lodging an application, investors are required to prepare a series of documents to be submitted to the consenting bodies. The pre-application phase is essential to the consenting process and should help investors clarify the nature and expected performance of their investment.

The introduction of a pre-application phase should be promoted to initiate discussions between investors and aquaculture consenting bodies and ensure that the correct information is available to investors before the full application is lodged.

The pre-application phase could, *inter alia*, help flag issues, pre-empt progress on non-viable sites, provide advice to investors and enable a more efficient and focused application.

Clear procedures and assessment criteria for licence and lease applications, that are coherent and comply with regulatory requirements, should be established.

Feedback mechanisms to inform the pre-application phase and refine management systems for final submission should be established.

Documentation

General guidance documents

A minimum set of guidance documents on the granting of aquaculture licences and leases for all types of aquaculture activities, also reflecting local provisions, should be made available to investors.

These documents should cover all requirements in relation to aquaculture operations. Among other things, guidance documents should:

- be drafted in a language that is simple, clear and understandable for the general public;
- provide information that is consistent among the aquaculture consenting bodies to improve the quality of applications and reduce the time required for approval;
- list the competent authorities (e.g. Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Rural Development, etc.) the consent of whom is required for the granting of licences and leases;
- explain the procedures and formalities to obtain an aquaculture licence and lease, possibly with descriptive flowcharts that indicate the actors involved and the time limits for each procedural step, including appeals processes;
- provide full guidance on protocol and required documents if there is a process prior to the pre-application phase;
- give a detailed description of the information to be provided by an investor for the full application, including:
    - technical information: farming system and characteristics, farmed species and cycles, production capacity, annual feed consumption, plan of the whole farm, etc.;

- environmental information: bathymetry, temperature, salinity, current speed, benthic community, sensitive habitats, etc.;
- geographical information: maps and location of proposed farming areas, available areas in AZAs, etc.;
- economic feasibility and integrity of the project: information on capital investment, such as equipment and construction budget costs, estimated unit production costs**,** annual production planning projections, annual operating costs, financial ratios, returns on investment analysis, etc.; and
- socio-economic information: benefits associated to the activities in surrounding areas, such as job opportunities associated to the aquaculture activity;

- list procedures related to the operation and monitoring of aquaculture farms (EMP);
- describe the main procedures on the market of aquaculture products, including food production and safety regulations in place; and
- provide a general overview of legislations and regulations governing aquaculture activities.

Environmental impact assessment monitoring and guidance

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) varies significantly depending on the national, and sometimes local, context. Whenever applicable, the EIA could be included in the consenting process and facilitated by the reference contact point.

Guidance documentation on EIA should place the investors in a position to carry out a cost-effective and practical assessment. The authorities at the appropriate level should indicate, when possible, the environmental objectives and associated indicators, standards and reference points to ensure compliance with the provisions of national and supranational environmental regulations, as well as associated timetables.

In addition, guidance documentation on EIA should clearly indicate relevant norms and rules, including rules to control and manage pollution and waste discharge as well as suggestions on how to introduce codes for better management practices.

Guidance documentation should also provide full information on the potential impacts of aquaculture on the different aquatic ecosystems, including environmental descriptors and standards, and on the suggested procedures to apply in order to mitigate such impacts.

Environmental impact assessment and monitoring should be considered within a wider management framework. They should also be accompanied by an explanation on how the EMP should be established, including a distinction between the rules to be followed by authorities and by investors, their respective responsibilities and clear procedures to be applied in the monitoring process.

Templates and logbook systems for environmental monitoring should be put at the disposal of investors.

The whole environmental assessment, including EIA reports and results, should be made available to the general public in a transparent and understandable way.

Facilitated licences and leases

The facilitation, for a number of years, of specific types of aquaculture production, should be assessed.

Ad hoc licences or leases should be promoted and granted for innovative or research aquaculture activities, in particular for the activities involving a production that contributes to maintaining ecosystem services:

- Experimental development licences could be granted to activities that test, develop or adopt

innovative farming systems and technologies (e.g. low carbon footprint), diversify production, carry out basic and/or applied research, etc.

- Licences and leases could be granted to activities that contribute to maintaining ecosystem services, such as: shellfish and algae aquaculture, which contributes to removing CO_2 from the environment; integrated multi-trophic aquaculture, which helps creating balanced systems for environment remediation (bio-mitigation) through a combination of fed aquaculture with inorganic and organic extractive aquaculture; and aquaculture associated to marine protected areas, which uses marine finfish and shellfish restocking for conservation purposes.

Timeframe

A timeframe, with a monthly breakdown, should be set for each aquaculture consenting body (or step) within the consenting process, to help investors plan their investment schedule.

The timeframe should indicate the expected time periods for:

- the pre-application assessment and advice provision; and
- the evaluation of applications and the communication of decisions, taking into account the legislation in place and associated consenting bodies.

Licence and lease terms

Wherever applicable, aquaculture consenting bodies could also be entitled to perform one or more of the following actions: renew, amend, transfer, suspend and revoke aquaculture licences and leases.

The longest duration of licences and leases validity should be promoted, and a minimum number of years should be ensured to enable investors securing returns on investment.

Validity and renewability conditions could be imposed on licences and leases to ensure the best use of leased marine areas. Such conditions could be based on compliance and performance criteria in terms of:

- environmental quality standards;
- gross or repeated infringement of the provisions set out in or pursuant to aquaculture regulations;
- cases where the licence is not used, or is only used to a limited extent; and
- facilitated licences conditions.

Any breach of an underlying condition should result in licence and lease revocation or suspension, and/or fettering of the renewal process.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY, COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Awareness on the relevance of aquaculture development for local and coastal communities should be enhanced among institutions. The institutional and administrative capacities of the consenting bodies should be strengthened at the national and local levels in order to increase staff capacity to handle aquaculture issues and consenting processes.

To this end, institutional mechanisms and programmes should be implemented. These should address, among other things:

- knowledge sharing and communication flows on aquaculture development and authorization and leasing processes;
- ad hoc capacity-building programmes to increase staff competencies and practical capacity to cope with administrative aquaculture authorization and leasing processes;
- the availability of reference documents and guidelines that include the provisions of national

and supranational environmental regulations (e.g. descriptors of environment quality, criteria to assess environment status, water quality requirements, potential impacts, specific monitoring programmes, and parameters to be assessed and monitored) allowing for the development of aquaculture activities; and

- the introduction of working methods and procedures to enhance the effectiveness of institutions in responding to investors needs.

Participatory and consenting mechanisms and programmes involving local communities and other interest groups in aquaculture planning and development should also be put in place or enhanced, possibly through the setting up of multi-stakeholder platforms or other consultation committees, with a view to increasing the social acceptability of aquaculture.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

The particularities of the different stages of industry maturity in the area, as well as regional specificities and the different legal contexts in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, should be taken into account. The capacity of developing states in the region should also be considered in implementing the guidelines.

To ensure their effective implementation and secure a level playing field in the region, the guidelines should be adaptive so that they can be adjusted, if necessary. Specific work to address implementation should be carried out, as appropriate, possibly through the provision of technical assistance.

Resolution GFCM/41/2017/3 on the reactivation of the Working Group on Fishing Technology

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

ACKNOWLEDGING relevant activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) carried out in response to requests by contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) aiming to improve fishing technology in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

NOTING the decision by the GFCM at its thirtieth session (Turkey, January 2006) to establish the TechnoMed network as a transversal working group of the SAC;

RECALLING the objective of the TechnoMed network which is to assist the GFCM in facilitating the exchange of information between scientists involved in research on fishing technology;

ALSO RECALLING the outcomes of the GFCM Transversal Working Group on Selectivity, which met within the framework of the TechnoMed network, *inter alia*, in 2008 and 2009 to address terms and concepts of relevance to fishing technology;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the ongoing work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on fishing technology;

NOTING the mid-term strategy (2017-2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries as well as the need to reverse the current trend in the exploitation of Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks, including through the monitoring and mitigation of unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems;

CONSIDERING the necessity to reactivate the Working Group on Fishing Technology (WGFiT);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following resolution:

1. The WGFiT and its activities shall be included on a permanent basis in the GFCM work programme.

2. The terms of reference of the WGFiT shall include the following objectives:

   - assist the SAC and the WGBS in formulating scientific advice on fishing technology aspects;
   - promote cooperation between Mediterranean and Black Sea scientists involved in fishing technology and selectivity studies;
   - assure a permanent watch on fishing technology issues in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; and
   - monitor issues relating to the typology of fishing fleet.

3. The WGFiT shall primarily rely on networking through the exchange of field experience and information and shall organize meetings on fishing technology issues, in particular fishing gear selectivity, at the request of the SAC and WGBS, as appropriate.

4. The WGFiT shall continue to review and examine the technical elements brought to its attention by the SAC and the WGBS and report accordingly.

Resolution GFCM/41/2017/4 on a permanent working group on vulnerable marine ecosystems

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

ACKNOWLEDGING the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72 on sustainable fisheries, in particular regarding the obligation to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the 2009 FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, which provide states and regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements (RFMO/As) with guidance in formulating and implementing appropriate measures for the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas through a range of management tools and measures necessary to ensure the conservation of target and non-target species as well as affected habitats;

TAKING NOTE of the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, Target 4: "Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment";

CONSIDERING the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) regarding the protection of VMEs, based on the outcomes of the first meeting of the Working Group on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (WGVME) (Spain, April 2017);

CONSIDERING the necessity to give a more permanent status to the activities of the WGVME;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The WGVME and its activities should be included, on a permanent basis, in the GFCM annual work programme.

2. The mandate and terms of reference of the WGVME, as provided in the Annex, should be reviewed and complemented so as to ensure the implementation of the above-mentioned UNGA resolutions.

3. The WGVME should continue to review and examine, in 2018, the technical elements

4. [1] for the protection of VMEs in the GFCM area of application, as provided by the SAC at its nineteenth session (Slovenia, May 2017), in order to formulate advice towards the adoption by the Commission of dedicated protocols for the protection of VMEs, in line with similar protocols established by other regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).

5. The WGVME should also contribute to identify the technical elements concerning management measures to be applied for:

- fishing vessels above 15 m length overall (LOA) operating with bottom contact fishing gear targeting the species *Aristaeomorpha foliacea*, *Aristeus antennatus*, or *Plesionika martia*; and
- fishing vessels above 15 m LOA operating with bottom contact gear (bottom trawls, bottom set gillnets, bottom longlines and pots and traps) at depths deeper than 300 m.

[1] Notably on the basis of the work of the WGVME.

Annex

Terms of reference for a permanent working group on vulnerable marine ecosystems

As agreed by the fortieth session of the GFCM, the Working Group on VMEs (WGVME) was established to develop initial measures related to the protection of VMEs in the GFCM area of application, in accordance with the FAO mandate. Once such initial measures are defined, the WGVME should also provide advice for the SAC.

In particular the WGVME should carry out the following tasks:

- collect information and map the distribution of VMEs (annual update);
- advise on new proposals for closures and on the enforcement of existing measures (efficiency of existing FRAs addressing VME protection);
- assess technical information provided by fishers and other institutions;
- advise the SAC on any VME-related matter and coordinate the elaboration of management tools.

The WGVME will also contribute to:

- the design and management of the Mediterranean VME geodatabase; and
- the establishment of a close collaboration and proper communication channels with scientific bodies from other RFMOs (e.g. ICES working group on deep-water ecology), scientific national institutions and the FAO.

Resolution GFCM/41/2017/5 on a network of essential fish habitats in the GFCM area of application

RECALLING the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), which foresees that the GFCM shall adopt multiannual management plans based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield, and establish fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including nursery and spawning areas, also to complement measures included in the multiannual management plans;

RECALLING the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, Target 1 "Reverse the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management" and the related Output 1.3 "Enhanced science-based GFCM regulations on fisheries management";

RECALLING the commitment made by the Mediterranean ministries for fisheries of the signatory countries of the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration, which calls upon the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) as well as the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) to present in 2018, at the forty-second session of the GFCM, proposals for the establishment of new FRAs in order to create a consistent network of essential fish habitats;

CONSIDERING that the SAC has reported that over 80 percent of the fish stocks assessed in 2017 are in overexploitation and that more than 40 percent of these have a low biomass;

CONSIDERING that, for key commercial stocks like European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), the SAC recommended to take immediate management actions to reduce fishing mortality through multiannual management plans and to identify new nursery areas;

AWARE of the need to implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the Mediterranean Sea;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Taking into account the existing FRAs, the SAC should present in 2018, at the forty-second session of the GFCM, elements for the establishment of new FRAs, without prejudice to the sovereign rights of the states and in accordance with applicable international law, in particular to establish a consistent network of essential fish habitats

2. [1], following a thorough consultation process.

3. The GFCM, at its forty-second session should agree upon a progressive calendar with quantified objectives to establish this network.

4. To achieve this, the SAC is invited to:

- review the existing information on the distribution of essential fish habitats in the Mediterranean;
- review the existing information on the distribution of sensitive habitats[2] in the Mediterranean;

[1] Essential fish habitat are defined as habitats identified as essential to the ecological and biological requirements for critical life history stages of exploited fish species, and which may require special protection to improve the status of the stocks and long-term sustainability

[2] Sensitive habitats are fragile habitats that are recognized internationally as ecologically important, which support important assemblages of commercial and non-commercial fish species and which may require special protection

- identify possible knowledge gaps and provide advice on measures to overcome these, including through predictive modelling and mapping of habitat suitability, showing the likelihood of their presence;
- define a consistent network of essential fish habitats which would also consider sensitive habitats, to be presented at the forty-second session of the GFCM; and
- provide advice on how to implement the protection of this network, and enhance it from 2018, in order to effectively contribute to achieve the maximum sustainable yield and implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries management in line with the GFCM objectives.

Resolution GFCM/41/2017/6 on the application of an International Maritime Organization number

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

EMPHASIZING that the identification of fishing vessels is a necessary step in the fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and for the management of fishing activities, and that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, assigned under the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme, is an established and reliable unique vessel identifier (UVI), which stays permanently assigned to a vessel irrespective of change of name, ownership, flag or marking;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the decision by the IMO Assembly, at its twenty-eighth session, in 2013, to adopt Resolution A.1078(28) extending the application of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to fishing vessels of 100 gross tonnage (GT) and above, and the decision by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), at its thirty-first session, in 2014, to use the IMO number as the UVI for vessels of 100 GT and above to be included in the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record);

NOTING the IMO Circular Letter No. 1886/Rev. 6, of 8 August 2016, which extends the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to all motorized fishing vessels of less than 100 GT down to a size limit of 12 metres in length overall (LOA) that are authorized to operate outside waters under national jurisdiction, and fishing vessels of non-steel hull construction of 100 GT and above;

CONSIDERING that most regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) mandate the use of IMO numbers by large fishing vessels authorized to fish in their respective convention areas and that the United Nations General Assembly has encouraged several times, most recently in its Resolution 71/123 of 7 December 2016, those RFMOs which have not yet done so to make the IMO number compulsory in their convention areas for all eligible vessels;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration states that "by 2020, [Ministers, heads of national delegations and the European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries] ensure the allocation of a unique vessel identifier (IMO number) to commercial fishing vessels of 24 metres and above (with the exemption of wooden vessels) in line with the applicable international rules";

ACKNOWLEDGING the rapid development of requirements for fishing vessels to acquire an IMO number and the need to provide clarity to fishing vessel operators and flag states in this regard;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

Identification of vessels with an IMO number

1. Effective from 1 January 2019, contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) flag states shall authorize their fishing vessels of 24 meters or above to operate, only if eligible vessels have an IMO number allocated by the manager of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme. Eligible vessels under the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme which are not identified with this

number shall not be included in the record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application (GFCM-AVL).

2. Eligible vessels under the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme which are not identified with this number shall not be included in the GFCM-AVL.

3. CPC flag states shall be encouraged to authorize any other fishing vessel, eligible to obtain an IMO number, in accordance with the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme, to operate in the GFCM area of application, only if the vessel has an IMO number allocated by the manager of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme, as described in the Annex.

4. A vessel without IMO number could exceptionally be included in the GFCM-AVL on the condition that the CPC flag state provides an explanation of its inability to obtain an IMO number in its submission of information to the GFCM Secretariat. The GFCM Secretariat shall report such explanation to the Compliance Committee.

5. Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall not apply to wooden vessels.

6. The IMO number shall be included in all relevant data related to the implementation of GFCM recommendations concerning the establishment of a record of vessels authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application.

7. Each CPC shall, in its capacity, apply this resolution to vessels that are flying its flag.

8. This resolution is without prejudice to the implementation of stricter national measures.

Annex

Eligibility criteria to obtain an IMO number

With a view to implementing paragraph 3, criteria to determine whether a fishing vessel is eligible to obtain an IMO number are based on the scheme established by the IMO and may be updated in the future. Based on Resolution A.1078 (28), as amended, on the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme, and on the IMO Circular Letter No. 1886/Rev. 6, of 8 August 2016, the following fishing vessels are eligible for an IMO number:

- fishing vessels, including fishing vessels with a non-steel hull (i.e. wooden vessels), of 100 GT and above; and

- motorized inboard fishing vessels of less than 100 GT down to a size limit of 12 metres LOA authorized to operate outside waters under national jurisdiction.

Requesting an IMO number

The IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme is currently managed on behalf of the IMO by IHS Maritime & Trade, a UK based company. Requests for an IMO number can be made directly to IHS Maritime & Trade, online or in writing as follows: online requests for ship numbering (http://imonumbers.ihs.com); written requests (to IHS Maritime & Trade; Sentinel House, 163 Brighton Road - Surrey, CR5 2YH, United Kingdom).

Requests for IMO numbers can be made by flag States, vessel owners/operators, classification societies or shipyards; requests for multiple IMO numbers can also be addressed to the managers of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme at the following e-mail address: ship.imo@ihs.com.

Resolution GFCM/40/2016/1 on guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/35/2011/3 on the procedure for the submission of new decision proposals to the GFCM annual sessions;

AWARE of the necessity to provide guidance to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties in the elaboration of conservation and management measures submitted to the Commission as draft decisions for consideration and possible adoption;

TAKING into account the need to streamline the decision-making process within the Commission with a view to ensuring formal consistency throughout the Compendium of GFCM decisions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties shall ensure, to the extent possible, to use the guidelines on drafting GFCM decisions reproduced in the Annex to this resolution when presenting to the GFCM Secretariat any proposal for new decisions to be submitted to the Commission.

2. The GFCM Secretariat might adapt the formal text of relevant decisions reproduced in the Compendium of GFCM decisions on the basis of the guidelines on drafting GFCM decisions and bring any formal changes proposed to the attention of the Commission for endorsement.

Annex

Guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions

- All GFCM decisions should have an external structure based on a number, a title, a preamble and an operative part, followed, if appropriate, by annexes.
- If appropriate, GFCM decisions should include “final provisions” where the relationship with other GFCM decisions is indicated, in particular whether previous decisions or some of their provisions are terminated.
- Definitions in GFCM decisions should be given only where a word or an expression is used in a technical meaning or in a meaning that is different from the ordinary one.
- Unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise, terms that are already defined in the GFCM Agreement should be defined in the same way in GFCM decisions by making a reference to the relevant definition in the GFCM Agreement.
- Consistency between the definitions of the same terms given in different GFCM decisions should be checked.
- Acronyms should be put in brackets immediately after the expression that is abbreviated, where in the text it is used for the first time.
- The provisions in GFCM decisions should be called “paragraphs”; if appropriate, they should be grouped in parts and sections.
- Each sentence in a provision should enunciate a limited number of rights or obligations – preferably one – pertaining to the subjects to which the decision is addressed; exceptions should be clearly distinguished from rules.
- The correspondence between the linguistic versions of the GFCM decisions in the official languages of the Commission should be carefully checked.
- At the time of adoption of a decision, the GFCM should consider indicating which version among the official languages of the Commission is authoritative in case of differences in meanings.
- Proposals for new GFCM decisions should be drafted at least in two of the official languages of the Commission.
- The mandatory character of a provision should be expressed in English by “shall” followed by the verb, in French by the present of the indicative mode of the verb, and in Arabic and Spanish by the appropriate terminology.
- The voluntary character of a provision should be expressed in English by “should” or “may” followed by the verb, in French by the conditional mode, and in Arabic and Spanish by the appropriate terminology.
- The GFCM, at the time of the adoption of a recommendation that has a mandatory effect under the GFCM Agreement, should use the following formula: “The GFCM (…) adopts, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation”.
- The GFCM, at the time of the adoption of a recommendation that has a voluntary effect under the GFCM Agreement, should use the following formula: “The GFCM (…) adopts, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution [or decision]:”.
- Decisions of the GFCM that have a mandatory character should be deemed to become effective at the expiration of the 120-day deadline for casting objections provided for in Article 13, paragraph 3, of the GFCM Agreement, unless they indicate another deadline.

Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995, the Agreement to promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas of 24 November 1993, as well as other relevant international instruments concerning the conservation and management of marine living resources;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

RECALLING that, according to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), states should widely apply the precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, and highlighting besides that the lack of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures;

RECALLING the Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption by the GFCM of multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area of application, as agreed during its thirty-seventh session (Croatia, May 2013);

RECALLING that the FAO Council adopted on 23 June 2001 an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU);

RECALLING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (UN headquarters, New York, September 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, signed in Rome on 22 November 2009;

RECALLING the subregional approach to fisheries management as enshrined in the GFCM Agreement, with a view to better addressing the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region;

CONSIDERING that rational management for sustainable fisheries is dependent on the scientific utilization of relevant data on fishing fleet capacity, on the fishing activities carried out, on the status of exploited biological resources and on the social and economic situation of fisheries;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) considers that several stocks are overexploited, some with a high risk of collapse, and that sustainable management requires that measures aimed at limiting the capture of juveniles are implemented;

NOTING the importance of multidisciplinary data and information to monitor and assess fisheries and fisheries resources and to ensure their sustainable exploitation;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as an instrument supporting the identification of fisheries-related data necessary to formulate sound scientific advice;

TAKING into account the importance of the classification by groups of priority species as identified by the SAC, of the use of the GFCM fleet segmentation for the collection of economic and biological data, as well as of the use of standard nominal fishing effort measurement;

RECOGNIZING to have a mutual interest in the development and the proper utilization of the marine living resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

RECOGNIZING the need for assistance to developing countries to adopt and implement port state measures;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM shall establish a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries (the strategy) aimed at supporting the GFCM in better fulfilling its mandate, as presented in Annex 1.

2. The implementation of the strategy is expected to ensure that, by 2020, the alarming trend in the status of commercially exploited stocks is reversed.

3. The strategy is divided into the following five targets, with selected outputs and proposed activities:

- reverse the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management;

- support livelihoods for coastal communities through sustainable small-scale fisheries;

- curb illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, through a regional plan of action;

- minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment; and

- enhance capacity-building and cooperation.

4. The GFCM shall review the contents of the mid-term strategy in due course.

5**.** The Commission agreed on the importance to convene an intersessional meeting to be held in 2016. The terms of reference of this meeting, as reproduced in Annex 2 of this resolution, will include in particular issues relating to governance and integration of national strategies into the mid-term strategy.

Annex 1

Mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries (mid-term strategy)

1. INTRODUCTION

The need for a strategy

1. Fishing has a tremendous cultural, social and economic importance in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, providing an important source of food and livelihood for riparian countries and sustaining the traditions and the way of life of many coastal communities. However, Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries are currently facing serious challenges, with roughly 90 percent of the scientifically assessed stocks considered to be fished outside safe biological limits, decreasing catches and shrinking fleets at the regional scale.

2. As some of these challenges are also experienced globally and in other regions of the world, a pledge to act to avoid the serious risk of irreversible environmental and socio-economic damage was renewed at the level of the United Nations (UN) and at the regional scale. Against the backdrop of international commitments towards the sustainability of fisheries as a means to support the livelihood of coastal communities in a Blue Growth perspective, existing challenges in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea bring about the need to develop tailor-made actions, taking into account the specificities of the region and the capacities of all actors involved.

3. The mid-term strategy is in line with the mandate of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) as a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) having competence over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is indeed fully consistent with the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) as amended in 2014. The mid-term strategy is based on key activities identified by the GFCM subsidiary bodies and intends to capitalize on accomplishments in the region over recent years in the field of stock assessment and fisheries management, marine environment and control, as well as to consolidate efforts pursued within the context of the GFCM Framework Programme (FWP), born in 2013 as a platform to promote sustainable development and cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea through multiannual and multidonor arrangements.

4. In addition, the mid-term strategy has been discussed with relevant organizations having interest in different aspects of fisheries and marine ecosystems, including observers to the GFCM and organizations that have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the GFCM (currently adding up to 14 international organizations). Therefore, the implementation of the mid-term strategy is based on a unique interdisciplinary partnership that provides for a perfect opportunity to enhance cooperation in the region and maximize the probability of success.

Historical background

5. The issue of sustainable fisheries has evolved over the years at the regional and subregional levels, before and after the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration)

6. [1]. Created in 1949 as a Council under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, by means of an international agreement, the GFCM was entrusted with the primary responsibility of supporting Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in elaborating common rules on exploited fisheries. The GFCM Agreement had been amended three times prior to the 2003 Venice Declaration, including

[1] In 2003, the Ministers of Mediterranean riparian countries met in Venice (Italy) with a view to renewing their commitment to work together towards developing sustainable and responsible fisheries. This commitment was embodied in the 2003 Venice Declaration which focused, in particular, on the future work of the GFCM and its role in this endeavour.

in 1997 when new obligations were agreed upon by Contracting Parties, consequently morphing the Council into a Commission endowed with administrative and financial autonomy.

7. With the entry into force of the third amendment to its constitutive Agreement, in 2004, the GFCM was provided with the operational means to step up its work in its area of application. Progress should in fact be measured from 2004 onward, following the 2003 Venice Declaration, when the role of its Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) was reinforced and new subsidiary bodies – such as the Compliance Committee (CoC) and, later, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS), developed as an ad hoc mechanism for scientific work and decision-making for Black Sea riparian states – were created. This allowed to better address the challenges identified. Such challenges include the need to provide timely data and information, to encourage the active participation of scientists in technical work, to revert the overexploitation of main fish stocks, to improve the evaluation and management of fishery resources, to protect marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems from harmful bycatch and discarding practices and to reduce the incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Since 2004, some 50 decisions have been taken including binding recommendations underpinning a regional management system consisting of data collection and reporting schemes, assessments and evaluations of commercially exploited stocks, elaboration of management measures, area-based management tools, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) instruments and periodical discussions on the implementation of decisions in place.

8. Consistent with the calls by the UN General Assembly and the Committee on Fisheries of FAO, a performance review was carried out in 2009–2011 to assess the effectiveness of the GFCM, under the stewardship of an ad hoc Task Force that eventually recommended a set of amendments to the GFCM Agreement with the objective of further modernizing the Commission. From an institutional point of view, the legacy of the 2003 Venice Declaration is enshrined in the GFCM Agreement, as amended in 2014. The renewed institutional framework of the GFCM is a response to a new generation of challenges currently affecting sustainable fisheries in the region. Its premise is a subregional approach to fisheries management, reinforced by a strong network of partner organizations that collaborate based on several MoU and with the support of the GFCM FWP to carry out the increasing technical activities.

9. The positive impacts of the resolute actions stemming from the GFCM reform will likely play out in the near future. Although the challenges ahead are important, the GFCM nowadays is a modern RFMO with the capability and expertise to take appropriate decisions based on the best available scientific advice and ensure their implementation. In parallel, a number of organizations have made substantial progress in working on several aspects connected to fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, placing them among their priorities and thus paving the paving the way for enhanced collaboration and synergies

International context

10. At the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 (New York, 25–27 September), world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDG 14 – entitled “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” – builds upon the provisions of numerous legal instruments that have been adopted to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources – e.g. the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement – and advocates for healthy and resilient marine ecosystems based on multiple elements. Similar relevance in the context of sustainable fisheries can be attributed to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABT), in particular Target 6 which concerns fisheries. The SDG 14 and ABT 6 can therefore be regarded as embodying comprehensive strategies calling for phased action at all levels of governance, including at the regional level. The SDG 14 in particular offers substantial guidance as to how challenges to the sustainability of

fisheries should be tackled, including the following, which are particularly relevant to the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries:

SDG 14	
Target 14.2	**by 2020**, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
Target14.4	**by 2020**, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
Target 14.5	**by 2020**, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
Target 14.7	**by 2030**, increase the economic benefits to small island developing states and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
Target 14.7.a	increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing states and least developed countries
Target 14.7.b	provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
Target 14.7.c	enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources

11. As a UN specialized agency, FAO already contributes to the global implementation of the SDGs through a strategic framework, of which Strategic Objective 2 specifically aims to increase and improve the provision of goods and services from fisheries in a sustainable manner, addressing in particular multi-sectoral approaches for ecosystem management, capacity building, governance frameworks and the like.

12. In order to support the achievement of UN targets, as well as the international obligations stemming therefrom, including the FAO Strategic Objectives, the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries has been elaborated.

13. The mid-term strategy will have an external dimension in that progress in implementing SDG 14 and ABT 6 through the regional targets, outputs and activities foreseen therein will be reported to international fora where the achievement of globally agreed goals is being monitored. As a regional body having a competence relevant to the implementation of SDG 14 and ABT 6, the GFCM is expected to provide information on the Mediterranean and Black Sea through, *inter alia*, the submission of reports and participation in meetings.

Regional context

14. The geopolitical situation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is currently complex. As of late, the Mediterranean has been experiencing significant instability due to ongoing conflicts and political turmoil in the region which, in turn, has exacerbated the problem of migration across the sea. At the same time, the existing gap in the level of development between the different subregions of the Mediterranean remains a top priority on the regional agenda. Similar considerations apply to the case of the Black Sea although different issues are at stake, including weaker fisheries governance resulting *inter alia* from the fact that not all six riparian countries are members of a same institutional arrangement such as the GFCM. In light of the special characteristics of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, it is all the more imperative to ensure a sound strategy is in place to promote the region's sustainable development. The fisheries sector, in particular, has an important role to play in such a strategy, as it is crucial to livelihood protection, food security and sustainable long-term development in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

15. The GFCM recently released assessment *The State of Mediterranean and the Black Sea Fisheries* (SoMFi 2016) highlights the impact of fisheries, and in particular the small-scale fisheries sector, within the region. Indeed, 80 percent of the region's fisheries are small-scale fisheries, underlining the role of fisheries in sustaining the region's coastal communities. Although the value generated from the first sale of fish products from Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries may seem relatively small compared with other sectors (representing less than 1 percent of regional GDP), the sector's ability to target some of the region's most economically vulnerable coastal communities makes it a key player in any sustainable development strategy. In fact, the value at first sale as a percentage of GDP is six times greater in the developing countries of the southern Mediterranean than in the wealthier northern Mediterranean countries. Furthermore, exports of fish products from this region represent over 10 percent of total global exports, indicating significant secondary impacts of this sector on the wider economy.

16. Likewise, around a quarter of a million people are directly employed onboard fishing vessels in this region; yet the number of people dependent on the fishing sector for their livelihoods increases exponentially when considering the families supported by the region's fishers and those employed in related sectors, such as fish processing, vessel maintenance and tourism. Furthermore, around 60 percent of fishing employment is found in the developing countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, meaning that the majority of the jobs provided by this sector are located precisely where jobs are needed.

17. Taken together, these factors endorse the potential of the fishing sector to play an instrumental role in the sustainable development of the Mediterranean and Black Sea region and, in particular, its most vulnerable coastal communities. To this end, reliable data on the status and trends on stocks and fisheries is needed, so that management plans embracing the ecological, economic and social aspects are adopted to ensure the sustainability of fisheries. Building on the success of the SDGs in drawing the attention of the international community to the role of fisheries in sustainable development, a regional strategy which adapts such principles to the Mediterranean and Black Sea context is of paramount importance to address current challenges in this area.

2. NATURE AND SCOPE

18. The proposed mid-term strategy is linked to SDG 14 and the FAO Strategic Objective 2. As this strategy stems from existing international and regional legal instruments, it does not create any new obligations on contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs). On the other hand, it purports to define a course of instrumental action to further progress in the development of sustainable fisheries at the regional level. It is programmatic and multiannual in nature and provides guidance for the strategic priorities in the 2017–2020 period, identifying key activities that complement, when needed, the regular work carried out by the different organizations in relation to fisheries. The mid-term strategy addresses three main pillars of the work of the GFCM, as the RFMO

in the area,: i) the scientific and technical work of the SAC and its subregional committees in the Mediterranean Sea and of the WGBS in the Black Sea, each of them carrying out core functions towards the provision of scientific advice for the Commission in light of relevant biological, social and economic parameters; ii) the decisions taken by the Commission in relation to capture fisheries, including all industrial, small-scale and recreational fisheries, and iii) the thorough assessment of the implementation of adopted management measures by CPCs, including efforts to fight against IUU fishing through the enhancement of MCS, as overseen by the CoC.

19. The mid-term strategy does not apply to aquaculture as this increasingly important sector has distinctive requirements that need to be addressed specifically. A dedicated Task Force within the framework of the GFCM is currently developing a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

20. The implementation of the proposed mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries will be guided by the following select principles which are in place at the FAO level:

Best available knowledge: The provision of advice, including on the status and trends of stocks and fisheries, should be based on the best available knowledge, including scientific advice and relevant information emanating from a variety of sources and stakeholders. Efforts to collect all information available shall be ensured, and standards for assuring the quality of information should be applied wherever and whenever practicable and appropriate within SAC and WGBS;

Objectivity and transparency: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment should contribute to the transparent provision of the best scientific evidence available, while respecting any confidentiality requirements. Uncertainty associated with information on status and trends should be expressed, without detracting from the application of the precautionary approach, when data and information are incomplete. Information on activities towards the fight against IUU fishing should be made available, respecting confidentiality requirements;

Timeliness: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as information on IUU fishing, should be provided in as timely a manner as possible;

Participation and cooperation: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as information on IUU fishing, should account for all relevant participants in the preparation, analysis and presentation of scientific advice and conclusions. Relevant participants may include, *inter alia*, representatives of CPCs and other riparian states, relevant international, non-governmental and civil society organizations. The existing cooperative network established through the adoption of MoU would be relied upon, having regard to the cross-sectoral nature of the strategy;

Adaptability: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as information on IUU fishing, should be adaptive enough to permit adjustments, as necessary, to ensure their effective support of fisheries management based on the most recent scientific advice available.

4. OBJECTIVE AND TARGETS

21. The overall objective of the mid-term strategy is to improve, by 2020, the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, by achieving five targets and related outputs and activities.

TARGET 1: REVERSE THE DECLINING TREND OF FISH STOCKS THROUGH STRENGTHENED SCIENTIFIC ADVICE IN SUPPORT OF MANAGEMENT

It is recognized that, with only 40 percent of the landings in the GFCM area of application coming from stocks for which scientific advice is provided to the Commission, and with an even smaller percentage of the landings coming from fisheries that are subject to comprehensive management plans, there is a need to improve the coverage of advice on the status of stocks and to increase the percentage of landings coming from fisheries regulated by specific multiannual management plans.

It is also recognized that, whenever possible, the advice provided to the GFCM as the international body in charge of adopting binding recommendations for the region should address all relevant aspects needed for decision making, including past and current socio-economic characteristics of the fisheries, as well as the potential socio-economic impacts of alternative management measures. Furthermore, when this information is lacking or scarce, precautionary measures should be advised so that, based on the precautionary approach, the Commission can still efficiently take decisions to regulate fisheries.

It is agreed that, consistently with SDG Targets 14.2, 14.4 and 14.7, commitment is needed to implement, by 2020, actions to increase the existing scientific and socio-economic knowledge in support of fisheries management, and to adopt necessary decisions to reverse the current overexploitation rates, reducing the percentage of stocks outside biologically safe limits, through the achievement of the following:

Output 1.1: Enhanced knowledge and expertise on Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries

Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian states have systems in place for the collection of fisheries data and information and its subsequent submission in line with specific binding recommendations. The GFCM in particular receives such information through dedicated data calls, national reports to its technical subsidiary bodies and through ad hoc questionnaires. The GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) organizes the different data calls and provides indications and tools on how to collect and submit data to the GFCM, with a view to creating a more rational and efficient database in support of decision making. Furthermore, regional workshops and working groups on a variety of topics, including stock assessment, and dedicated conferences such as the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (SSF Conference) have provided experts with fora in which information could be exchanged and incorporated into the advice from the subsidiary bodies to the Commission. However, this information is still fragmented and unbalanced between different subregions and aspects such as socio-economic characteristics of fisheries are still not well understood and incorporated in the advice.

This output will require the compilation of data and information on different fisheries-related issues, including through the implementation of the DCRF, as well as the execution of a number of activities as listed below:

a. The creation of a **GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science (GFCM FishForum)**, expected to act as a hub for collecting in a more comprehensive manner experiences and scientific information/data on aspects related to fisheries, from stock assessment to socio-economic issues and anthropogenic effects on fisheries and ecosystems. Among other results, the GFCM FishForum should support stock assessment-related work, the compilation of existing knowledge on the status of stocks and discussion on harmonized ways to provide advice on stocks and fisheries, the creation of a database with comprehensive and reliable fisheries data and the establishment of a network of experts and research institutions covering different domains of fisheries science. The Forum will be organized around the following thematic clusters: stock assessment, socio-economic aspects, small-scale and recreational fisheries, bycatch and discards, IUU fishing, fishing technology, interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems, stakeholders and regional/subregional platforms.

b. The realization of **regional surveys at sea**, including acoustic surveys for pelagic species as well as trawl surveys for demersal fisheries. These joint surveys, carried out in the context of FAO, are expected to provide information on a large number of species over large areas and to serve as tuning indices for assessment purposes, as well as provide validation on the advice on the status of the main commercial stocks.

c. The compilation of **catalogues of fishing activities** by geographical subarea, also for small-scale and recreational fisheries, and including information on fishing gear and fishing operations, description of fishing areas as well as target and bycatch species. This catalogue is expected to provide a comprehensive summary of fishing activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, as well as updated estimates of fishing capacity by fleet segment and subregion.

All information gathered through this output is expected to feed into the process of the provision of advice (see Outputs 1.2 and 1.3) and will also be summarized among others in the next issues of the report on *The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries* (SoMFi), expected to be delivered biennially under the framework of this strategy (in 2018 and 2020).

Output 1.2: Socio-economic information and analysis incorporated into scientific and management advice

In recent years, GFCM subsidiary bodies have made efforts to integrate available socio-economic analysis into the advice provided to the Commission through dedicated workshops on bio-economic assessment of management measures. Despite data limitations, attempts have been made to review existing methodologies to perform management strategy evaluation (MSE) simulations and to assess the economic, social and biological implications of alternative management scenarios for certain stocks. However, the quality and quantity of available socio-economic data are still limited and work is needed to harmonize methodologies for socio-economic analysis, including on the definition of adequate indicators that could be used across the region, so as to further integrate socio-economic data into management advice. Furthermore, information on socio-economic characteristics should facilitate an analysis of profitability and therefore the integration of dedicated measures for the valorization of fish products into management measures (see Output 1.3). In order to achieve this output, the following activities should be executed within the mid-term strategy:

a. The definition of socio-economic indicators and the completion of **a comprehensive regional survey on the socio-economic characteristics of fisheries** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This survey is expected to help overcome a main barrier to the integration of socio-economic data in management advice by providing accurate, timely and complete socio-economic baseline data on the region's fisheries.

b. The **incorporation of socio-economic information** into the assessment of the state of main commercial fisheries and the provision of advice on the comparative impacts of alternative management scenarios.

Output 1.3: Enhanced science-based GFCM regulations on fisheries management

In recent years, relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies have improved their advice, both in terms of scope (e.g. covering aspects ranging from red coral to artificial reefs to the status of stocks and fisheries) and coverage (e.g. improving subregional coverage and increasing the percentage of the landings for which advice on stock status is given) and cooperation has been enhanced with relevant partner organizations towards an increased scientific base. At the same time, and following the adoption of the GFCM Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption of GFCM multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area

[1], the GFCM has advanced towards the regulation of fisheries in its area of application, with the adoption of a comprehensive management plan for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea and demersal trawlers in the Strait of Sicily, and with an incipient management plan for turbot gillnet fisheries in the Black Sea.

However, advice in support of management measures still focuses on a limited number of topics and still addresses a small percentage of exploited stocks, marine populations, ecosystems and areas. In some cases, existing advice at the national level (e.g. assessment of national stocks) is not presented to the GFCM subsidiary bodies and therefore is not taken into account in the provision of advice. In other cases, information is scarce or lacking, and no scientific advice is provided. Furthermore, scientific advice is not always immediately incorporated into recommendations and, as a result, only a very small percentage of the landings come from fisheries regulated by comprehensive management plans.

Technical work for the improvement of the advice on cases with limited information (data-limited stock assessment methods) as well as technical work in support of the establishment of new management plans (e.g. for small pelagic fisheries in the western Mediterranean, deep-water shrimp in the central-eastern Mediterranean, anchovy in the Black Sea or European eel in the Mediterranean Sea) is already underway within the GFCM. Output 1.2, coupled with the work towards the estimation of IUU activity (see Output 3.3), will also support better decision making through the incorporation of socio-economic information, including aspects of valorization of fish products, as well as information on the impact of IUU.

In order to achieve this output, the following activities should be carried out within the mid-term strategy:

a. The implementation of a dedicated **approach for the provision of advice to the GFCM by its subsidiary bodies**. Such an approach envisions action for stocks/fisheries where information on stocks/fisheries is either fragmented or not made available, and stocks/fisheries for which a validated scientific advice exists. In the former situation, immediate actions to collect the required information and make it available should be launched, while at the same time precautionary advice should be issued. On the other hand, when a validated scientific advice exists, the advice should include indications on the effect of alternative management measures on both the stocks and the fisheries, including on socio-economic aspects. Within this approach, and without prejudice to addressing additional species, the GFCM agreed on a list of priority commercial species by subregion for which an advice should be produced:

	Western Mediterranean	**Central Mediterranean**	**Adriatic Sea**	**Eastern Mediterranean**	**Black Sea**	
Pelagic species	*Engraulis encrasicolus*	*Engraulis encrasicolus*	*Engraulis encrasicolus*	*Engraulis encrasicolus*	*Engraulis encrasicolus*	*Trachurus mediterraneus*
	Sardina pilchardus	*Sardina pilchardus*	*Sardina pilchardus*	*Sardinella aurita*	*Sprattus sprattus*	*Sarda sarda*
Demersal species	*Parapenaeus longirostris*	*Parapenaeus longirostris*	*Mullus barbatus*	*Mullus barbatus*	*Merlangius merlangus*	*Psetta maxima*

[1] Decision GFCM/37/2013/1

	Merluccius merluccius	*Merluccius merluccius*	*Merluccius merluccius*	*Saurida lessepsianus*		*Mullus barbatus*
	Pagellus bogaraveo					
Species of conservation concern	*Anguilla anguilla*				*Squalus acanthias*	
	Corallium rubrum					
Invasive species	*Pterois miles*				*Rapana venosa*	
	Lagocephalus sceleratus					

b. [The **operationalization of the Review Panel**, as established by GFCM (Rule XVI of the GFCM Rules of Procedure) to review the scientific advice formulated by its subsidiary bodies and provide conclusions to support the decision-making process.]

c. The **revision of existing management plans / development of new management plans**, based on the technical advice provided by the subsidiary bodies, with the objective of addressing the main commercial fisheries as well as those fisheries that rely on or show a strong interaction with resources in need of urgent action.

TARGET 2: SUPPORT LIVELIHOODS FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

It is recognized that small-scale fisheries play an important role in providing income and ensuring food security, particularly within economically vulnerable coastal communities. Therefore concerted action should be taken to support this sector.

It is recognized that the data available to measure the extent and impact of small-scale fishing activity are limited and can vary widely from country to country. Due to these data limitations, small-scale fisheries tend to be undervalued, potentially leading to their marginalisation in the decision-making process.

It is also recognized that states should be responsible for collecting complete, timely and accurate socio-economic data on the impact of small-scale fishing and for developing coherent policies to ensure resource and market access for small-scale fishers. Support will be provided within the mid-term strategy to enhance the coordination of efforts and to harmonize existing measures to support the small-scale fishing sector.

It is agreed that commitment is needed, by 2020, to support livelihoods within sustainable small-scale fisheries, consistent with SDG Target 14.b and 14.7, through the realisation of the following:

Output 2.1: Robust and timely information on the impacts of small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries on marine living resources and on their interactions with other human activities in coastal communities

In recent years, work has been carried out to better understand the importance of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Preliminary analyses have shown that these fisheries are the predominant sector in the region (accounting for 80 percent of the region's fishing fleet, 60 percent of all on-vessel fishing labour and approximately 25 percent of the total landing value from the region's capture fisheries), highlighting the crucial role that these fisheries must play in any strategy to sustainably manage the region's marine living resources. As discussed in depth at the First Regional Symposium on sustainable small-scale fisheries (27–30 November 2013, Malta) and the subsequent

SSF Conference (7–9 March 2016, Algeria), due to the delicate socio-economic role these fisheries play in providing livelihoods for hundreds of thousands of people in the region's coastal communities, concerted efforts are needed to support this sector. The importance of producing an accurate, timely and comprehensive socio-economic description of small-scale fisheries, and their interactions with other sectors such as recreational fisheries, have been identified as a crucial first step towards mitigating detrimental socio-economic impacts of efforts to manage the region's marine resources. However, despite similarities between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries, the latter deserve a specific action. Socio-economic indicators are needed to inform policy interventions that will help to maximize economic and social benefit, while minimizing environmental and ecological impacts. This output will require the execution of a number of activities as listed below:

a. The implementation of a **regional survey on small-scale fisheries**. This survey is expected to provide a snapshot of the ecological, social and economic impacts of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and at the same time improve the capacity to collect relevant data on small-scale fisheries as requested through the DCRF. Information on the different gear used in SSF will be collected as part of the catalogue of fishing activities (Target 1) with a view to better linking SSF to the different fishing activities in coastal areas.

b. The establishment of a **permanent Working Group on Small-Scale and Recreational Fisheries**. This working group is expected to foster knowledge-sharing platforms among the region's small-scale and recreational fishers for the dissemination of best practices and the sharing of information, to oversee the completion of the regional survey on small-scale fisheries and to coordinate efforts among CPCs and relevant organizations.

c. The assessment of the impacts of **recreational fisheries** and the consideration of best management measures to regulate these activities.

The information gathered through these activities should result in an **estimate of the economic impact of small-scale fisheries** on coastal communities and their interactions with related sectors, as well as inform the development of **indicators to monitor the socio-economic status of small-scale fisheries** and the management of recreational fisheries.

Output 2.2: FAO Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines tailored to the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

The FAO *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) constitute an important tool for supporting actions to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries and support livelihoods in coastal communities. These guidelines take a holistic approach, among others, promoting the importance of tenure rights, livelihood diversification, market access, decent working conditions and the engagement of women and marginalized groups, as crucial elements towards improving socio-economic conditions and strengthening small-scale coastal fishing communities. This output will require a holistic approach to supporting the region's small-scale fisheries, including by carrying out the following activities:

a. The development of **national plans of action for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines** is expected to provide roadmaps for bolstering valorization, commercialization and livelihoods in small-scale fisheries and coastal communities in a way that adapts to the specific needs at the regional, subregional and national levels.

b. The establishment of **a regional platform to engage and promote dialogue among small-scale fishing associations** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This platform is expected to build on and reinforce existing subregional and national platforms in order to provide a participatory mechanism for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and the dissemination of best practices.

c. The **endorsement of the principle of decent work**, as defined by the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), so as to promote, without compromising environmental sustainability, the improvement of socio-economic conditions within small-scale fisheries and the promotion of livelihood diversification

d. The organization of **a high-level meeting** in collaboration with strategic partners, including the Mediterranean Initiative of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to generate political will in small-scale fisheries within a Blue Growth context.

TARGET 3: CURB ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING, THROUGH A REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

It is recognized that better management of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is undermined by IUU fishing activities and the disregard of common rules. Although the impacts of IUU fishing are currently not assessed and therefore under-represented in the current status of fisheries and trends information, they must be adequately considered in the development of scientific advice for management.

It is stressed that CPCs, in their capacity as flag states, coastal states, port states and market states, have the primary responsibility to ensure respect of common rules by fishing vessels. Support will be provided within the mid-term strategy to enhance coordination of efforts and harmonize existing measures aimed at improving monitoring, control and surveillance.

It is acknowledged that, while the implementation of the two roadmaps to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea adopted by the GFCM has been positive thus far, there is an important need to set political and operational objectives to counter illegal activities, building upon the elements of these roadmaps and reflecting relevant elements in the FAO International Plan of Action against IUU, which is already voluntarily applied in the region. It is also acknowledged that support will be provided for **the organization and celebration of an international day for the fight against IUU fishing**, to be imminently declared by FAO upon the request of the GFCM.

It is agreed that there is a need to commit to **effectively reducing IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea** by 2020, consistent with SDG Target 14.4, by developing a holistic **regional plan of action to fight IUU fishing**, to eventually be transposed at the national level and that would among others achieve the following:

Output 3.1: Regular quantification of IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and harmonization of existing measures to fight against IUU fishing

IUU fishing remains one of the greatest threats to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries, undermining national and regional management efforts. In 2003, it was calculated that the lower and upper estimates of the total value of IUU fishing worldwide were between US$10 billion and US$23 billion annually, representing between 11.06 and 25.91 million tonnes of fish, and there is today a general recognition that the incidence of IUU fishing has not decreased since. Another topical issue relating to IUU fishing is the need to harmonize at the regional level existing measures used to counter illegal activities. In this regard, guidance is not only sought from the Regional Plan of Action to fight IUU fishing but also from an evaluation of relevant national legislations in place which are collected in the GFCM database of national legislations. In order to meet the target of considerably reducing IUU fishing, it will be instrumental to carry out the following activities:

a. The realization of an **assessment of the quantity, magnitude and characteristics of IUU fishing** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Whereas work is ongoing within FAO to bring about a common methodology to assess IUU fishing, a tailored approach for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is needed with a view to supporting the scientific work of the SAC and WGBS.

b. The evaluation of the adequateness of national legislations relating to IUU fishing adopted by CPCs as contained in the GFCM database of national legislations. As appropriate, this evaluation should lead to the revision of national legislations in view of the harmonization of measures to fight IUU fishing which will be facilitated by the Regional Plan of Action to fight IUU fishing.

Output 3.2: Reinforced inspection procedures in the framework of port state control

The regional system of port state measures in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea should be aligned with the provisions in the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA). Most importantly, the 5 June 2016 entry into force of the FAO PSMA brings about actions and initiatives to promote port controls worldwide. The GFCM should be involved in the correct implementation of the FAO PSMA, through the adoption of robust port state measures. Efforts will be needed, on the one hand, to support the ratification of the FAO PSMA by states and, on the other hand, to make sure that appropriate conditions are in place to strengthen port state measures (both political, legal and technical). This will entail carrying out several activities within the remit of the GFCM:

a. The promotion of **training of national inspectors** and, as appropriate, relevant officers, including jointly with other partners and by developing specific online instruments, with a view to launch national actions to better take stock of the needs of each recipient country relating to efficient port controls.

b. The establishment of a **mutual assistance system** will facilitate exchange of information between flag states and port states via the GFCM Secretariat and that of a **regional information system to exchange port state measures related data** will operationalize port state measures in the GFCM area of application, consistent with the provisions of the FAO PSMA, complementing the ongoing establishment of a regional monitoring and control system.

Output 3.3: Enhanced modular monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) at the regional level

Since the adoption of the GFCM recommendation on the establishment of a vessel monitoring system (VMS), the Commission has been advancing on the phased development of a regional control system, with a view to enhancing monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This system is needed in order to have the same control standards in place across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and therefore ensure all CPCs are on par, regardless of whether or not they have a fishing monitoring centre. In this regard, priority will be given to the development of national VMS to verify whether these are consistent with minima requirements in place at the GFCM level. Furthermore, because of the high number of small-scale vessels operating in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the system will underpin a modular approach which is responsive to the needs of those CPCs which rely primarily on small-scale vessels. This output will complement control related activities already agreed upon by the GFCM, such as the working group on integrated MCS measures for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily, and will be achieved by carrying out the following action:

a. The continuation of the operationalization of a **regional VMS and control system**, in order to help monitor adherence to fisheries restricted areas and to underpin GFCM data collection systems by progressively incorporating electronic tools, such as the e-logbook, which could be developed at the regional level. Effort and catches information deriving from this system would support the enhanced assessment of fisheries stocks, identification of fishing grounds and fishing activities, contributing to the achievement of Target 1.

TARGET 4: MINIMIZE AND MITIGATE UNWANTED INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FISHERIES AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENT

It is underlined that healthy and productive marine ecosystems are an important means to supporting maximum sustainable yield and facilitating blue growth.

It is recognized that fisheries, as well as other anthropogenic-driven phenomena, such as climate change or the introduction of non-indigenous species, can have potentially negative effects on the marine environment and marine ecosystems.

It is agreed that, by 2020, consistent with SDG Targets 14.1, 14.2 and 14.5, necessary measures will be taken to minimize and mitigate negative impacts of fisheries on marine biodiversity and ecosystems, especially in relation to vulnerable species and ecosystems, as well as to mitigate negative anthropogenic effects on fisheries, in close coordination with partner organizations. These measures should be implemented by achieving the following outputs:

Output 4.1: Reduced bycatch rates in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries

Bycatch is considered as one of the most important threats to the profitability and sustainability of fisheries and, as such, it is considered to be one of the major concerns for most RFMOs and other fisheries management bodies. In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, based on the analysis presented in SoMFi 2016, discard rates vary between areas and fishing gear, but can reach up to 20 percent of the total catch. In order to address this threat and to take into account previous concerns raised, this output will require the execution of the activities as listed below:

a. The implementation of a **bycatch monitoring programme,** including through the use of observers onboard commercial fishing vessels. This programme is expected to obtain representative data on the discard component of total bycatch in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, as well as information on the incidental catch of vulnerable species that could occur during sampled fishing operations, with a view to facilitating the adoption of required management measures towards the reduction of bycatch rates.

b. The development and launch of a fully encompassing **communication mechanism** to educate fishers on the negative impacts of bycatch on fisheries productivity and on marine ecosystems. This activity entails, among others, the publication of infographics, cards and posters. Ecolabelling and certificates for fishers who ensure their commitment in fishing according to sustainable practices in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea should also be envisaged.

c. The implementation of **effective management measures to improve the selectivity of fisheries**, including the possibility to use artificial reefs to protect fish essential habitats (e.g. nursery areas) as well as the implementation of more selective fishing gear.

d. The proposition of measures to reduce catches of vulnerable species when appropriate, by entrusting the SAC with this task.

e. The identification and implementation of **mitigation measures to address the interaction between cetaceans and fishing gear**.

Output 4.2: Healthier marine ecosystems and more productive fisheries

The GFCM was a pioneer in adopting, in 2005, a binding recommendation on the protection of seabeds below 1 000 metres depth from trawling, as a measure to minimize the impact of these fisheries on deep-sea ecosystems. Moreover, in 2006, the GFCM adopted a specific area-based management tool, the fisheries restricted areas (FRAs), to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the region. Furthermore, the Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity has been elaborated among the Secretariats of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the GFCM, the Mediterranean Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Med), the UNEP/MAP through its Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) and in collaboration with the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MedPAN) , which will focus on the identification of priority spatial areas at regional

scale for the implementation of protection measures, in order to maximize the potential benefits of such measures.

Specific actions towards the protection of Mediterranean populations of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) have also been developed, and, within the context of the MoU between the GFCM and the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP), a number of indicators for good environmental status (GES) of exploited marine populations have been established. In addition, within the same MoU, work towards the implementation of the Mediterranean Regional Plan on Marine Litter has been initiated. Finally, SAC subsidiary bodies have highlighted the potential combined effects of climate change and other direct and indirect anthropogenic impacts such as the introduction of non-indigenous species (often referred to as "alien species") in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, stressing the need to launch dedicated actions to better understand such phenomena so as to better mitigate their effects.

To achieve Output 4.2, coordination will be guaranteed between relevant regional organizations so to ensure:

a. The promotion of the **identification and establishment of new FRAs** to protect priority areas within ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), VMEs, etc. from harmful fishing activities, and the implementation of monitoring and control systems to ensure the efficiency of these spatial measures, also in relation to Target 3. This action should aim to achieve at least the protection of 10 percent of the coastal and marine areas, as expressed in Aichi Target 11. The CPCs should be closely involved in the definition of new FRAs.

b. The adoption of a comprehensive **regional management plan for red coral**, based on previous technical work carried out in the context of the GFCM subsidiary bodies, including relevant GFCM guidelines, and updated advice as provided within Output 1.3.

c. The creation of an **adaptation strategy to cope with potential effects of invasive species and climate change on fisheries**. Such a strategy should be based on the results of an evaluation of the potential ecological and socio-economic effects of climate change and of the introduction of non-indigenous species on Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.

d. The creation of an **adaptation strategy to cope with potential effect of marine litter on fisheries**, as well as the implementation of fisheries management measures aimed to minimize the production of litter from fishing activities (e.g. abandoned fish gear), in line with existing Mediterranean regional management plan on marine litter.

TARGET 5: ENHANCE CAPACITY BUILDING AND COOPERATION

It is urged that CPCs, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and concerned stakeholders enhance cooperation to promote sustainable development and blue growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

It is acknowledged that fulfilling the objective of the mid-term strategy through the proposed activities both requires and promotes increased scientific and technical cooperation a throughout the region. Particular efforts will be needed for the Black Sea, given that not all riparian countries are currently contracting parties to the GFCM.

It is agreed that commitment is needed, by 2020, in line with SDG 14.7, to help level the playing field for developing countries and to ensure the accrual of socio-economic benefits from the sustainable management of fisheries, by achieving the following:

Output 5.1: Improved national capacity for the management of fisheries resources

In recent years, the CoC has acknowledged that there is strong political willingness to support the work of the GFCM and to routinely carry out the assessment of adopted GFCM decisions. Some CPCs are, however, experiencing some difficulties in meeting their obligations stemming from GFCM

decisions and, therefore, capacity-building efforts must be enhanced. In this regard, the GFCM Agreement recognizes, in particular, the needs of developing CPCs. This output will be achieved through the completion of the following activities:

a. The provision of **capacity building for CPCs**, as obliged by the Commission, when necessary, to assist CPCs in meeting their obligations stemming from relevant GFCM decisions. The provision of technical assistance by the GFCM has been sparse up to now as no clear mechanism existed to govern the provision of technical assistance, including from the identification of needs to the actual support on the ground.

b. The implementation of a **technical assistance mechanism** to support CPCs in bridging existing gaps. Such a mechanism should be based on recent work carried out by the CoC to thoroughly address the link between national gaps/shortcomings and the implementation of GFCM recommendations. Based on requests for technical assistance received by the GFCM thus far, the main following areas would be, among others, covered by the technical assistance mechanism: i) stock assessment and management plans; ii) data collection, analysis and transmission; iii) elaboration and amendment of national legislations; iv) assessment and development of national VMS and control systems in accordance with GFCM standards; v) the strengthening of port controls and vi) the elaboration and development of case studies on small-scale fisheries.

c. The launch of a **regional programme for education and training** to lay down the foundation for a new generation of fisheries experts through mid- and long-term specialization curricula, in collaboration with regional and national research/training institutions, which would essentially cover domains such as population dynamics, including stock assessment, fishing technology, socio-economic analysis and fisheries legislation.

Output 5.2: Strengthened fisheries governance in the Black Sea

On the occasion of the 2014 amendment to the GFCM Agreement, the specificities of the Black Sea were recognized when it was decided to establish a specific mechanism to promote cooperation among riparian countries. Over the past decades, many efforts have been made to bring about a concerted approach to the issues and challenges that are faced in the Black Sea. The trend has shifted towards a regional decision-making process which has been promoted through the WGBS since 2011 (the year it was established). The contribution of the WGBS to fisheries governance has been decisive, to the extent that three binding recommendations have been adopted by the GFCM in the years that followed the establishment of the WGBS. Furthermore, a non-binding roadmap to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea was also adopted. The most crucial element for fisheries governance in the Black Sea remains cooperation among the riparian countries. Enhanced cooperation has been staunchly pursued by the GFCM, leading to the granting of cooperating non-contracting party status to Georgia and Ukraine in 2015. There is momentum, at present, to build upon ongoing cooperation and further strengthen fisheries governance in the Black Sea. To this end, this output will be achieved through the completion of the following activities:

a. The organization of a **high-level conference on fisheries governance** in order to examine existing institutional hurdles and provide a forum for riparian countries to provide inputs to the ongoing process of cooperation in the Black Sea. Discussions are needed in particular to ensure full membership of the six riparian countries to the GFCM, in due course.

b. The launch of the start-up phase of a **regional, scientific and technical cooperation project for the Black Sea**, the BlackSea4Fish project, carried out in the remit of the WGBS. It is expected that this project would operate under the umbrella of the GFCM, with the aim to support the activities of the WGBS, and would contribute to further bridging gaps at the regional level, endowing the WGBS with the necessary support to make sure that its work programme is efficiently implemented.

Output 5.3: Increased cooperation with relevant actors

As part of the same organization, tight collaboration with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on issues such as the development and implementation of the SSF Guidelines, the management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), the implementation of the FAO PSMA or the Global Record, has been instrumental to align regional actions with global practices and to showcase regional initiatives in reply to international guidelines. The establishment of the FAO regional projects for the Mediterranean, starting with the launch of Copemed in 1996 and followed by MedSudMed, AdriaMed and EastMed, has substantially supported the SAC in the provision of scientific advice, thanks to the technical support and capacity-building activities directly provided to countries over the years.

In addition to the ongoing collaboration of the GFCM with relevant FAO departments and projects, at the time of writing, the GFCM has concluded 14 MoU. These instruments have been central to fostering synergies and avoiding duplications. Moreover, several initiatives are being undertaken in the framework of these instruments which are extremely important due to the transversal nature of the areas of cooperation addressed therein. In addition to the governmental cooperation promoted by the GFCM, intra-governmental cooperation with other institutions is also important. This output will be achieved through the following activities:

a. The **operationalization of existing MoU**, including the launching of joint activities, with a view to avoiding duplications. Where new possibilities arise for new MoU, these should be submitted to the Commission for its consideration and adoption.

b. In line with the FAO Strategic Objective 2, the **strengthened coordination with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and FAO regional projects**, taking into account current challenges and recent changes within the GFCM, including the focus on a subregional approach and the launch of this strategy.

5. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

22. Consistent with Article 17 of the GFCM Agreement, the capacity of developing CPCs will be duly taken into account in implementing the strategy in order to level the playing field and bridge existing gaps. Technical assistance will be provided where there is a need to build national capacities so that existing commitments can be fulfilled equally. In this respect, the promotion of the "concerted actions" initiative or the signature of bilateral letters of agreement, as already implemented by the GFCM in the past with selected CPCs, should be encouraged.

23. The effective implementation of existing and future fisheries management-related decisions by CPCs is instrumental in reaching the objectives of the mid-term strategy.

24. The GFCM, through its relevant subsidiary bodies, should regularly assess the attainment of the targets during the period of implementation of the strategy, by reviewing the outcomes of specific activities, revising and updating, as appropriate, the expected outputs and providing guidance to reach more effectively agreed objectives.

This strategy is dedicated to the late Mohamed HadjAli Salem, an important member of the GFCM family having twice served as GFCM Chairperson and also as the long-standing coordinator of the SIPAM network. His experience and commitment intelligently led the Commission through delicate times of change.

Annex 2

Terms of reference for the intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries

The intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries will:

a) be open to CPCs and all relevant partner organizations, including FAO and FAO regional projects;

b) set specific agreed targets, based on national strategies, under the five objectives of the mid-term strategy, as endorsed by the Commission at its fortieth session;

c) match agreed objectives in GFCM recommendation against the targets in the mid-term strategy with a view to further promoting complementarities;

d) integrate relevant outcomes of previous work by the GFCM (e.g. SSF, IUU) in the strategy;

e) consider the possibility to clarify the scope of activities foreseen in the mid-term strategy, as appropriate;

f) review the progress of the two-year feasibility study on the implementation of the subregional approach and make recommendations on the course of action to be followed;

g) discuss the *modus operandi* and practical arrangements for the implementation of the mid-term strategy;

h) identify the necessary resources, including means to pool resources in the context of concerted actions; and

i) define the composition and methods of work of the Review Panel.

Resolution GFCM/40/2016/3 on sustainable small-scale fisheries in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which calls upon states to cooperate in the conservation and management of marine living resources, including through subregional or regional fisheries organizations;

TAKING NOTE of the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which recognizes the important contributions of small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security;

ACKNOWLEDGING the 2014 FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) which aim at enhancing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition and at supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the GFCM Agreement whereby the Commission shall pay particular attention to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities in adopting conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities;

CONSIDERING the role of the GFCM as the FAO regional fishery body competent over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to contribute to the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and to improve the socio-economic situation of fishers and fish workers within the context of sustainable fisheries management;

WELCOMING the conclusions of the 2013 First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea organized by the GFCM in partnership with FAO, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies, Institute of Bari (CIHEAM Bari), the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and in collaboration with the Government of Malta;

FURTHER WELCOMING the conclusions of the 2016 Regional Conference on Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea organized by the GFCM in partnership with FAO, CIHEAM-Bari, MedPAN, WWF and in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM should provide support to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to accelerate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines by adapting them to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea context.

2. The CPCs acknowledge the importance of the work made at the Regional Conference on Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and underline the significance of the conclusions adopted by this conference (which are attached in the Annex to this resolution) in the context of the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries at the regional level.

3. The GFCM should facilitate the elaboration of national strategies for the sustainable development of the small-scale fisheries sector, in line with the SSF Guidelines and with the conclusions of the Regional Conference.

4. The CPCs should continue to build political will to invest in participative management approaches – such as co-management schemes – in order to sustainably develop fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Particular attention should be accorded to improving livelihoods and socio-economic opportunities – including access to markets – for small-scale fishers, in line with Target 14 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). To this effect, marine spatial planning, including, *inter alia,* preserved fisheries areas and the installation of artificial reefs, provides an effective tool for engaging stakeholders in the sustainable management of fisheries.

5. Specific actions should be foreseen to elaborate coordinated policies in support of the small-scale fishing sector, including a common regional strategy, in coordination with the existing regional small-scale fisher networks and platforms throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and a high-level event on sustainable small-scale fisheries.

Annex

Conclusions of the Regional Conference "Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea"

(Algiers, Algeria, 7–9 March 2016)

PREAMBLE

The Regional Conference "Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea" (Algeria, March 2016) enjoyed the robust attendance of over 200 participants, which included policy-makers, scientists, practitioners, fishers representatives, fish workers, civil society organizations, NGOs, research institutions, international organizations and more. The conference was organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), including its Mediterranean regional projects, in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries and in partnership with the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM-Bari), the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

In 2013, on the occasion of the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Malta, November 2013), the main challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishery sector in this region were brought to the forefront. Since then, such issues have continued to gain prominence in discussions on small-scale fishery management in the context of the Blue Growth Initiative in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

This regional conference was conceived as a practical response to the outcomes of the symposium in Malta, seeking to capitalize on the momentum already generated in order to offer a tangible strategy for the future sustainable development of this sector. Concrete case studies were carried out, which further explored key themes identified through the symposium, and their results were presented in a format which deliberately sought to promote discussions, express opinions and share experiences in order to better grasp priorities and opportunities for this sector.

There is no doubt that small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea play a significant social and economic role. These fisheries constitute over 80 percent of the fishing fleet, employ at least 60 percent of total on-vessel fishing labour and account for approximately 25 percent of the total landing value from capture fisheries in the region. At their best, small-scale fisheries exemplify sustainable resource use: exploiting marine living resources in a way that minimizes environmental degradation while maximizing economic and social benefits. Yet concerted effort is needed to ensure that best practices become standard practices.

In recognition of this need for a concerted action for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishery sector, the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries graciously offered to host the regional conference with a view to mobilizing such an effort. This event is perfectly aligned with the "Aquapêche 2020" strategy, recently launched by Algeria as a result of a nation-wide consultation process with all stakeholders and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FAO. Consistent with Blue Growth principles, this strategy is also expected to provide a decisive contribution towards the promotion of sustainable small-scale fisheries, both at the national and regional levels.

The following conclusions have been developed based on the outcomes of the regional conference. The conclusions are put forth to urge actions in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and they are grouped, first, under a cluster of general and

transversal proposals and, next, under five clusters relating to the specific thematic sessions of the conference.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which, among other issues, stress the importance of providing access for small-scale artisanal fisheries to marine resources and markets, the importance of the Regional Conference "Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea" was acknowledged. Widespread support was expressed by conference participants for the conference objectives to raise awareness, share knowledge, and devise future strategy to promote this crucial fishing sector.

In particular, the following general proposals were made:

- Tailor implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) to the Mediterranean and Black Sea context and provide support to GFCM contracting parties in the implementation of these guidelines.
- Launch a comprehensive and region-wide survey to develop accurate, timely and complete baseline data on the value and economic impact of small-scale fisheries, with a view to ultimately informing policy interventions.
- Launch wide-ranging consultations, including a mechanism for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishing sector and specific actions to develop coordinated policy to support this sector. To this end, implement a joint regional strategy which builds on existing regional networks and platforms and promotes a level playing field throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- Develop a regional programme aiming to provide support and technical assistance, in particular to developing countries, in order to build capacity in the field of small-scale fisheries. Carry out at the national level, where necessary, an analysis of legislation and institutional mechanisms which ensure the full participation of small-scale fishers in all activities regarding the sustainable development of the sector (development of alternative activities, co-management, financial support, labelling, traceability, right to decent work, social protection, etc.).
- Build the political will to invest in small-scale fisheries as a crucial tool to transform fisheries management, particularly within the context of the Blue Growth initiative and the implementation of the reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy. It was suggested that the GFCM member countries, the European Commission and FAO provide joint leadership in this regard (i.e. through the organization of a high-level event).
- Disseminate the conclusions of the Regional Conference "Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea" to relevant international meetings, such as GFCM regular sessions, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and relevant European Union (EU) meetings.

SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO THE PANELS

PANEL I – Supporting the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea under the Blue Growth perspective

Blue Growth is a recent concept that seeks to create sustainable economic, environmental and social development in the aquatic environment. As Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries are dominated by small-scale fishing activities, if the exploitation of fish resources in these seas is to contribute to Blue Growth, then small-scale fishing will necessarily play an integral role in Blue Growth strategies.

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Develop indicators to measure the economic and social impact of small-scale fishing, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In particular, efforts should be made to estimate not only the value of the output produced by such fishing and its economic impact on coastal communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, but efforts should also be made to measure small-scale fishing's impact on related sectors such as fish processing and tourism. Furthermore, an analysis of the interaction of small-scale fishing with other sectors, particularly those also engaged in Blue Growth strategies (i.e. marine transportation, oil and gas, tourism, etc.), is needed for a better understanding of the wider economic and social impacts of small-scale fishing as well as the risks these other sectors may pose to small-scale fishing communities.
- Examine the economic impact of small-scale fishing under different exploitation arrangements, with a view to identifying circumstances under which this activity might generate an investable surplus and undertake studies to estimate the potential size of this surplus. Similarly, efforts should be made to identify points of entry for technological, management, marketing and policy interventions that would facilitate the above-mentioned favourable circumstances.
- Identify relevant parameters – having acknowledged the need to develop a common definition of small-scale fisheries – for the classification of "small-scale fishing" in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, based on relevant regional characteristics (e.g. dimension of the vessel, gear used, activities of non-vessel based fisheries) and in relation to the harvested resources.
- Disseminate information on the effectiveness of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and promote its use as a data collection tool for small-scale fishing. Provide technical assistance in the practical application of the DCRF in the collection of standardized data on small-scale fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- Produce a desk study on the social protection systems and national legislations in place and available to small-scale fishers in the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian states, with a view to identifying and promoting the most successful options.
- Identify policy interventions which facilitate income and livelihood diversification for small-scale fishers. In particular, efforts should be made to identify opportunities for cross-over between the small-scale fishing and small-scale aquaculture sectors.
- Develop, in collaboration with GFCM Members, a pilot programme that would test ways to both better integrate small-scale fisheries into a Blue Growth approach, as well as better integrate small-scale fisheries in the decision-making processes of other sectors whose Blue Growth activity may have an impact on small-scale fisheries.

PANEL II – Strengthening the role of stakeholders in the context of management and co-management schemes

Acknowledging concrete evidence on how co-management can be an effective approach for both resolving conflicts and developing innovative solutions for the management of small-scale fisheries, key actions were identified that would create enabling conditions for the institutionalization of stakeholder engagement through co-management schemes. Such key actions include the need for stronger investment in capacity building, both for institutions and for fisher organizations, and the need for a better understanding of legal and institutional frameworks that allow for the participation of fishers in fisheries management. The panel stressed that while Blue Growth presents important opportunities for small-scale fisheries, the effects of Blue Growth in other sectors may also present a risk to these fisheries. Stronger organization and co-management initiatives are needed in order to guard against such risks.

In light of the discussions held during the panel, the following actions are proposed:

- Conduct an analysis to assess national and international legal frameworks with a view to identifying institutional contexts that allow for the establishment of small-scale fisheries co-management schemes and with a view to defining general rules for the engagement and compliance of small-scale fishers with these schemes.
- Prepare best practice guidelines for the enforcement of small-scale fisheries co-management schemes in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Such guidelines should be linked directly to the SSF Guidelines and, in addition to providing advice on the institutional and legislative context, should provide direction for the elaboration and implementation of participatory processes, co-management settings and tools, approaches for monitoring, control and surveillance schemes and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of management measures.
- Provide support to ongoing co-management processes in the Mediterranean and build commitment for their multiplication across the region. A regional programme, based on a solid institutional framework and building on existing experiences and partnerships, should be established to offer a longer-term vision on how co-management can benefit small-scale fisheries at the regional scale.
- Map fishing activities in order to provide relevant information to be integrated into marine spatial planning processes. Such processes are crucial to securing tenure rights and access to the resources for small-scale fishers, and thus ensuring livelihoods and the sustainable development of communities reliant on small-scale fisheries. The GFCM, on behalf of its member countries, should advocate for this issue at a high-level with the European Commission, prior to the commencement of the marine spatial planning processes.
- Establish a capacity building programme devoted to supporting stakeholder roles in small-scale fisheries co-management and tailored to different targets (institutional, marine protected areas administration, local administrations, natural and social scientists, civil society, small-scale fishers and other resource users).

PANEL III – Improving the efficiency of marine protected areas (MPAs) as fisheries management tools and benefits from involving the small-scale fisheries sector

Recognizing the priority socio-economic and environmental challenges for the management of marine ecosystems, marine protected areas (MPAs) offer a potential solution to concurrently address a multitude of issues. Indeed, an important strategy for reconciling conservation and sustainability objectives is the integration of the small-scale fisheries sector into management decisions in and around MPAs. Action must be taken at the local and national levels in view of reaching international and regional agreements. Such action can be effected by decision makers, MPA managers, fishers, scientists and the private sector.

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Adapt and draw lessons from the experience of MPAs with no take zones and regulated buffer zones that have been successful in involving fishers in management decisions and in processes that both safeguard wild resources, while also preserving the livelihoods upon which small-scale fishers depend. Given the socio-economic benefits obtained by small-scale fishers in these exemplary MPAs, learning from such cases would provide guidance on how to sustain economic, social and cultural aspects of the profession. To support replication of these successful MPAs, adequate legal frameworks, political will and financial and human capital would be required.
- Replicate examples of collaboration at the inter- and intra-ministerial levels that demonstrate the successful management of small-scale fisheries in and around MPAs when working "hand in hand". Such integrative models could encourage top-down and bottom-up processes in many riparian countries for securing the future sustainability of the profession, while also providing international technical guidance.
- Improve the management of MPAs, including multiple use MPAs, by relying on the scientific and traditional knowledge of fishers, by involving concerned users/stakeholders and by using adaptive approaches. To this end:
    - tailor management in light of the outcomes of long-term comparative monitoring of biological features, ecological effects of small-scale fisheries and socio-economic benefits in and outside MPAs;
    - develop adaptive participatory approaches for management plans for small-scale fisheries in and around MPAs, based on biological and socio-economic data, which could be jointly formulated, implemented and revised by MPA practitioners and fishers;
    - adopt regulations to overcome conflicting uses of MPAs which could have a negative impact on the livelihood of small-scale fisheries, having regard to relevant conservation objectives;
    - consider participative management, in cases of use conflicts, specifically those between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries, to create a balance between the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and, where applicable, the sustainable development of responsible tourism, so as to achieve conservation objectives.
- Consider conservation efforts, and MPAs in particular, as an investment in natural capital rather than as a public expenditure. As such, efforts should be made to protect this investment from risks, such as conflicting marine-based activities and land-based pollution.
- Safeguard the small-scale fisheries sector in and around MPAs, including by setting up cooperatives, through strategies that are integrated in development plans devised by local authorities and that provide a market edge in favour of responsible and sustainable fisheries practices.

PANEL IV – Enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains

The value chain of small-scale fisheries is enhanced by a favourable environment where fishers are strongly connected with other local actors, including public and private institutions and even consumers. This permits the creation of competitive economic clusters, which can foster the development of coastal communities. Clustering must be encouraged, eliminating all possible bottlenecks. In the case of SSF in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, four relevant areas of intervention have been identified: sustainability aspects (including governance and MPAs), marketing strategies

(quality aspects), inter-sectoral integration and provision of infrastructures and services (in particular, access to markets and credit).

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Identify best practices for value creation, especially in the fields of labelling, direct sale, processing, diversification, inter-sectoral integration and vertical coordination. Additional case studies should be carried out to further examine such best practice interventions and to promote their replication in various Mediterranean and Black Sea contexts.
- Model successful value chains, particularly in cases where clustering of various coastal economic activities occurs, to identify entry points for innovation and to better understand the scope for fisher cooperation in resource management and in product marketing.
- Establish a capacity building programme to support stakeholder roles in the creation of cooperatives, formulation of agreements with public and private institutions, development of partnerships and projects for coastal development.
- Better study and analyse issues related both to credit and financial institution support. Public institutions should provide basic infrastructures and services to foster value chains and to prevent market failure. Access to formal finance is a crucial concern. This includes access to both formal credit for capital expenses and financing for fishing operations. Facilities and financial products can be developed in partnership with banks for medium to long-term investment. Formal financing schemes (production contracts, storage receipts) can be applied with the participation of fishers, traders and public authorities.

PANEL V – Putting the principles of the SSF Guidelines into practice: the case of the Mediterranean and Black Sea

The SSF Guidelines constitute an important tool for supporting actions to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. These guidelines take a holistic perspective on the needs of small-scale fisheries and recognize that the implementation of these guidelines will necessarily be cross-sectoral. With a view to adapting these guidelines to the regional context, key elements to operationalize the principles of the SSF guidelines were explored: i) policy and legal frameworks; ii) main stakeholders; iii) institutional structures; iv) key entry points; and v) collaboration with other initiatives. The panel noted the importance of action at the local level and the need for effective participation of fishing communities. There are already positive developments taking place in the region in support of the SSF Guidelines implementation, for instance the existence of regional organizations and platforms such as the Maghreb Platform for sustainable small-scale fisheries, the Mediterranean Platform of Artisanal Fishers (MedArtNet), Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) and the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MedAC), and the development of national policies and initiatives (e.g. Aquapêche 2020 in Algeria, SSF national action plan proposals in EU countries).

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Establish a GFCM working group on small-scale fisheries to facilitate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the GFCM region by developing national action plans and taking into account recommendations from relevant events and existing experience within the region and beyond.
- Strengthen the GFCM engagement with small-scale fishing communities by establishing a mechanism for supporting organizational development and agreeing on a modus operandi for meaningful collaboration. In particular, FAO's work on small-scale fisheries should be taken into account and special efforts should be made to collaborate with existing small-scale fisheries organizations and platforms, as well as to include women and marginalized groups in such collaboration.

- Promote, without compromising environmental sustainability, the improvement of socio-economic conditions within small-scale fisheries, particularly through the promotion of livelihood diversification as appropriate, and the endorsement of the principle of decent work, as defined by the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Furthermore, ratification of this convention by GFCM member countries should be encouraged.
- Promote and facilitate the development of a forum for small-scale fisheries associations of northern and southern Mediterranean riparian countries, particularly through specific projects financed by member countries or by other international, governmental or non-governmental entities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Satisfaction and gratitude were expressed by all participants in the regional conference to the Government of Algeria for kindly hosting the event and to the co-organizers for the thorough preparation of the event. The Principality of Monaco is also gratefully acknowledged for its financial support towards the publication of the conference conclusions.

Resolution GFCM/37/2013/1 on area-based management of fisheries, including through the establishment of fisheries restricted areas in the GFCM area of application and coordination with UNEP-MAP initiatives on the establishment of specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in particular Articles 118 and 119, whereby states are called upon, *inter alia*, to cooperate with each other in the conservation and management of living resources in the areas of the high seas, through subregional or regional fisheries organizations as appropriate, and to exchange data and scientific information relevant to the conservation of fish stocks through competent international organizations;

ALSO RECALLING the 1995 United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the objective of which is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks by, *inter alia*, requiring states to cooperate in this respect through regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements (RFMO/As) particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and the provisions of the 1993 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas.

TAKING NOTE of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the related International Plans of Action, strategies and guidelines which promote responsible fishing and fisheries activities, accounting for all their relevant biological, technological, economic, social, environmental and commercial aspects, while ensuring the protection of living aquatic resources and their environments and coastal areas;

ACKNOWLEDGING the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 61/105, 62/177, 63/112, 64/72, 65/38, 66/68 and 67/69 on sustainable fisheries, particularly those paragraphs which call upon flag states and RFMO/As to sustainably manage fish stocks and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems in general, as well as to manage bottom fisheries on the high seas, in order to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems and to ensure the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the 2009 FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas which guide states and RFMO/As to formulate and implement appropriate measures for the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas, through a range of management tools and measures necessary to ensure the conservation of target and non-target species, as well as affected habitats;

CONSIDERING the role of the GFCM, as a RFMO, and in particular as the FAO regional fishery body competent over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level of marine living resources in its area of application, and to this end, to keep under review the state of these resources and of the fisheries based thereon, as well as to formulate and recommend appropriate measures;

UNDERLINING that area-based management of fisheries is recognized to be a tool contributing to the maintenance of marine living resources in a healthy state and/or to their recovery as well as to the conservation of marine biodiversity, which is important for the sustainable exploitation of these resources within an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, and that the GFCM has already taken action in this regard by setting up fisheries restricted areas (FRAs);

WELCOMING the cooperation established, through Resolution GFCM/31/2007/4 on the Pelagos Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals, between the GFCM Secretariat and the Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement, on the exchange of data related to the Pelagos Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals, recognized as a specially protected area of Mediterranean importance (SPAMI) by the contracting parties to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the definition of "FRA" as endorsed by the GFCM on the basis of a formulation of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) which stipulates that a FRA is a geographically defined area in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of living marine resources or the protection of marine ecosystems;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the definition of SPAMI as stipulated by the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention;

DEEMING the memorandum of understanding adopted by the FAO/GFCM and the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-MAP) as the instrument that aims to promote cooperation between these two organizations, within their respective mandates, including in harmonizing existing respective criteria to identify FRAs and SPAMIs for the cases where their location may coincide, in particular those located partially or entirely in the areas beyond national jurisdiction;

WELCOMING the collaboration between the GFCM and the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) under the memorandum of understanding which foresees close collaboration in the elaboration of measures contributing to the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), the following resolution:

1. The designation of FRAs for the conservation and management of fisheries resources within an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, including in cases where their location may totally or partially coincide with that of SPAMIs, should be done by the GFCM, in particular for areas in the high seas.

2. Paragraph 1 is without prejudice to actions taken by a contracting party and/or by a cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) to exert their rights and fulfil their obligations for the designation of FRAs, including fisheries management measures, within the waters under their sovereignty or jurisdiction.

3. The designation of a FRA by the GFCM should be based on sound scientific and technical identification by the SAC based, *inter alia*, on proposals by CPCs, party organizations, scientific institutions and observers, with a view to recovering and/or maintaining marine living resources in a healthy state while ensuring the conservation of marine biodiversity for a sustainable exploitation. The identification of a FRA should follow as a minimum standard those criteria and conditions stipulated in the GFCM standard form.

4. In the case where the GFCM intends to designate a FRA that may be totally or partially located in a SPAMI, decision may only be taken if appropriate cooperation and coordination have taken place between the GFCM, the UNEP/MAP and other competent regional organizations, such as ACCOBAMS.

5. The provisions in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 are without prejudice to any collaboration which the GFCM may pursue with other party international organizations in connection with area-based management tools in order to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity towards sustainable exploitation in its area of application, including the Black Sea.

Resolution GFCM/37/2013/2 on guidelines on the management of fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

FURTHER RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

NOTING the International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity elaborated within the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which calls upon states to cooperate, where appropriate, through regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements and other forms of cooperation, with a view to ensuring the effective management of fishing capacity;

ENDORSING Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register, Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2, Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/2 on the management of fishing capacity, and Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6 on the submission of data on fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that according to the advice by the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), most demersal and small pelagic stocks are currently considered overexploited, some of which with high risk of overfishing, and that sustainable management requires measures aimed at controlling or reducing the fishing effort from 10 percent up to 40 percent at least;

EMPHASIZING that in cases where no scientific information on the status of fisheries and exploited marine resources is available, a precautionary approach should be adopted;

ACKNOWLEDGING that any possible limitation to the fleet capacity at the regional level shall not prevent or hinder transferability of fishing fleet capacity from one contracting party or cooperating non-contracting party (CPC) to another and from one GFCM geographical subarea (GSA) to another, provided that the targeted fisheries are sustainably exploited and that the overall capacity does not increase;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

Definitions

1. For the purpose of this resolution, the following definitions should apply:

   a) "Capacity" means an input-based estimate (i.e. vessels numbers, size in gross tonnage [GT] or in length overall [LOA], engine power [kW]) or an output-based estimate (i.e. the maximum potential harvest or output that could be achieved if only the fixed factors would limit production). As a minimum common standard GT and/or kW should be used to establish capacity.

   b) "Fishing capacity" means a fishing vessel's tonnage in GT and its engine power in kW. The fishing capacity level per CPC should be equivalent to the sum of its vessels expressed in GT and engine power (kW).

   c) "Overcapacity" means: i) in input terms, there is more than the minimum fleet and effort required to produce a given output level (e.g. harvested catch); and ii) in output terms, the maximum harvest level that a fisher could produce with given levels of inputs (e.g. fuel,

amount of fishing gear, ice, bait, engine horsepower and vessel size) would exceed the desired level of harvesting.

Principles

2. For the management of fishing capacity, the following principles are relevant:

a) Responsible management for sustainable exploitation: the social and economic impacts of measures addressing overcapacity, including those stopping fishing activities and reducing fleet capacity, should be taken into account. Open access to fisheries is not compatible with the sustainable exploitation of fisheries.

b) Overall fishing capacity: the levels of the overall fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application should be determined on the basis of national fishing capacity management plans and scientific advice.

c) Optimal fishing capacity: the optimal fishing capacity in each fishery should reflect the balance between economically and biologically sustainable exploitation.

d) Capacity measurement: CPCs should ensure the complete and successful implementation of the regional fleet register and use the agreed regional fishing capacity measure units as established in Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 and Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/2, respectively.

e) Result-based management approach: CPCs should endeavour to apply a result-based management approach in relation to the management of fishing capacity.

f) Long-term economic efficiency: short-term profitability should not lead to investments that undermine long-term economic efficiency.

g) Safety: the management of fishing capacity should not preclude the consideration of issues such as safety, including vessel design, size and ability to catch fish, as well as best practices in fish handling, hygiene and quality while ensuring that the overall fishing capacity is not increased.

h) New technologies: The management of fishing capacity should take into account the incorporation of environmentally sound and evolving fishing technologies in all fisheries in the GFCM area of application.

i) Complementarity, coherence and consistency: CPCs should work to ensure that efforts to address the management of fishing capacity are complementary, coherent and consistent with current activities, actions and international commitments, including the ecosystem approach to fisheries.

j) Flexibility, adaptability, transparency and accountability: the principles of flexibility, adaptability, transparency and accountability are fundamental elements within management plans on fishing capacity.

Objective

3. The GFCM, taking also into account the scientific advice formulated by the SAC including, *inter alia*, on updated stock assessments, on the implications of the possible creation or extension of exclusive economic zones with corresponding studies on socio-economic aspects, should provide guidance on the development and implementation of actions at the national level for the management of fishing capacity so as to rationalize the management of fishing capacity at the regional level.

4. This text is intended as guidelines only and is by no means binding to concerned CPCs.

Actions at the national level

5. Pending the availability of solid scientific evidence, the following actions may be implemented by CPCs to manage fishing capacity (which should be without prejudice to additional or stricter measures taken or to be taken for the management and reduction of national fleet capacity and may consider existing measures in all CPCs):

a) Take into consideration the advice provided by the SAC on the current levels and options to obtain desired levels of fishing capacity, including per GSA, in relation to fleet segmentation, fishing type, species and fishing gear.

b) Undertake capacity reduction programmes where there is evidence of overcapacity, in accordance with the precautionary approach.

c) Use the agreed regional fishing capacity measure units, as established in Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5.

d) Evaluate the effects of modernization, new fishing practices, and technology creep on the management of their fishing capacity. In cases where fleet modernization programmes are undertaken, provide evidence to the GFCM Secretariat that the overall capacity is not increasing.

e) Consider the use of licence-based fisheries systems in situations such as, but not limited to, fisheries restricted areas (FRAs).

f) Freeze fishing capacity at levels in line with Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/2 based on and with reference to the GFCM record of vessels. Should a CPC have an obsolete fleet, be in the process of developing its fleet or experience structural problems, it should promptly inform the GFCM Secretariat of the situation that hampered to freeze fishing capacity at said levels.

g) Consider the use of some limitations or other mechanisms in order to prevent negative impacts of the transfer of fishing capacity from one operational unit to another, thereby jeopardizing the stability of biodiversity.

h) Subject to the maintenance of the overall fishing capacity, fishing vessels larger than 15 metres LOA may be transferred from one GSA to another by those CPCs concerned. The GFCM should consider the issue of fishing capacity for vessels shorter than 15 m LOA, including small-scale fisheries vessels.

6. A mechanism should be developed to monitor fishing capacity levels through, *inter alia*, regional fleet registers and other data collection schemes. To this end, the GFCM Secretariat should be responsible for updating and communicating the current levels of fishing capacity to the CPCs.

7. The GFCM, through its Compliance Committee, should monitor the implementation of these actions through annual reports submitted by the CPCs. It may consider the update and further development of these actions every three years, including through binding recommendations and in light of any additional management measure that could be adopted in the meantime.

Rationalizing the management of fishing capacity at the regional level

8. The rationalization of fishing capacity management at the regional level may be facilitated through the use of the different financial, technical, administrative and legislative instruments available.

<u>Financial instruments</u>

9. Financial instruments should be used with caution considering that even the so-called “good” subsidies can create incentives to increase, rather than reduce, fishing capacity. Efforts towards disinvestments in the fisheries sector should be encouraged where overcapacity and sustainable exploitation may be a concern.

10. Any financial instrument designed to support fleet reduction may guarantee an efficient decrease in fleet capacity, taking into consideration that continuous technological creep is also increasing fishing capacity.

11. Financial assistance with public funds for the management of fishing capacity should not lead, in any circumstances, to an increase in the fishing capacity or in the power of fishing vessels engines. Nonetheless, public financial assistance may contribute to improving safety on board, working conditions, hygiene and quality of products, energy saving and fishing gear selectivity, provided that it does not increase the ability of the vessels to catch fish. No public aid should be granted for the construction of fishing vessels or for increasing vessel fish holds.

12. Financial investments/assistance with private funds may be allowed only within an organized fisheries management framework designed and monitored to deliver sustainable exploitation on the basis of scientific advice and rational management.

Technical instruments

13. Indicators of fishing capacity should be developed to evaluate the balance between fleet capacity and fishing opportunities – both qualitatively and quantitatively.

14. The efficiency of fishing gear and electronic equipment, such as those used for detecting fish, should be taken into consideration in the management of fleet capacity.

15. The collection of data at the national level regarding the status of various stocks – and particularly shared stocks – should underpin the management of fishing capacity.

16. The monitoring of fishing capacity should be supported by the use of existing tools, such as logbooks, catch documentation systems and vessel monitoring systems (VMS), as appropriate.

Administrative and legal instruments

17. Policies and regulatory frameworks implemented by CPCs for the management of fishing capacity should be harmonized, including on the basis of relevant GFCM decisions regarding the management of fishing capacity and other relevant management measures, such as temporary closures of fisheries or other fishing effort limitations.

18. A transparent entry/exit regime that applies to CPCs with a view to avoiding future increase in the overall fishing capacity should be established.

19. Measures on freezing fishing capacity should be adopted when necessary based on scientific evidence, best practices and lessons learned.

Regulation of new constructions and imports of fishing vessels

20. The freezing of fishing capacity is without prejudice to CPCs that have substandard fishing fleets (e.g. in terms of navigation and safety capabilities) or obsolete fleets, are in the process of developing or upgrading their fleets, or experience other structural problems. Those CPCs are encouraged to follow this guidance, to the extent possible

21. In exceptional cases where scientific evidence shows that there are sustainable new fishing opportunities, keeping in mind best practices and lessons learned as well as socio-economic concerns for local communities, new constructions and/or imports of vessels may be allowed to CPCs complying with this guidance. However, all new constructions should be certified as compliant with GFCM decisions by the competent authorities and reported to the GFCM Secretariat.

22. In situations where there may not be new fishing opportunities but new constructions or import of vessels are asked for, a system of control should be established as follows:

a) all new constructions should have an official authorization;

b) in order to authorize a new construction or import, the destruction or removal from the register of a vessel of at least the same tonnage and power as that intended to be built or imported or is necessary. Priority consideration should be given to situations which enable the transfer of capacity from fleet segments in which there is overcapacity;

c) the tonnage and power of a new vessel should be equal to/less than the tonnage and power of vessel(s) removed from the register of active vessels (i.e. registered and currently fishing vessels).

23. The fishing licences of vessels that have been removed from the register should be transferred to the replacement vessel, taking into account the fact that the indivisible "vessel unit" to be transferred is composed of tonnage + power + fishing licence.

Human resources development for the management of fishing capacity

24. Communication and awareness programmes related to the management of fishing capacity should be established among stakeholders and the general public to raise awareness about the problems of overcapacity.

25. The effective participation of stakeholders, including women and fisheries organizations, should be supported by access to information and education. The diversification by fishers engaged in non-fishing activities should be encouraged.

26. The CPCs are encouraged to seek assistance in the monitoring of fishing capacity and in the development and implementation of national plans of action for the management of fishing capacity.

Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1 on guidelines on allocated zones for aquaculture

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECOGNIZING that aquaculture plays an important role in terms of contribution to economic development and that it represents an important source of food and employment for coastal communities of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs);

CONSISTENT WITH the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in particular Article 9 which calls upon states*, inter alia*, to produce and regularly update aquaculture development strategies and plans, as required, to ensure that aquaculture development is ecologically sustainable and to allow the rational use of resources shared by aquaculture and other activities;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT relevant provisions in the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the 1995 Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its protocols as amended, in particular, the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean;

NOTING that aquaculture activities are rapidly expanding in the GFCM area of application, thus calling for an integrated coastal zone management consistent planning and management at the regional level;

ACKNOWLEDGING that aquaculture activities affect and are affected by other human activities to the extent that their relative contribution to environmental degradation needs to be controlled and that adverse social and environmental interactions with aquaculture activities have to be reduced;

CONSIDERING the implementation of a regional strategy for the creation of allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs) as an immediate priority for the responsible development and management of aquaculture activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the creation of AZAs may facilitate the integration of aquaculture activities into coastal zone areas exploited by other users and contribute to the enhancement of coordination between the different public agencies involved in aquaculture licensing and monitoring processes;

ACKNOWLEDGING conflicts between aquaculture activities and other users of the coastal zones in addition to the main variables and factors affecting the development of aquaculture activities;

STRESSING IN PARTICULAR the need for the definition of common criteria for the selection of sites for aquaculture activities;

BEARING IN MIND that the sustainable development of aquaculture can be significantly facilitated by a clear vision of AZAs;

DESIRING to promote in the GFCM area of application the establishment of AZAs as a management tool for marine spatial planning;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following resolution:

1. The CPCs should include in their national marine spatial planning a strategy for aquaculture development and management schemes for the identification and allocation of specific zones reserved to aquaculture activities.

2. AZAs should comprise specific areas dedicated to aquaculture activities. Any future development thereof, and their identification should be based on the best social, economic and environmental information available in order to prevent conflicts among different users for increased competitiveness, sharing costs and services and to assure investments.

3. AZAs should be established within the remit of local or national aquaculture plans of CPCs with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of aquaculture development and of promoting equity and resilience of interlinked social and ecological systems.

4. AZAs should be established within the framework of integrated coastal zone management, with regulations and/or restrictions being assigned to each zone in accordance with their degree of suitability for aquaculture activities and carrying capacity limit.

5. The zoning process for the establishment of AZAs should follow a participatory approach, be transparent, coordinated by the main authority responsible for marine planning at the local level and carried out in cooperation with the different authorities involved in aquaculture licensing and leasing procedures and monitoring. The coordination of competences among the different public authorities involved in aquaculture licensing and leasing procedures and monitoring should be ensured at the national level.

6. Zones to be allocated to aquaculture activities may be classified, *inter alia*, as, "areas suitable for aquaculture activities", "areas unsuitable for aquaculture activities" and "areas for aquaculture activities with particular regulation and/or restriction". Guidelines should be developed to this end.

7. Once established, AZAs should be based on legal and regulatory provisions, integrated into the national legislation or other adequate national administration level, as well as on interministerial coordination in order to ensure their effective implementation.

8. For every AZA, an allowable zone of effect of aquaculture activities may be defined in the close vicinity of each farm. The definition of such zone should be accompanied by an environmental monitoring programme.

9. The environmental monitoring programme should be flexible and adaptable, taking into account a scale (time and space) approach, and monitoring should be mandatory.

Resolution GFCM/35/2011/1 on the submission of combined data on fishing vessels

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING the obligations of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to submit data on fishing vessels, in accordance with established standards and protocols, under the following GFCM recommendations: Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lion to protect spawning aggregations and deep-sea sensitive habitats; Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/2 on the minimum mesh size in the codend of demersal trawl nets; Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register; and Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2;

CONSIDERING that most of the data to be reported under each of these recommendations are common and that a single transmission of data on fishing vessels, incorporating all the data fields specified in each recommendation, would facilitate the data submission processes executed by CPCs;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following resolution:

1. The CPCs should submit the data specified in Recommendations GFCM/33/2009/1, GFCM/33/2009/2, GFCM/33/2009/5 and GFCM/33/2009/6 as a single data set, as defined in the Annex to this resolution.

2. The data should be submitted by CPCs to the GFCM Secretariat at least at the beginning of each calendar year, and not later than 31 March, and followed by updates, as appropriate, in order to fully reflect the situation of their fleets at any given time.

3. The data should be submitted by CPCs in accordance with the data submission standards and protocols established by the GFCM Secretariat, taking into account the provisions under paragraph 1.

Annex

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Regional fleet register (RFR)

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5</td><td colspan="6">A D D I T I O N A L   D A T A   F I E L D S</td></tr>
<tr><td>Authorized vessel list

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6</td><td>Minimum mesh size

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/2</td><td colspan="4">Fisheries restricted area (FRA)

Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">All regional fleet register fields (47) as specified in Annex 1 of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5</td><td>Indicator Y/N (Automatic on the basis of regional fleet register data)</td><td>Indicator Y/N</td><td colspan="4">Indicator Y/N</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Time period authorized for fishing with demersal trawl gear</td><td>Number of fishing days used by each vessel in 2008</td><td>Number of fishing days exerted in the FRA</td><td>Main gear used to fish in the FRA</td><td>Seasonal period authorized for fishing in the FRA</td></tr>
</table>

Resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures, amending Resolution GFCM/30/2006/1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECOGNIZING the need to ensure, at the commercial and organizational levels, the confidentiality of data, reports and messages submitted to the GFCM;

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 5 and 8 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), the following policy and procedures on data confidentiality:

PART I
Field of application

1. The provisions set out below should apply to all data, reports and messages (in electronic form or other) transmitted and received pursuant to GFCM recommendations.

PART II
General provisions

2. The GFCM Secretariat and the competent authorities of the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), when transmitting and receiving data, reports and messages, should take all necessary measures to comply with the security and confidentiality provisions set out under parts 3 and 4 of this resolution.

3. The GFCM Secretariat should inform all CPCs of the measures taken by the GFCM Secretariat to comply with such security and confidentiality provisions.

4. The GFCM Secretariat should take all the necessary steps to ensure that the requirements pertaining to the deletion of data, reports and messages handled by the GFCM Secretariat are met.

5. Each CPC should guarantee the right for the GFCM Secretariat to obtain, as appropriate, the rectification of data, reports and messages, the processing of which does not comply with the provisions of the GFCM Agreement.

6. The Commission may instruct the GFCM Secretariat not to release the data, reports and messages submitted to the GFCM by a CPC, where it is established that the relevant CPC does not comply with the security and confidentiality provisions.

PART III
Provisions on data confidentiality

7. Data, reports and messages should only be used for the purposes stipulated in GFCM recommendations.

8. With respect to fisheries data transmitted by CPCs in line with GFCM data transmission requirements and with the technical manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), the GFCM Secretariat should develop web-based data access and reporting facilities, which should be made available in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 10, to:

a) registered users nominated by a CPC, without any time restriction, unless otherwise specified. Such nomination may be revoked at any time by the relevant CPC; and

b) registered participants in GFCM meetings having limited access for the duration of the relevant meetings.

General statistical reports and publications should be made available to the general public without any restriction, in accordance with the guidance provided by the Commission and with the security provisions stipulated in “Provisions on data security” below.

9. With respect to aquaculture production statistics to be provided under Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/1 on reporting of aquaculture data and information, repealing Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/6, the GFCM Secretariat should develop web-based data access and reporting facilities, which should be made available, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 12, to:

a) registered users of aggregated data, as specified in the Annex (b) of this resolution. This group of users includes the national focal points nominated by the CPCs, the GFCM Secretariat, the Bureau of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) and the GFCM Bureau, without any time restriction unless otherwise specified; and

b) non-registered users of aggregated data, as specified in the Annex (a).

PART IV
Provisions on data security

10. The CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat should ensure the secure processing of data, reports and messages, in particular when this involves a transmission via an electronic network. The CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat should apply appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect data, reports and messages against accidental or unlawful destruction, accidental loss, alteration, unauthorized disclosure or access, and against all inappropriate forms of processing. The following security issues should be addressed:

a) system access control: the system should withstand break-in attempts from unauthorized persons;

b) authentication and data access control: the system should be able to limit the access of authorized parties to a predefined set of data only;

c) communication security: it should be guaranteed that data, reports and messages entered into the system are securely communicated;

d) data security: it should be guaranteed that data, reports and messages entered into the system are securely stored for the required amount of time and will not be tampered with; and

e) security procedures: security procedures should be designed addressing access to the system, system administration and maintenance, backup and general use of the system.

11. Having regard to the state of the art and implementation costs, the above measures should ensure an appropriate level of security with respect to the risks related to the processing of data, reports and messages.

12. Data security: access limitation to the data should be secured via a flexible user identification and password mechanism. Each user should only be granted access to the data which are necessary for his/her task.

13. Security procedures: revision of log files generated by the software, proper maintenance of system security, access restrictions and necessary liaison with involved parties to address security matters should be ensured by the GFCM Secretariat.

Annex

Data aggregation by access level for online consultation of GFCM aquaculture production statistics

- **First level of access: PUBLIC**

  a) Aggregated data (production amount + economic value)

TIME FRAME	Up to a defined year
DATA	Food for human consumption
AGGREGATION LEVEL	Year Environment Area Species

  b) Data by country (production amount + economic value)

TIME FRAME	Up to a defined year per single country
DATA	Food for human consumption Fish and shellfish
AGGREGATION LEVEL	Year Environment Area Structure of culture Species

- **Second level of access: REGISTERED USERS**
  [national focal points + GFCM Secretariat + CAQ Bureau + GFCM Bureau]

  a) Data by country (production amount + economic value)

TIME FRAME	The whole time series
DATA	Food for human consumption Fish and shellfish Eggs

	Crustaceans
AGGREGATION LEVEL	Year Environment Area Method of culture Structure of culture Species

Resolution GFCM/35/2011/3 on the procedure for the submission of new decision proposals to the GFCM annual sessions

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

AWARE of the necessity for coordinated and timely actions by all contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to ensure the enforcement of conservation and management measures of the GFCM, and the need to encourage all CPCs to abide by these measures;

CONSIDERING the need for action to ensure the effectiveness of the GFCM objectives;

TAKING into account the conclusions of the GFCM performance review, which were in favour of improving the effectiveness of the Commission with regard to the decision-making process in the field of fisheries and aquaculture management;

NOTING that the GFCM, at its thirty-fourth session (Greece, April 2010), debated on the importance of adopting a strict procedure concerning the submission of new proposals for decisions to the GFCM annual sessions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties should ensure, to the extent possible, to submit to the GFCM Secretariat, at least 15 days before the beginning of each annual session, any new proposal for a decision related to the fisheries and aquaculture management in order to guarantee its communication in a timely manner to the other CPCs.

2. All efforts should be endeavoured so that these proposals are, to the extent possible, elaborated by more than one contracting party and presented in at least two GFCM working languages.

3. To ensure the effectiveness of the objectives of the GFCM, paragraphs 1 and 2 are without prejudice to the adoption of any other decision regarding fisheries and aquaculture management needed during the annual session.

4. Any new proposal for a decision introduced beyond the time limit fixed under paragraph 1 should be first submitted to the Commission for approval at the opening of the annual session in order to be considered or not during the session.

Resolution GFCM/33/2009/1 on the management of demersal fisheries in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

RECALLING that effective management measures aim to curb the decline in fish stocks, identified in the scientific advice, and to ensure the conservation of fisheries resources;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) suggested that fishing mortality should be reduced significantly, on the basis of the scientific evidence that some of the demersal stocks may be approaching a critical state;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species which urges the control of fishing effort and the improvement of the exploitation pattern of demersal fisheries;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species which calls for a management programme of the fishing effort concerning demersal and small pelagic fisheries;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries, in particular, in relation to the development of new fisheries;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Unless proven unnecessary by sound scientific advice, a reduction of a minimum of 10 percent of the bottom trawling fishing effort should be applied throughout the entire GFCM area of application.

2. The SAC should continue to monitor the fishing effort of other demersal fisheries together with their impact on demersal resources, with a view to including such fisheries under the provisions of paragraph 1, if necessary.

3. This measure does not affect the number of fishing vessels.

4. This resolution should be implemented without prejudice to fleet modernization plans which may be in place in some contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties.

Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING the need to compile data, monitor fisheries and assess fisheries resources in a georeferenced manner;

RECALLING the efforts made by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and its subcommittees to identify appropriate boundaries for subareas in the GFCM area of application (FAO area 37);

CONSIDERING the decision made by the GFCM at its twenty-sixth session (Italy, September 2001) to establish GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the advice emanating from the SAC at its ninth session (FAO headquarters, October 2006) and its eleventh session (Morocco, December 2008);

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GSAs should be used in the GFCM area of application as shown in Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

Annex 1

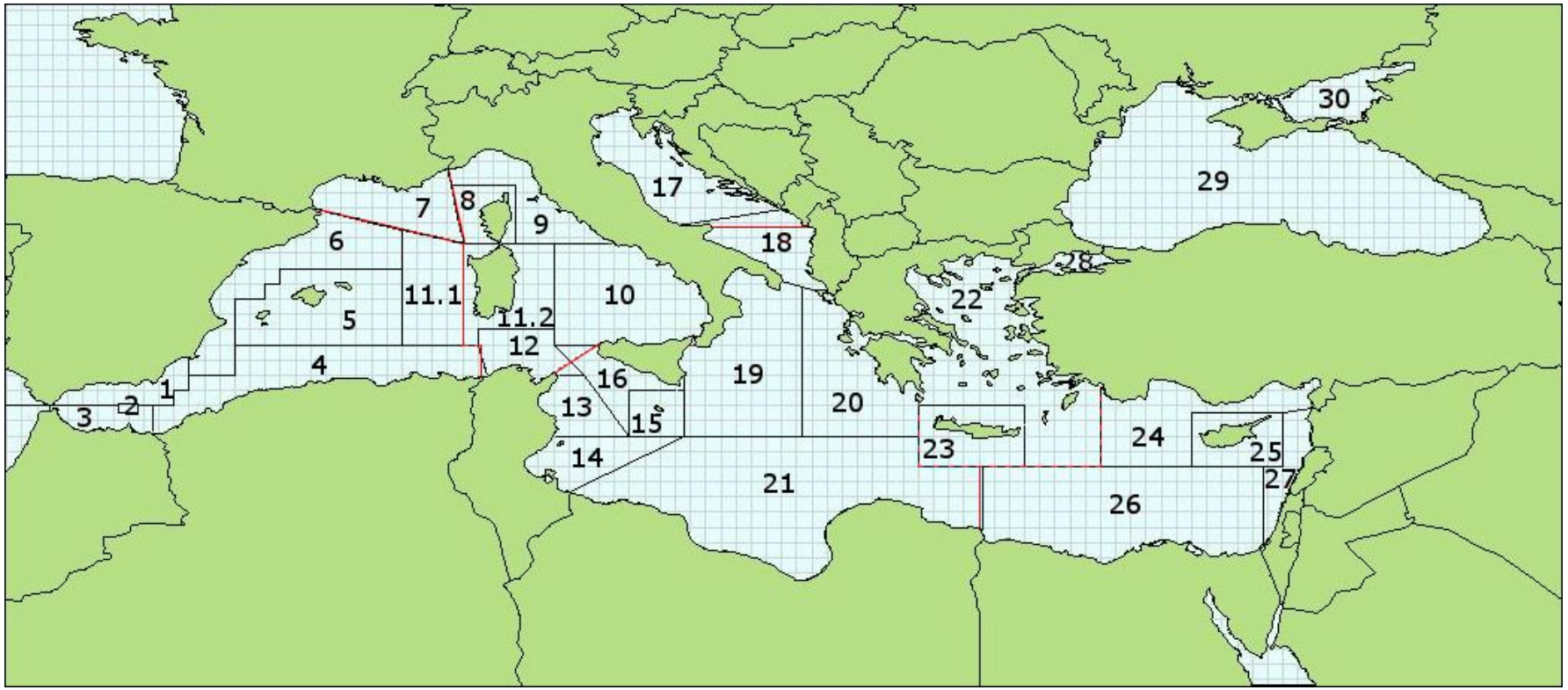
Table of GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) (GFCM, 2009)

FAO SUBAREA	FAO STATISTICAL DIVISIONS	GSAs
WESTERN	1.1 BALEARIC	1 Northern Alboran Sea
		2 Alboran Island
		3 Southern Alboran Sea
		4 Algeria
		5 Balearic Islands
		6 Northern Spain
		11.1 Western Sardinia
	1.2 GULF OF LION	7 Gulf of Lion
	1.3 SARDINIA	8 Corsica
		9 Ligurian Sea and Northern Tyrrhenian Sea
		10 Southern and Central Tyrrhenian Sea
		11.2 Eastern Sardinia
		12 Northern Tunisia

FAO SUBAREA	FAO STATISTICAL DIVISIONS	GSAs
CENTRAL	2.1 ADRIATIC	17 Northern Adriatic Sea
		18 Southern Adriatic Sea (part)
	2.2 IONIAN	13 Gulf of Hammamet
		14 Gulf of Gabès
		15 Malta
		16 Southern Sicily
		18 Southern Adriatic Sea (part)
		19 Western Ionian Sea
		20 Eastern Ionian Sea
		21 Southern Ionian Sea
	3.1 AEGEAN	22 Aegean Sea
		23 Crete
EASTERN	3.2 LEVANT	24 Northern Levant Sea
		25 Cyprus
		26 Southern Levant Sea
		27 Eastern Levant Sea
BLACK SEA	4.1 MARMARA	28 Marmara Sea
	4.2 BLACK SEA	29 Black Sea
	4.3 AZOV SEA	30 Azov Sea

Annex 2

GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) (GFCM, 2009)



---- FAO statistical divisions (red) ---- GFCM geographical subareas (black)

01 – Northern Alboran Sea	07 – Gulf of Lion	13 – Gulf of Hammamet	19 – Western Ionian Sea	25 – Cyprus
02 – Alboran island	08 – Corsica	14 – Gulf of Gabès	20 – Eastern Ionian Sea	26 – Southern Levant Sea

03 – Southern Alboran Sea	09 – Ligurian Sea and northern Tyrrhenian Sea	15 – Malta	21 – Southern Ionian Sea	27 – Eastern Levant Sea
04 – Algeria	10 – Southern and central Tyrrhenian Sea	16 – Southern Sicily	22 – Aegean Sea	28 – Marmara Sea
05 – Balearic Islands	11.1 – Western Sardinia 11.2 – Eastern Sardinia	17 – Northern Adriatic Sea	23 – Crete	29 – Black Sea
06 – Northern Spain	12 – Northern Tunisia	18 – Southern Adriatic Sea	24 – Northern Levant Sea	30 – Azov Sea

Annex 3

Geographical coordinates for GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) (GFCM, 2009)

GSAs	LIMITS	GSAs	LIMITS	GSAs	LIMITS	GSAs	LIMITS
1	Coast Line 36º N 5º 36' W 36º N 3º 20' W 36º 05' N 3º 20' W 36º 05' N 2º 40' W 36º N 2º 40' W 36º N 1º 30' W 36º 30' N 1º 30' W 36º 30' N 1º W 37º 36' N 1º W	**4**	Coast Line 36º N 2º 13' W 36º N 1º 30' W 36º 30' N 1º 30' W 36º 30' N 1º W 37º N 1º W 37º N 0º 30' E 38º N 0º 30' E 38º N 8º 35' E Algeria-Tunisia border Morocco-Algeria border	**7**	Coast line 42º 26' N 3º 09' E 41º 20' N 8º E France-Italy border	**10**	Coast line (including north Sicily) 41º 18' N 13º E 41º 18' N 11º E 38º N 11º E 38º N 12º 30' E
2	36º 05' N 3º 20' W 36º 05' N 2º 40' W 35º 45' N 3º 20' W 35º 45' N 2º 40' W	**5**	38º N 0º 30' E 39º 30' N 0º 30' E 39º 30' N 1º 30' W 40º N 1º 30' E 40º N 2º E 40º 30' N 2º E 40º 30' N 6º E 38º N 6º E	**8**	43º 15' N 7º 38' E 43º 15' N 9º 45' E 41º 18' N 9º 45' E 41º 20' N 8º E 41° 18' N 8° E	**11**	41º 47' N 6º E 41° 18' N 6° E 41º 18' N 11º E 38º 30' N 11º E 38º 30' N 8º 30' E 38º N 8º 30' E 38º N 6º E
3	Coast Line 36º N 5º 36' W 35º 49' N 5º 36' W 36º N 3º 20' W 35º 45' N 3º 20' W 35º 45' N 2º 40' W 36º N 2º 40' W	**6**	Coast line 37º 36' N 1º W 37º N 1º W 37º N 0º 30' E 39º 30' N 0º 30' E 39º 30' N 1º 30' W 40º N 1º 30' E	**9**	Coast line France-Italy border 43º 15' N 7º 38' E 43º 15' N 9º 45' E 41º 18' N 9º 45' E 41º 18' N 13º E	**12**	Coast line Algeria-Tunisia border 38º N 8º 30' E 38º 30' N 8º 30' E 38º 30' N 11º E 38º N 11º E 37º N 12º E

	36º N 1º 13’ W Morocco-Algeria border		40º N 2º E 40º 30’ N 2º E 40º 30’ N 6º E 41º 47’ N 6º E 42º 26’ N 3º 09’ E				37º N 11º 04’E

GSAs	LIMITS	GSAs	LIMITS	GSAs	LIMITS
13	Coastline 37º N 11º 04’E 37º N 12º E 35º N 13º 30’ E 35º N 11º E	**19**	Coastline (including east Sicily) 40º 04’ N 18º 29’ E 37º N 15º 18’ E 35º N 15º 18’ E 35º N 19º 10’ E 39º 58’ N 19º 10’ E	**25**	35º 47’ N 32º E 34º N 32º E 34º N 35º E 35º 47’ N 35º E
14	Coastline 35º N 11º E 35º N 15º 18’ E Tunisia-Libya border	**20**	Coastline Albania-Greece border 39º 58’ N 19º 10’ E 35º N 19º 10’ E 35º N 23º E 36º 30’ N 23º E	**26**	Coastline Libya-Egypt border 34º N 25º 09’ E 34º N 34º 13’ E Egypt-Gaza Strip border
15	36º 30’ N 13º 30’ E 35º N 13º 30’E 35º N 15º 18’ E 36º 30’ N 15º 18’ E	**21**	Coastline Tunisia-Libya border 35º N 15º 18’ E 35º N 23º E 34º N 23º E 34º N 25º 09’ E Libya-Egypt border	**27**	Coastline Egypt-Gaza Strip border 34º N 34º 13’ E 34º N 35º E 35º 47’ N 35º E Turkey-Syria border

16	Coastline 38º N 12º 30’ E 38º N 11º E 37º N 12º E 35º N 13º 30’ E 36º 30’ N 13º 30’ E 36º 30’ N 15º 18’ E 37º N 15º 18’ E	**22**	Coastline 36º 30’ N 23º E 36º N 23º E 36º N 26º 30’ E 34º N 26º 30’ E 34º N 29º E 36º 43’ N 29º E	**28**	
17	Coastline 41º 55’ N 15º 08’ E Croatia-Montenegro border	**23**	36º N 23º E 36º N 26º 30’ E 34º N 26º 30’ E 34º N 23º E	**29**	
18	Coastlines (both sides) 41º 55’ N 15º 08’ E 40º 04’ N 18º 29’ E Croatia-Montenegro border Albania-Greece border	**24**	Coastline 36º 43’ N 29º E 34º N 29º E 34º N 32º E 35º 47’ N 32º E 35º 47’ N 35º E Turkey-Syria border	**30**	

Resolution GFCM/32/2008/1 on reporting on the implementation of GFCM management measures

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECOGNIZING the vital importance of implementating GFCM measures, as referred to in Article 8 of the GFCM Agreement, to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the obligation of the contracting parties to transpose the relevant GFCM recommendations adopted in virtue of Article 13 of the GFCM Agreement, into the appropriate policy, legal or institutional framework to which they pertain;

REFERRING to the responsibilities of the Compliance Committee (CoC) in monitoring the implementation of GFCM measures;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the CoC underlined the need to improve the quality of information submitted on the implementation of GFCM measures;

NOTING the duties of the GFCM Secretariat, with particular reference to Rule V paragraph 4 of the GFCM Rules of Procedure;

UNDERLINING that the adoption of this resolution is without prejudice to specific data and information reporting obligations contained in the relevant recommendations and resolutions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties should report annually to the GFCM Secretariat on the implementation of GFCM measures, at least 30 days prior to each GFCM session, using the standard form provided in the Annex to this resolution.

Annex 1

Standard form to report on the implementation of GFCM measures

Reference to GFCM measures	Implementing policy, legal or institutional framework	Reference to national law (if applicable)	Progress on operational implementation	Remarks (including constraints)

Resolution GFCM/31/2007/4 on the Pelagos sanctuary for Mediterranean marine mammals

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

NOTING the imperative international responsibility concerning the conservation and management of the marine living resources in the Mediterranean for the needs of present and future generations;

RECALLING that establishing closed or specially regulated fishing areas is recognized to be one of the measures for the recovery of marine fish stocks;

RECALLING also that the sustainable management of fish stocks is closely linked with and may benefit from the conservation of other marine biodiversity components, in particular high trophic level species;

NOTING that an intergovernmental agreement concerning the creation of a marine mammal sanctuary in the Mediterranean hereafter named the "Pelagos Agreement", extends, *inter alia*, on waters beyond national sovereignties or jurisdictions of the coastal states (as in Annex 1);

NOTING also the wish expressed by the contracting parties to the Pelagos Agreement to cooperate with the GFCM on matters related to fisheries;

TAKING NOTE of the measures, attached to this intergovernmental agreement, related to fisheries matters, in particular Article 7 (b) and (c) by which the contracting parties to the Pelagos Agreement: i) will comply with the international regulations and those of the European Community regarding the use and the keeping of fishing equipment known as "pelagic driftnet" and ii) will exchange their views, as deemed necessary, to promote in the appropriate fora and after scientific evaluation, the adoption of regulations related to the use of new fishing equipment that could result in the indirect capture of marine mammals or that could endanger their sources of prey, while also considering the risk of loss or of deliberate disposal of fishing equipment at sea;

NOTING also that the Pelagos Sanctuary, as a specially protected area, refers to the Agreement between the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Migratory Species for Animal Wildlife and the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area, and was recognized by the contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) as a specially protected area of Mediterranean importance (SPAMI) and, as such, the contracting parties to this protocol agree "to comply with the measures applicable to the SPAMI and not to authorize nor undertake any activities that might be contrary to the objectives for which the SPAMIs were established" (Article 8.3.b);

CONSIDERING that most of the GFCM Mediterranean riparian states and the European Union are parties to one or both of the agreements mentioned above and that the conservation plan adopted by the contracting parties to the Pelagos Agreement refers to the competence of the GFCM, as far as fisheries measures are concerned;

CONSIDERING also Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/5 related to the criteria for obtaining the status of cooperating non-contracting party in the GFCM area of application;

NOTING the interest of the Pelagos Sanctuary as an ecosystem approach experimental zone;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, that the following resolution:

1. The GFCM Secretariat is requested to cooperate with the Pelagos Secretariat on the exchange of data. Each organization should report to its respective governing bodies.

Annex

Excerpt of the Agreement concerning the creation of a marine mammal sanctuary in the Mediterranean

Article 3

The sanctuary is composed of maritime areas situated within the internal waters and territorial seas of the French Republic, the Italian Republic and the Principality of Monaco, as well as portions of adjacent high seas. The limits of the sanctuary are the following:

- to the west, a line extending from Point Escampobariou (western point of the Giens peninsula: 43º 01' 70' N, 06º 05' 90'' E) to Cape Falcone, situated on the western coast of the island of Sardinia (40º 58' 00'' N, 008º 12' 00'' E),

- to the east, a line extending from Cape Ferro, situated on the north-eastern coast of Sardinia (41º 09' 18'' N, 009º 31'18'' E) to Fosso Chiarone, situated on the western Italian coast (42º 21'24'' N, 011º 31' 00'' E).

Resolution GFCM/29/2005/2 on general guidelines for a GFCM control and enforcement scheme: needs and principles

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The main aim of the General guidelines for a GFCM control and enforcement scheme should be to create a GFCM scheme that ensures a high degree of compliance with relevant conservation measures and legal certainty and security for the vessels concerned. Furthermore, such scheme should pay due regard to the characteristics and specificities of different GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) and fisheries. An effective control and enforcement scheme should embody a number of principles, namely:

a) consistency with the provisions of the GFCM Agreement and existing instruments of international law;

b) evaluation of existing GFCM measures and possibly complementing them with new measures.

c) the scheme should underline the general duty to cooperate and a commitment to transparency, taking into account confidentiality requirements;

d) the scheme should inlcude two types of measures:

- measures applicable to all fisheries; measures concerning vessels would apply only to vessels beyond a certain size.

- measures applicable on a case-by-case basis to certain fisheries, where and when such measures would be cost-effective;

e) the scheme should contribute to the improvement of data collection and statistics and to the timely transmission of statistics, for scientific as well as for monitoring purposes;

f) provisions for ensuring compliance by vessels of both contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (PCC) and non-contracting parties, thereby seeking to minimize the level of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the GFCM area of application; and

g) the special requirements of developing states should be fully recognized and active cooperation should be established to facilitate their implementation of the measures.

2. Under these circumstances, a possible GFCM scheme could consist of the basic components hereafter.

Flag state duties

3. The following monitoring measures should be taken by the flag states in regard to vessels entitled to fly their flags in the GFCM area of application:

a) ensuring control over their vessels by:

- adopting measures so that their vessels comply with and do not undermine GFCM conservation and management measures;

- authorizing their vessels to fish in the GFCM area of application by means of fishing authorizations, licences, or permits;

- ensuring they do not authorize vessels to fish in the GFCM area of application unless they are able to effectively exercise their responsibilities in respect of such vessels, including monitoring and controlling their fishing activities;
- ensuring that their vessels do not conduct unauthorized fishing within areas under the national jurisdiction of other states, through appropriate cooperation with coastal states concerned, and other relevant means available to the flag state; and
- requiring their vessels fishing on the high seas to carry the licence, authorization or permit on board at all times and to produce it on demand for inspection by a duly authorized person;

b) establishing a national record of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish in the GFCM area of application, which should include vessels of other states authorized under charter agreements, and transmitting this information to the GFCM;

c) putting transshipment regulation in place;

d) implementing measures regarding the operation and control of chartering;

e) defining requirements for recording and timely reporting of vessel position, catch of target and non-target species, fishing effort and other relevant fisheries data including an estimate of discards, unless GFCM stipulates otherwise; these data should be verified for certain fisheries by observer programmes, where these programmes have been adopted by the Commission;

f) implementating a vessel monitoring system (VMS); and

g) Investigating, following up and reporting on actions taken in response to an alleged violation by a vessel.

Obligations of the CPCs

4. The obligations of the CPCs should include:

a) the provision to the GFCM, in the manner and at such regular intervals as may be required by the GFCM, of compliance reports and information concerning its fishing activities, including the fishing area and fishing vessels, in order to facilitate the compilation of reliable fisheries statistics on GFCM regulated species (catch, effort, size samples, etc.), and the effective implementation of the GFCM compliance programme; and

b) compliance with all GFCM conservation and management measures.

Compliance and enforcement

5. The CPCs, through the Commission, should establish an observation and inspection programme to ensure compliance with GFCM conservation and management measures. The programme may, *inter alia*, comprise the following elements:

a) high sea inspections;

b) procedures for the effective investigation of alleged violations of GFCM conservation and management measures, and for reporting to the Commission on the actions taken, including procedures for exchanging information;

c) provisions for appropriate action to be taken when inspections reveal serious violations as well as the expedient and transparent follow-up of such actions in order to uphold the responsibility of the flag state within the intended programme;

d) port inspections;

e) monitoring of landings and catches, including statistical follow-up for management purposes;

f) specific monitoring programmes adopted by the GFCM, including boarding and inspection; and

g) observer programmes.

A programme to promote compliance by vessels of non-contracting parties

6. Further to existing measures, the GFCM should examine measures consistent with international law to deter activities of such vessels which undermine the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures, such as:

a) the implementation of all the relevant elements of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing; and

b) the prohibition of landings and transshipments of GFCM species by vessels of non-contracting parties, sighted in the GFCM area of application, that do not comply with the relevant GFCM conservation and management measures.

Resolution GFCM/21/1995/2 on the reporting of activities of fishing vessels operating in the Mediterranean Sea

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

AGREED at its twenty-first session (Spain, May 1995) to set a minimum length limit of 15 metres for the application of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (FAO Compliance Agreement);

MINDFUL that Article II.2 of the FAO Compliance Agreement allows but does not require a contracting party to exempt fishing vessels of less than 24 metres in length from the application of the agreement, subject to the provisions set out in Article II.2;

NOTING that Article II.3 of the FAO Compliance Agreement provides, for coastal states of fishing regions such as the Mediterranean where exclusive economic zones and other zones of extended jurisdiction have not been declared, that a different length limit below which the FAO Compliance Agreement shall not apply is set, and that the limit would only apply in respect of vessels flying the flag of a coastal state and operating exclusively in that fishing region;

CONCERNED that there is no provision for vessels of non-coastal states that operate in the Mediterranean to report on their activities to the GFCM;

NOTING also that Article III of the FAO Compliance Agreement requires the flag states that operate in the Mediterranean to report on their activities to the GFCM;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. For the purpose of Article II.3 of the FAO Compliance Agreement, a minimum length limit of 15 metres should be established for fishing vessels flying the flag of a coastal state of the Mediterranean and operating exclusively in the Mediterranean;

2. All states without distinction, whose fishing vessels operate in international waters in the Mediterranean, should be requested to provide information on these vessels, as set out in Article VI of the FAO Compliance Agreement, to the GFCM Secretariat.

Resolution GFCM/15/1980/1 on the definition of a littoral management policy

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that the management of the coastal area implies a global process of reflection, discussion and decision-making, taking into account the interactions of all the activities conducted in that area;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that this process is based on the definition of a management policy drawn up by all the parties concerned within a multidisciplinary structure or mechanism;

FINALLY CONSIDERING that the authorities responsible for the management of coastal resources should contribute to this process with the results of their analysis in order to ensure that the needs and prospects of coastal fisheries and aquaculture are fully taken into consideration in the management of coastal areas;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. A national strategy indicating in particular the place of artisanal fisheries in management schemes should be defined;

2. Coastal occupation plans should be developed according to the types of utilization;

3. Practical management schemes should be formulated;

4. Liaison among fishers, research workers and administrators should be strenghtened by establishing multidisciplinary reflection, discussion and decision structures.

3. OTHER DECISIONS

Decision GFCM/38/2014/1 Roadmap to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Mediterranean

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
Institutional aspects at the regional and subregional levels	Set up a working group of the Compliance Committee on IUU fishing and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)	With a view to constantly collecting, updating and analysing information on the nature and the extent of IUU fishing and on available means to fight it, an ad hoc forum within the framework of the GFCM should be devoted to address these issues
	Strengthen mechanisms to facilitate knowledge sharing and cooperation among Mediterranean riparian states, including through the GFCM and other existing relevant organizations	The GFCM should create a repository of information on the nature and the extent of IUU fishing in the Mediterranean. Contracting parties should commit to make relevant information available and to cooperate within the remit of the GFCM
	Establish a network of entities and institutions that could contribute to share knowledge and improve cooperation	Relevant institutions and entities should be identified. The GFCM could establish a platform, including via electronic means, to facilitate the exchange of information in the network
	Assess the presence of non-contracting parties in the GFCM area of application	All efforts should be done to ensure that non contracting parties known to fish in the GFCM area of application are invited to either become contracting parties or cooperating non-contracting parties

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
Legal aspects	Assist, develop and harmonize the legislations of contracting parties taking into account their specific needs in the fight against IUU fishing	The GFCM should try to align the legal frameworks of its contracting parties using common benchmarks and acknowledging the different priorities and needs existing at the subregional level
	Ensure the timely submission of information relating to IUU fishing to the GFCM Secretariat, according to the recommendations in force	The contracting parties should comply with requirements under relevant GFCM recommendations requesting information on IUU fishing (e.g. Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1, Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8)
	Elaborate a regional plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU activities based on scientific and socio-economic data	The contracting parties should make proposals to set up a plan of action as a main element to fight IUU fishing activities. This should be done by involving stakeholders, fishers associations and relevant civil society organizations
Scientific research aspects	Develop and agree on standard methodologies to evaluate IUU catches and trade of fishing products in support of scientific advice	The contracting parties should develop studies addressing the main targeted species. A collection of these studies would be necessary as a basis for the work to be done
	Strengthen the national statistical systems of Mediterranean riparian states, including through the elaboration of common formats for reporting and evaluation of data on IUU fishing	In order to improve efficiency in the fight against IUU fishing, the contracting parties should consider shifting towards the use of common formats to report data
Technical aspects	Elaborate a catalogue of fishing gear and their technical characteristics mainly used in the Mediterranean for IUU fishing purposes	Available information should be collected by the GFCM through Mediterranean riparian states with a view to enabling the marking of fishing gear

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Carry out surveys on the use of illegal fishing gear in the GFCM area of application	Particular attention should be given in the studies to the trading of such gear between contracting parties
	Eradicate illegal bycatch, discards and ghost fishing	Illegal practices causing bycatch, discards and ghost fishing should be identified and phased out and selectivity of fishing gear improved
	Mitigate the impacts of IUU fishing on cetaceans, seabirds and turtles	In view of mitigating the impacts of IUU fishing on cetaceans in the Mediterranean, projects should be launched together with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS)
	Harmonize the following instruments of management in the Mediterranean, including at the subregional level and wherever it is possible: fishing seasons, fishing areas, minimum length size of target species and specifications for mesh size	Under the guidance of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), Mediterranean riparian states should provide advice to the Commission so that it can formulate and adopt recommendations on the basis of relevant technical elements
Socio-economic and educational aspects	Launch awareness campaigns for the protection of Mediterranean fisheries against IUU fishing	The establishment of a network of entities and institutions would be instrumental to undertake this action

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Facilitate the involvement of professional associations and fishers in the fight against IUU fishing, including through co-management and participatory approaches, in order to foster ownership of measures taken	The lack of participation of professional associations and fishers should be regarded as a weakness in the fight against IUU fishing. The conservation of the Mediterranean ecosystems and the sustainable use of their resources could benefit from their direct involvement
	Promote research by means of collecting and analysing socio-economic data with a view to evaluating their relevance in connection with IUU fishing in the Mediterranean, taking stock of the work of the FAO regional projects as well as of that of universities and relevant programmes	In light of the socio-economic dimension of IUU fishing in the Mediterranean, all relevant data should be collected and analysed to better understand the root causes of the problem
MCS-related aspects	Improve traceability mechanisms and take measures to prevent, deter and eliminate the trade in IUU products	A deterrent system to fight IUU fishing would have to ensure that controls are performed from the net to the plate. The work done by the FAO and the GFCM could be taken into account as well as the requirements of EU regulations. Market-related measures should be developed, extending beyond the FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU)
	Adapt tools such as the joint international inspection scheme and observer programmes to the contracting parties, including at the subregional level	Coordination among controlling bodies operating at the regional level (e.g. coast guards, border guards, financial police and fisheries inspectors) would have to be pursued

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Carry out joint trainings of fisheries inspectors and other enforcement authorities	The GFCM could organize training sessions with the cooperation of the EU (i.e. the European Fisheries Control Agency), if possible
	Establish a GFCM centralized vessel monitoring system (VMS) and continue providing technical assistance and transfer of technology in the field of MCS	A GFCM centralized VMS would significantly facilitate not only the transfer of technology but also the sharing of knowledge among contracting parties. Without substituting national fishing monitoring centres, it would endow contracting parties devoid of this centre with a much needed MCS tool

Decision GFCM/37/2013/1 on guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption of GFCM multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species which urges the control of fishing effort and the improvement of the exploitation pattern of demersal fisheries;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species and calling for the development of a management programme of fishing effort in several GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) as well as in adjacent subareas, as relevant;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING that small pelagic fisheries are multispecies and that management decisions should therefore be taken considering at least both sardine and anchovy;

CONSIDERING that small pelagic stocks play a fundamental ecological role in transmitting biomass and energy from short trophic webs towards higher trophic levels;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and of the scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method to this end shall be established;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) in its recurrent scientific advice considers that several stocks are subject to high overfishing and that sustainable management requires measures aimed at controlling or reducing the fishing effort and to improve the exploitation pattern safeguarding the juveniles;

RECALLING Resolution GFCM/33/2009/1 on the management of demersal fisheries in the GFCM area of application stating that unless proven unnecessary by sound scientific advice, a reduction of a minimum of 10 percent of bottom trawling fishing effort should be applied throughout the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the Guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area of

application, agreed upon at the thirty-sixth session (Morocco, May 2012) of the GFCM, hereinafter named "GFCM guidelines for management plans";

*CONSIDERIN*G that preventing actions are needed to counteract and control excessive fishing mortality levels pending the development and adoption of the multiannual management plans for the relevant stocks and fisheries concerned;

DETERMINED to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of exploited marine living resources with particular attention to straddling fish stocks and on fish stocks exploited by more than one contracting party or cooperating non-contracting party (CPC);

RESOLVES, that:

PART I
Fostering multiannual management plans

1. The CPCs whose vessels exploit either the small pelagic or demersal stocks such as the one listed in Annex 1 and which may be exploited by more than one CPC in any of the GSAs in particular in the high seas, are encouraged to develop, whenever advisable and through regional and subregional cooperation, joint fisheries management measures. Such measures, which ideally could be based on national management plans, should contribute to the development of multiannual management plans for the mixed fisheries concerned that may subsequently form the basis for GFCM management plans.

2. The list of species in Annex 1 from which CPCs can choose the species or the mix of species considered to be a priority for their fisheries, is not deemed to be exhaustive and may be revised on the basis of SAC advice or upon request from CPCs. Notwithstanding Annex 1, upon request from a CPC, the SAC may include additional relevant species in the analysis of different management scenarios for the development of multiannual management plans for the fisheries concerned at the subregional level.

3. The management measures to be identified should be based on the evaluation of different management scenarios by the SAC and should be in line with the GFCM guidelines for management plans and, in particular, with the following general objectives:

- to counteract and/or to prevent overfishing with a view to ensuring the sustainable economic viability of fisheries;
- to provide high long-term yields;
- to restore and/or to maintain, to the extent possible, the stock size of harvested species at least at levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield;
- to guarantee a low risk of stocks falling outside safe biological limits;
- to ensure protection of biodiversity; and
- to avoid undermining the structure and functioning of the ecosystems.

4. Coordination and cooperation among concerned CPCs, as referred to in paragraph 1, should be further promoted with a view for the GFCM to adopting further multiannual management plans for fisheries concerning more than one CPC if possible as from 2014. The process to develop and adopt the multiannual management plans is not constrained by an ending date to accomplish such a goal.

5. Notwithstanding provisions under paragraph 1, fisheries exploiting marine living resources exclusively distributed in territorial waters or in waters under national jurisdiction of a coastal state, which are not exploited by more than one CPC, should not be included in a GFCM multiannual plan, unless specifically requested by the concerned CPC.

6. In view of allowing CPCs to develop the approach referred to in paragraph 1, they are encouraged to ensure:

a) the quality and completeness of the primary data collected under their national programmes, and of the detailed and aggregated data derived therefrom which are transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat for scientific analysis by the SAC as a basis for advice on different management scenarios for sustainable fisheries; and

b) an adequate annual scientific monitoring and data gathering both on the exploitation levels of their fisheries and of the status of the marine living resources exploited by them; to this end, appropriate data should be collected, analysed and made available at SAC developings and subcommittees meetings for the assessment of the stocks.

7. Notwithstanding data submission through the Task 1 statistical matrix as requested by Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3, the GFCM Secretariat, on behalf of the SAC, may request, through specific calls, the detailed and aggregated data needed to perform scientific and impact assessment analysis. The GFCM Secretariat with the assistance of the SAC, and on the basis of advice by its subcommittees, is requested to provide the format for data submissions.

8. With a view to enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of the SAC scientific advice-making process, the CPCs may coordinate themselves at the subregional level to facilitate data sharing and preliminary scientific analysis to be subsequently presented and discussed at the SAC working groups and its subcommittees. Scientific analysis performed outside the SAC working groups should be presented using the SAC assessment forms including the input and output tables together with the diagnostic of the method(s) applied. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs should individually and collectively engage in capacity building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on fisheries and exploited stocks.

9. Pending the adoption of multiannual management plans, elaborated through the subregional working groups, management measures (e.g. fishing effort, seasonal closures, minimum size, selectivity, characteristics of fishing gears, etc.) may be defined at the subregional level by stock or group of stocks.

PART II
Improvement of the exploitation patterns

10. Pending the adoption of management plans, the CPCs should promote more selective fisheries to improve their exploitation patterns with a view to reducing and eliminating, to the extent possible, discards while avoiding capture of juveniles at least below a certain minimum conservation size.

11. The CPCs are encouraged to apply, on a voluntary basis, the minimum conservation size as indicated in Annex 2.

12. When a CPC decides to apply such conservation size, a marine organism which is smaller than the minimum conservation size specified in Annex 2 (hereinafter “undersized marine organism”) should not be caught, retained on board, transshipped, transferred, sold, displayed or offered for sale.

13. The size of marine organism should be measured in accordance with the following criteria:

a) total length (from the tip of the snout to the end of the tailfin) for finfishes,

b) for crustaceans:

i) either the length of carapace, parallel to the midline, from the back of either eye socket to the midpoint of the distal dorsal edge of the carapace; or

ii) the total length, from the tip of the rostrum to the rear end of the telson not including the setae where present.

14. If more than one method of measuring size is permitted, the marine organisms should be deemed to be of the required size if at least one of the stipulated measurements is equal to or greater than the relevant minimum conservation size.

15. Provisions under paragraphs 10, 11 and 12 above are without prejudice to stricter measures adopted by a CPC.

16. Notwithstanding paragraphs 10, 11 and 12 when due to unavoidable circumstances, undersized marine organisms have been actually caught, the master of the catching vessel should record those catches of undersized specimens (estimated weight and numbers) in a specific section of the logbook.

17. Without prejudice to provisions foreseen in paragraphs 10, 11 and 12 when a system to avoid discards and an obligation to land all catches have been established by a CPC, the master of the fishing vessel should not be allowed to discard those catches and should therefore land the fish caught independently of its size, in line with the provisions stipulated by the CPC. All quantities landed should be recorded and should not be displayed, offered for sale or used for human consumption.

18. The CPCs implementing a landing obligations scheme as stipulated by paragraph 17 should notify its content and characteristics to the GFCM Secretariat in advance of the subsequent GFCM annual session with a view to informing the other parties.

19. The SAC is requested to provide synoptic tables reporting, for the main demersal resources exploited by the bottom trawl and bottom-set nets operational units at the subregional level and, where possible by GSA, the following information:

a) the minimum size of maturity;

b) the size at first maturity (25 percent, 50 percent and 75 percent);

c) the minimum size of capture; and

d) the size at first capture (25 percent, 50 percent and 75 percent).

20. Priority should be given to cover the FAO subareas 37.3 (Eastern Mediterranean) and 37.4 (Black Sea).

21. The CPCs implementing on a voluntary basis provisions stipulated in paragraphs 11 and 12 should notify the modalities and conditions of application at the national level to the GFCM Secretariat in advance of the subsequent GFCM annual session with a view to informing the other parties.

Annex 1

Indicative list of species*, from which CPCs can choose the species or the mix of species considered to be a priority for their fisheries, that may be included in regional or subregional multiannual management plans by fishery(ies)

Aristaeomorpha foliacea	ARS	Giant red shrimp
Aristeus antennatus	ARA	Blue and red shrimp
Coryphaena hippurus	DOL	Common dolphinfish
Dicentrarchus labrax	BSS	Sea bass
Eledone cirrhosa	EOI	Horned octopus
Eledone moschata	EDT	Musky octopus
Engraulis encrasicolus	ANE	European anchovy
Eutrigla gurnardus	GUG	Grey gurnard
Helicolenus dactylopterus	BRF	Blackbelly rosefish
Illex coindetii	SQM	Broadtail shortfin squid
Lophius budegassa	ANK	Blackbellied angler
Lophius piscatorius	MON	Angler
Merlangius merlangus	WHG	Whiting
Merluccius merluccius	HKE	European hake
Micromesistius poutassou	WHB	Blue whiting
Mugilidae	MUL	Mullets nei
Mullus barbatus	MUT	Red mullet
Mullus surmuletus	MUR	Surmullet
Mustelus mustelus	SMD	Smooth-hound

Nephrops norvegicus	NEP	Norway lobster
Pagellus acarne	SBA	Axillary seabream
Pagellus bogaraveo	SBR	Blackspot seabream
Pagellus erythrinus	PAC	Common pandora
Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	Deep-water rose shrimp
Phycis blennoides	GFB	Greater forkbeard
Psetta maxima	TUR	Turbot
Raja clavata	RJC	Thornback ray
Raja asterias	JRS	Mediterranean starry ray
Raja miraletus	JAI	Brown ray
Rapana venosa	RPW	Rapa whelk
Sardina pilchardus	PIL	Sardine
Scomber spp.	MAZ	Scomber mackerels nei
Sepia officinalis	CTC	Common cuttlefish
Solea solea	SOL	Common sole
Spicara smaris	SPC	Picarel
Sprattus sprattus	SPR	European sprat
Squalus acanthias	DGS	Piked dogfish
Squilla mantis	MTS	Spottail mantis squillid
Trachurus mediterraneus	HMM	Mediterranean horse mackerel
Trachurus trachurus	HOM	Atlantic horse mackerel

Trigla lucerna (= Chelidonichthys lucerna)	GUU	Tub gurnard
Trisopterus minutus	POD	Poor cod

* Subject to further advice from the SAC

Annex 2

Minimum conservation size of marine organisms

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	Minimum size
1. Fish		
Engraulis encrasicolus *	European anchovy	9 cm
Merluccius merluccius	European hake	20 cm
Mullus spp.	Red mullets	11 cm
Pagellus bogaraveo	Red seabream	33 cm
Pagellus erythrinus	Common pandora	15 cm
*Sardina pilchardus***	European sardine	11 cm
Solea solea	Common sole	20 cm
2. Crustaceans		
Nephrops norvegicus	Norway lobster	20 mm CL 70 mm TL
Parapenaeus longirostris	Deep-water rose shrimp	20 mm CL

(*) Anchovy: CPCs may convert the minimum size into 110 specimens per kg;

(**) Sardine: CPCs may convert the minimum size into 55 specimens per kg

Decision GFCM/37/2013/2 Roadmap to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Black Sea

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT IUU FISHING IN THE BLACK SEA	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
Political and institutional aspects	Political will of the six Black Sea riparian states will be needed at one point to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing	To address IUU fishing in any future relevant document to be discussed and agreed upon by the six Black Sea riparian states
	Strengthen mechanisms to facilitate cooperation and coordination among Black Sea riparian states, including through existing international and regional agreements, and encourage governments to integrate their body of law (see Appendix E of the report of the thirty-seventh session [Croatia, May 2013]) to harmonize fisheries regulations and laws	Efforts to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea should depart from the implementation of existing measures. Black Sea riparian states should more promptly cooperate with existing international and regional agreements
Legal aspects	Develop a regional plan of action to fight IUU fishing and related activities in the Black Sea Elaborate an inventory of the existing legal instruments	The lack of common rules shared by Black Sea riparian states, coupled with the joint dimension of the problems posed by IUU fishing, calls for the elaboration of a regional plan of action to fight IUU fishing tailored for the Black Sea. This could be done on the basis of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU) or other relevant instruments
	Elaborate a regional strategy to regulate small-scale fisheries in the Black Sea Prepare a background document about the importance of small-scale fisheries for the next symposium in November 2013	Small-scale fisheries account for an important share of the fish caught in the GFCM area of application. They have a huge value, also cultural, and have often been overlooked by policy-making, including in the Black Sea. Black Sea riparian states are invited to actively participate in the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Malta, November 2013) and report there on salient aspects of this sector. Also, they are invited to attend the FAO Technical Consultations to be held in May 2013 (Rome)

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT IUU FISHING IN THE BLACK SEA	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
Scientific aspects	Develop and agree on standard methodologies to evaluate IUU catches in support of stock assessments	Species to be considered are anchovy, horse mackerel, sprat, sturgeon, spiny dogfish, turbot and whiting. A collection of existing studies would be necessary as a basis for the work
	Inventory of data collection frameworks existing at the national level Propose to circulate the questionnaires for data collection to the non-contracting parties (in collaboration with the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution [Black Sea Commission or BSC]).	Because data collection is limited in scope and national systems in the Black Sea region lack harmonization, existing gaps and needs should be appraised. The inventory should be carried out within the remit of those GFCM Framework Programme actions relating to data collection (Bulgaria, April 2013)
	Provide technical assistance to strengthen capacity in the domain of data collection/processing/analysis/sharing Identify training activities for the next Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) meeting.	Consider the possibility of endowing the BSC and the GFCM with efficient and reliant data submission systems through technical support to Black Sea riparian states
	Strengthen national statistical systems of Black Sea riparian states, including through the elaboration of common forms for data reporting and to establish a regional common database.	Ad hoc measures should be identified (e.g. separate landings of sprat from those of anchovy) and referred to the ongoing actions relating to data collection within the remit of the GFCM Framework Programme. Focal points of Black Sea riparian states should work together, including by sharing software employed by their fishing vessels, and use as reference point the existing statistical frameworks
	Promote scientific research in the Black Sea through FAO regional projects (e.g. BlackSeaFish), the GFCM Framework Programme and any other relevant project	Existing initiatives should be pursued in order to build up regional undertakings in the scientific domain

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT IUU FISHING IN THE BLACK SEA	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Results of ongoing projects should be reported to the WGBS, which can facilitate the identification of priorities for further actions.	
Technical aspects	Elaborate a catalogue of fishing gear and vessel types used in the Black Sea The WGBS was informed that a new book, to be published by October 2013, included a chapter on fishing gear in Black Sea (initiatives from the countries). Find complementarities, if any, with the proposed catalogue. Ensure that the GFCM catalogue includes all the possible additional information statistics of the different types of gear used by the different fleet segments.	Available information should be collected by Black Sea riparian states and the GFCM could be the repository of this information
	Scientific studies on selectivity should be collected. On the basis of gaps identified in the studies, further papers should be drafted	Particular attention should be given in studies to the implications of bycatch reduction, particularly of cetaceans, and discards. The positive and negative implications of monofilaments should be considered
	Marine protected areas (MPAs) have to be properly managed according to existing rules in place in the Black Sea. Further studies should be carried out to assist states in establishing MPAs in the Black Sea Establish a fisheries restricted area in the longer term	A network of MPAs in the Black Sea should be established and Black Sea riparian states should consider the creation of fisheries restricted areas through the GFCM, where necessary
	Study the mitigation of the impacts of IUU fishing on cetaceans	In view of mitigating the impacts of IUU fishing on cetaceans, a project should be launched under the auspices of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), BSC and the GFCM

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT IUU FISHING IN THE BLACK SEA	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Standardization of the following instruments of management in the Black Sea would be required: fishing seasons, fishing areas, minimum length size of priority species, registering and marking of fishing gears, technical specifications for mesh size, mitigation of bycatch and banning or progressive reduction of discards The WGBS and BSC should dedicate effort to propose ways of harmonizing existing measures among riparian states	Under the guidance of the WGBS, Black Sea riparian states should elaborate recommendations on the basis of relevant technical elements for the states to adopt. Other potential fora should be also considered
Technical aspects	Perform joint stock assessments of priority species The first Working Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea will be organized in Oct-Nov 2013 together with some training sessions. It is suggested that this first exercise will be for shared stocks. An effort has to be done to collect information from different countries on a limited number of priority species (turbot, sprat, anchovy and whiting) and to be prepared in advance to perform this joint assessment exercise.	Black Sea riparian states, including through the FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), should seek funding opportunities to support research in the Black Sea. The results of stock assessments performed for priority species should be brought to the GFCM Working Group on Stock Assessment, the GFCM Subcommittee on Stock Assessment and the BSC
	Carry out joint surveys at sea (demersal and small pelagic species) Prepare a cooperation programme for extending the current survey protocols being carried out at present to the other countries.	Launch common initiatives, including through the FAO/GFCM framework, for the direct evaluation of the status of the priority species
Socio-economic and educational aspects	Awareness campaigns for the protection of Black Sea fisheries against IUU fishing should be launched	A network of relevant actors in the Black Sea should be established to raise awareness. The establishment of a network of experts through the BSC and the GFCM could be instrumental to this action

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT IUU FISHING IN THE BLACK SEA	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Facilitate the development and involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations and the civil society in the management of Black Sea fisheries	The current lack of participation of NGOs should be considered by Black Sea riparian states and their contribution to the conservation of the Black Sea ecosystems and the sustainable use of their marine living resources could benefit from their involvement
	Invite the public opinion not to criminalize the fishery sector as a whole because of some IUU practices	The alarming recourse to violence in relation to IUU fishing activities in the Black Sea has to be duly addressed. Black Sea riparian states should endeavour to promote the positive role of fisheries
	Promote sustainable aquaculture activities	Opportunities for the development of aquaculture in the Black Sea should be sought. The GFCM, through its Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), and European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), could cooperate to assist Black Sea riparian states
MCS-related aspects	Improve market control and traceability mechanisms and take measures to minimize the trade of IUU products	A deterrent system to fight IUU fishing would have to ensure that controls are performed from the net to the plate. Work done by the FAO and the GFCM could be taken into account as well as the requirements by EU regulations. Market-related measures should be developed, departing from the IPOA-IUU of the FAO
	Joint adaptive inspection schemes and national observer programmes have to be envisaged	Coordination among controlling bodies operating at the regional level (e.g. coast guards, border guards and financial police) would have to be pursued, including through the existing regional network of coast guards in the Black Sea

ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FIGHT IUU FISHING IN THE BLACK SEA	OBJECTIVES/METHODOLOGY
	Carry out joint training of fisheries inspectors and other enforcement authorities	Common training based on best practices on controls in the six Black Sea riparian states should be organized. The GFCM could organize training sessions with the cooperation of the European Union (European Commission and if so agreed, the European Fisheries Control Agency)
	Reinforce monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and develop cost-effective options to that end	Facilitate, through competent organizations, technical assistance and capacity building opportunities for the control of fishing fleets, including through vessel monitoring systems (VMS), in the Black Sea

Decision GFCM/36/2012/1 on guidelines on a general management framework and the presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area of application

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem of 2001;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular Article 31a of its Plan of Implementation;

RECALLING the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECALLING the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species, Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic species and Resolution GFCM/33/2009/1 on the management of demersal fisheries in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the diversity of both the multispecies fisheries and of the life history traits of exploited stocks in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality must be kept below safe levels to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability to generate benefit for both current and future generations;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and of the scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method to this end should be established;

CONSIDERING the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) advice on the need to develop multiannual management plans based on agreed reference points and to evaluate different management scenarios;

AIMING to develop coherent, effective and efficient precautionary management systems in line with the agreed principles of sustainability and able to take actions on the basis of target and safeguard reference points, either model-based or empirical, as well as an associated system of decision control rules;

RESOLVES that:

PART I
General objectives and definitions

1. The GFCM may develop and adopt multiannual management plans for fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic stocks, in particular when shared among contracting parties, and operating in one or more adjacent GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs).

2. Such multiannual management plans should be designed to counteract and prevent overfishing while providing high long-term yields and maintaining, to the extent possible, the stock size of harvested species at levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield and with a low risk of stocks falling outside safe biological limits.

3. Whenever scientifically-based and in line with GFCM provisions, they should be coherent with the precautionary and/or ecosystem approaches and minimize the impact of fishing on the sensitive habitats.

4. For this purpose, the SAC may be requested to provide the GFCM with a set of management scenarios for each multiannual management plan to be adopted.

5. Each management scenario may evaluate, as appropriate, different measures including:

a) fishing gear selectivity, fishing effort regulation, and/or spatio-temporal closures with their time frame of implementation;

b) the probability and time frame for the recovery of the stock(s) based on adequate reference points and

c) the socio-economic impacts on fishing activities.

6. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels carry out fishing activities in the GFCM area of application should agree to cooperate with a view to gradually developing and implementing, whenever advisable, multiannual management plans for the fisheries concerned in accordance with these guidelines.

7. Such guidelines should not affect the possibility for CPCs to develop their own multiannual management plans, provided that the objective and measures therein are not less strict or in contradiction with GFCM measures.

Definitions

8. GFCM multiannual management plans may include, where relevant, the following elements:

a) Reference point: the conventional value of an indicator, either model-based or empirical, which represents the status of the fishery or exploited fish stocks or stocks assemblage, and whose characteristics are considered to be useful for the management of the fisheries with respect, for example, to an acceptable level of biological risk or a desired level of yield. These values may be key fishing mortality rates (F), total mortality rates (Z), exploitation rates (E), biomass levels, catch rates and related fishing effort or other set of empirical indicators that are related to the maximum potential of a stock or group of stocks and that produce the highest sustainable catches and economic viability of fisheries. In terms of their use, the reference points can be classified as Target, Threshold or Limit reference points.

b) Target reference point: a management objective based that points to a status of a fisheries and/or biological resource which is considered to be desirable. Target reference points should be set sufficiently far away from a limit reference points so that the probability that the limits will be exceeded is low. The trajectory toward the target(s) may be represented either on a linear plot with a single target reference point or on a two-dimension plot using two target reference points or on a multidimensional plot when more than two target reference points are used.

c) Threshold reference point: a precautionary reference point expressed either as a fishing mortality rate or a biomass level or another agreed indicator. It is between the limit and target reference points and used to reduce the probability that the limit reference point will be exceeded. It serves as a red flag and may trigger particular management actions designed to reduce fishing pressure and mortality. After this point, pre-negotiated management measures to reverse the situation should be initiated.

d) Limit reference point: a conservation reference point expressed either as a fishing mortality rate or biomass level or another agreed indicator that indicates the status of a fishery and/or a resource which is considered to be undesirable and which management actions should avoid with a high probability. After this point, pre-negotiated management measures to reverse the situation should be initiated.

PART II

Specific operational objectives, scientific monitoring and adaptation of the plans

9. The general objectives of a management plan adopted according to these guidelines should be attained on the basis of specific target reference points and, whenever possible and appropriate, on the basis of threshold and/or limit reference points to be chosen along with a range of management actions on a case by case basis depending on the available scientific and socio-economic advice by the SAC and within the lists proposed by the SAC as requested under paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 below.

10. The specific objective may be to keep, with a high probability, and throughout an accepted range of management actions and relevant time frame for their implementation, the fishing mortality and/or the exploitation rate and/or levels of biomass on the key stock(s) at levels able to deliver long-term high yields while reducing the risk that stock size falls below biological acceptable levels in order to avoid undermining their production potentials. The key stock(s) may be chosen taking into account in a proportionate manner either the catch composition and/or the economic value as well as, whenever appropriate, the vulnerability of stock(s). The specific objective(s) should be chosen on the basis of simulations and evaluation of different management scenarios carried out by the SAC.

11. The SAC is requested to provide a reasoned list of reference points frequently used in fisheries management and in line with the objectives of a multiannual plan as indicated in paragraphs 1 and 6 of these guidelines.

12. The threshold reference points should be chosen by the SAC taking into account the uncertainties in the parameter estimations and, whenever scientifically possible, provide values that result in a 5 percent probability that the limit reference points will be reached.

13. The list of reference points that may be provided by the SAC on the basis of paragraphes 11 and 12 is not deemed to be exhaustive and may be revised on the basis of SAC advice and GFCM deliberations.

Scientific monitoring for the conception, adaptation and revision of the plans on the basis of management scenarios

14. The CPCs should ensure an adequate annual scientific monitoring of their fisheries and exploited stocks so that the SAC is in a position to provide scientific advice, based on evaluation of different management scenarios, adequate to set up multiannual management plans for relevant shared stocks and fisheries.

15. The SAC, on the basis of stock assessment analysis and Task I data, should provide each year, whenever possible, or on a longer time scale depending on the investigated stocks, advice on the status of exploited stocks and pressure exerted by fishing activities and monitor the achievement and maintenance of the objective(s) of a management plan so that, whenever the case, required adaptation of the multiannual management plan could be achieved.

16. Whenever possible and adequate, the SAC is requested to use management procedure simulations for the consideration of contracting parties, taking into account the uncertainties in the parameter estimation and in the implementation, to assess the probability to achieve the management objective(s) under different management scenarios.

17. Whenever the GFCM, on the basis of SAC advice, finds that the fishing mortality or the exploitation rate and associated SSB levels or other suitable indicators are no longer appropriate to achieve the objective(s) of a multiannual management plan, then it should revise the reference levels accordingly.

18. Where SAC advice indicates that the specific targets of a multiannual management plan are not being met, the GFCM should decide the revision of management measures to ensure the sustainable exploitation of the stock(s).

PART III

Science in support of advice for fisheries management

19. As appropriate, the GFCM and its CPCs should, individually and collectively, engage in capacity-building efforts and other research cooperative activities to improve knowledge on fisheries and exploited stocks and to support the effective implementation of these guidelines including, as adequate, entering into cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international frameworks.

20. With a view to supporting the SAC in the formulation of adequate scientific advice for multiannual management plans, CPCs should endeavour to:

- improve the communication between CPCs, the GFCM and the SAC by enabling a constant and regular dialogue;
- improve the implementation of data collection and provision to the SAC;
- support research programmes and projects supporting the work of the SAC;
- facilitate participation in working groups and SAC meetings of scientists from all CPCs, as well as other relevant scientific bodies;
- contribute to the training of scientific researchers, including young scientists; and
- strengthen peer-review mechanisms within the SAC by ensuring, *inter alia*, the wide participation of scientists and explore the possibility to publish its main scientific findings in the scientific peer-reviewed literature.

Decision GFCM/30/2006/1 on guidelines on sustainable Atlantic bluefin tuna farming practices in the Mediterranean[1]

PART I
Introduction

1. The development of Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) farming[2] practices in the Mediterranean since the mid-1990s has been accompanied by a series of concerns about the sustainability of this important industry and about its impacts. The price of BFT destined for sashimi, coupled with the ability to rapidly increase the weight of wild-caught BFT in farms, has created more demand for BFT captured at sea and, consequently, placed greater pressure on the stock.

2. In 2002, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) called for the establishment of a Working Group, to be convened jointly with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), with a mandate to develop practical guidelines to address known problems, with an emphasis on fishing and farming statistics, and to propose research needed in order to investigate potential problems.

3. The working group met three times between 2003 and 2005 to develop the guidelines that are presented in this document.

PART II
Nature and scope

4. The farming of BFT in the Mediterranean Sea should be considered an activity clearly overlapping between capture fisheries and aquaculture. The potential of BFT farming, all the perceived risks associated with it, and all matters related to the sustainability of this recent commercial activity, clearly encompass issues specific to both the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

5. In the long term, the potential sustainability of BFT farming is also linked to the research advances in the successful "domestication" of the species. Although considerable progress has been made in this regard, the economically feasible "closed-cycle" production of BFT has not been achieved yet. The guidelines have thus been prepared based on BFT farming as currently practiced in the Mediterranean.

6. The guidelines encompass a series of statistical, socio-economic, biological, environmental and management issues. They have been limited to the issues arising, or potentially arising, because of BFT farming. In other words, the guidelines do not address the sustainability issues that could exist even without farming. The guidelines were written by a group of experts – primarily scientists – in these disciplines.

7. The guidelines are advisory in nature. They are intended to reinforce the basis for the regulations[3] that have already been introduced by the GFCM and ICCAT for BFT in the Mediterranean, primarily for the capture fisheries component. The guidelines could also serve as a basis for a broader management framework that takes into consideration other aspects related to the sustainability of the farming industry.

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[1] Prepared by the ad hoc GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Bluefin Tuna Farming/Fattening Practices in the Mediterranean.

[2] Tuna farming in the Mediterranean is currently practiced as capture-based aquaculture. It involves the collection of wild fish, ranging from small to large specimens, and their rearing in floating cages for periods spanning from a few months up to 1 to 2 years. Fish weight increment or change in the fat content of the flesh is obtained through standard fish farming practices. Confinement of captured fish during short periods of time (2–6 months) aimed mostly at increasing the fat content of the flesh, which strongly influences the prices of the tuna meat in the Japanese sashimi market, can also be referred to as "tuna fattening".

[3] Available from www.iccat.es and www.fao.org/gfcm. Specific regulations mentioned in the text are provided at the end for ease of reference.

PART III
Guidelines

Capture fisheries

8. Farmed BFT comes from capture fisheries. The expansion of tuna farming activities in the Mediterranean has generated a growing demand of wild fish specimens. Hence, one of the main concerns about this demand is the current and potential pressure to increase fishing effort. A main step towards responsible and sustainable fishing is to enforce the conservation and management measures of the regional fisheries management organizations, particularly ICCAT and the GFCM (e.g. [Rec. 02-08]).

9. *Catches*. In order to ensure that the potential pressure to increase fishing effort due to farming is not exerted, it is necessary to ensure compliance with the quotas established for the conservation of the stock. In addition, under a number of international instruments, flag states of the fishing vessels have responsibilities to collect and report catch data, irrespective of whether the fish is intended for either the market or farming.

10. *Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing*. Every effort should be made to combat and eliminate IUU fishing and farming, including through the development of a responsible trading system among countries, in order to ensure that only the fish caught and farmed in accordance with agreed conservation and management rules is allowed to enter into international trade. In particular, the recommendation that ICCAT and GFCM contracting parties prohibit landings from fishing vessels, placing in cages for farming and/or the transshipment within their jurisdiction of tunas or tuna-like species caught through IUU fishing activities, should be enforced ([Rec. 03-16]).

11. *Other information*. The recommendation on BFT farming ([Rec. 04-06]) specifies types of data that flag states of fishing or transfer vessels should collect and maintain (vessel logs, quantities, time and place of catch, vessel lists, etc.). In addition to these requirements, research should be conducted on methodologies to obtain accurate estimates of the size composition of the catch; such methodologies should be adopted for the collection and reporting of size composition data.

Transport and transfer

12. A critical point of this phase is the control of the amount (quantitatively and qualitatively) of fish that is transferred from the fishing gear to the transport and/or farming cages.

13. *Fish transfers*. The traceability of the transfer of live fish into cages should be ensured, particularly when different countries are involved. The ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Programme ([Res. 94-5], [Rec. 97-04], [Rec. 03-19]) sets the modality of collecting trade data but does not cover live fish transfers. The ICCAT Recommendation 03-16 prohibits the transshipment of fish caught through IUU activities. The ICCAT Recommendation 04-06 regulates the statistical data to be taken by tugs or fishing vessels and farms.

14. Research should be promoted to further develop the methods and techniques currently available for quantifying live fish (e.g. underwater video cameras or acoustic methods); standards should be agreed to and adopted as soon as possible, also to allow for fair transactions thus avoiding conflicts between vessels and farm operators.

15. *Scientific research*. The provision of fish specimens to the research community, if required, will ensure the collection of valuable scientific information on the wild BFT population that may benefit both the fishery and farming sectors. Therefore, the industry should be encouraged to facilitate the provision to the research community of specimens accidentally killed during fishing, transfer or transport, as they represent a significant biological sample from the wild stock. Furthermore, specimens collected at the beginning of the farming process will provide “point zero” information required to properly evaluate the performance of the farming activity at the end of the

production cycle. Areas of research could include, among others: reproduction biology, growth, mortality, genealogy, stock structure and behaviour.

Farming

16. This section refers to the BFT production phase itself. The culture technique follows in some ways the traditional offshore cage system, with similar rearing structures and technical constraints. On the other hand, farming of this pelagic species raises a series of distinct issues that require particular attention.

Registration

17. It is essential to adopt a system to licence or register farming facilities in order to comply with the requirements for listing authorized facilities in the ICCAT Recommendation 04-06, which should help prevent IUU farming. In addition, if excess farming capacity is deemed undesirable, due consideration should be given to the magnitude of the total allowable catch established for this species in the region.

Socio-economic issues

18. A preliminary socio-economic appraisal to evaluate the context in which farming takes place appears to be an important requisite. Activities linked to BFT farming should be addressed particularly in view of job opportunities.

19. Studies for integrated coastal zone management should be carried out to avoid the possibility of conflicts between the BFT farmers and other resource users including those from the tourism, other aquaculture activities, and small-scale fisheries sectors. During the site selection process in particular, it would be advisable to give considerable attention to avoid conflicts with other sea users, and consideration should be given to making arrangements for the involvement and participation by local fishers (e.g. in the supply of baitfish).

20. *Subsidies*. Currently, BFT farming is unquestionably tied up to the availability and exploitation of natural resources (both seed and baitfish) and the practice of subsidizing activities that utilize limited natural resources is not generally in line with sustainable management policies. In some Mediterranean states, subsidies for aquaculture development exist including funds for BFT farming. However, it remains unclear whether these will have a positive or negative impact on the development and sustainability of the BFT industry. This important issue requires further monitoring and analysis.

21. The industry, in collaboration with public authorities, should develop, apply and monitor procedures and standards which aim to guarantee appropriate labour and safety conditions in BFT farming operations.

22. The Mediterranean aquaculture sector, including BFT farming, may benefit significantly from human resource development efforts, including capacity-building and promotion of skills on good farm management, as well as training of farm technicians and other farm workers.

Environmental issues

23. *Feeding*. In the absence of a formulated feed, the current practice is to feed the BFT using frozen baitfish from wild stocks of different geographical origins. The main risks resulting from the use of this kind of feed could be:

- the possible overexploitation of wild stocks of small pelagic baitfish; and
- the involuntary introduction of pathogens. Frozen allochthonous species can be vectors to pathogenic organisms as well as potential aetiological disease agents of autochthonous wild populations.

24. The use of baitfish from local fisheries could represent a solution to the risk of introducing new pathogens. However, stock assessment and monitoring of local baitfish populations would be

required to prevent the overfishing of these resources and, in the cases in which vessels are providing the baitfish directly to the farm without landing it, the quantities caught should be collected and reported by the flag state in order to be included in the national capture production statistics.

25. A standardized quality-control system should be developed (i.e. screened for heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, etc.) to ensure the quality of baitfish and the absence of potential pathogens.

26. Furthermore, it appears essential that research on the nutritional requirements of BFT be promoted with the aim to develop an artificial feed capable of guaranteeing acceptable meat quality standards as required by the market.

27. In order to minimize the amount of baitfish used, and to avoid the polluting effect of uneaten food, improvement of feeding management practices is advisable.

28. *Site selection, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and farm design*. The steps of selecting an area where the farms will be located, a specific site within that area, and the evaluation of any potential environmental impacts are closely related. In addition, farm design considerations are important. Once an area is chosen, site selection should be preceded by an EIA. Factors that should be taken into account include, but are not limited to:

- avoiding sensitive ecological areas;
- ensuring the presence of an adequate water current pattern to properly/effectively disperse settling/floating particles/substances/debris and sediments;
- maintaining a safe distance from potential sources of pollution (e.g. industrial parks, urban areas) to prevent contamination of the farmed fish;
- ensuring a safe distance between farms and river beds, in order to avoid potential problems associated with floods;
- ensuring the development and effective implementation of site rehabilitation plans, as appropriate;
- ensuring a minimum and safe distance between farms, as well as a minimum distance between individual cages;
- ensuring a sufficient minimum distance between the cage bottom and the sea bed in order to allow for adequate water circulation;
- minimizing both visual and environmental impacts through farm design; and
- avoiding the use of copper- and zinc-based antifouling products on nets and mooring systems.

29. *Environmental monitoring*. Approval of farming concessions and licences should be, for all intents and purposes, linked to the submission of environmental monitoring plans. While all countries involved in BFT farming in the Mediterranean have requirements for EIA and environmental monitoring of aquaculture sites, it would be useful to develop minimum standards to be applied for BFT at a regional or national level. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture should consider the feasibility of developing such standardized guidelines. Standard analysis of the main physical, chemical and biological parameters of water and sediments at agreed distances from the farm site should be the norm, at an agreed-upon frequency. As with other aquaculture activities, the results of monitoring procedures should be transparent and available to the public. The frequency of monitoring should be controlled and closely planned with the competent local environmental authorities, and could be conducted with the assistance of accredited independent environmental monitoring and certification services.

30. Environmental monitoring might, as appropriate, include the monitoring of ecological effects on i) the benthos, including changes in biodiversity parameters and deposition; ii) the water column and water surface; and iii) interactions with attracted species and populations.

31. Environmental monitoring guidelines may include reference to the need/opportunity for regular assessment, including meaningful quantitative and interpretative analysis of environmental impact status and trends, as well as regular updates on the use of the information thus generated. This includes information on improved management (especially production practice and farm operation; waste reduction/reuse) and contingency planning efforts.

Data and research

32. *Farm data and records*. Information concerning farming operations and environmental parameters (fish movements between cages, stocking densities at any possible given/possible time, feed application/use, effective feed consumption, temperature, dissolved oxygen, etc.) should be properly collected, recorded and made available for monitoring purposes. This information should also be made available for research purposes, in line with confidentiality requirements.

33. *Scientific research*. The farming activity presents a valuable opportunity for cooperative research between the industry and the scientific community, and such collaboration should be encouraged. Furthermore, collaborative efforts should be aimed at designing experiments on live fish during farming, especially on captive behaviour, reproductive physiology, growth performance, nutritional demand and feed conversion rates. The non-marketable parts of fish that die incidentally during recruitment and/or farming should be considered as potentially suitable samples for research.

Animal welfare

34. The welfare status of captive livestock is an important determinant of society's overall acceptance of farming technology. In general terms, the following would be advisable:

- during all phases of the production cycle, due care should be taken to avoid inflicting unnecessary stress to farmed fish; handling of the fish should be reduced to a minimum during both fishing and transfer of the BFT into the transport or final cages;
- setting an upper limit to the density of the cultured fish in the cages (kg/m^3); this parameter is closely related to the overall well-being of the fish in terms of its potential correlation with the incidence of pathogens as well as with stressful conditions at high densities; and
- adequate and standard harvesting procedures should be followed to minimize the suffering of the fish, and to guarantee quality standards of the final product required by the market.

Harvesting and marketing

35. The harvesting process is the production phase in which the data that can be collected and reported for biological and statistical purposes are measurements that are not as affected by estimation error as in the capture/transfer phase. These data, along with the farming reports, can be cross-checked with the estimates of inputs, as a means for validating the initial amount of farmed fish. It is essential that the concerned local authorities monitor the correct application of the ICCAT/GFCM recommendations to ensure the accuracy of reported harvest and trade data.

36. *Biological samples and research*. In the input phase, accidentally-killed fish represent valuable specimens for scientific purposes. However, the data on input biomass are estimates. On the other hand, during the harvesting phase, all fish are physically available, such that accurate data and biological samples can be collected from a significant number of fish. The availability of specimens for sampling and data collection would facilitate the implementation of research activities.

37. *Waste management*. During the harvesting and processing of the fish for the market, a large amount of biological waste is produced. Unless used for research purposes, this waste should be

properly stored, treated, landed and disposed of. Licensed farms should have approved waste-disposal plans, including plans for farm material subject to renewal (e.g. nets, ropes).

38. *Farm harvest data*. The output data of the harvesting activity should be recorded and reported. For stock assessment purposes, it is important to obtain the size composition of the captured fish. Since there currently are technological difficulties for measuring the fish at the time of capture with the desired degree of accuracy and precision, it is necessary to record and report the size composition at the time of harvesting, as specified in the ICCAT Recommendation 04-06, paragraph 2. Estimates of the round weight of harvested fish should also be obtained, as these data would be useful for monitoring regional farming activity and for cross-checking inputs and outputs. Summary information on annual inputs and outputs to farming operations should also be reported in accordance with the ICCAT Recommendation 04-06, paragraph 5. This information should be made available in round weight so that it can be analysed with respect to catch and aquaculture statistics.

39. *Trade*. The traceability of all internationally traded tuna can be accomplished with instruments such as the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Programme [Rec. 03-19]. However, the usefulness of this programme should be improved by amending its coverage to include international transfers of live fish, and by ensuring that all ICCAT and GFCM contracting parties submit biannual summaries of their imports, as required by the programme. The data collected by the programme will also provide information useful for validation and estimating unreported catches.

Summary of statistical issues

40. From the point of view of the sustainability of the BFT resource, it is clear that a number of statistics have to be collected, reported and analysed at the regional level, so that the stock can be assessed and managed properly. Such requirements for data collection and reporting in capture fisheries directed at BFT existed well before the practice of farming began (e.g. in the ICCAT Convention, in various ICCAT recommendations and resolutions, in the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO]). It is important to obtain the following:

- accurate estimation of total weight of the catch from wild stocks;
- accurate estimation of the biological characteristics of the catch (e.g. size composition);
- accurate statistics on the origins of the catch (flag, area, season, transfer and destination);
- accurate statistics on purse seine fishing operations (e.g. fishing effort and fishing strategy);
- accurate estimates of input to and output from the cages, growth and conversion rates, and a brief description of the method used to measure the input; and
- information on authorized farming facilities.

41. The framework for the separation of the capture and aquaculture components of tuna farming was established by the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP). The CWP noted that "the problem was to ensure that the weight of the captured organisms is recorded as capture fishery production and that subsequent incremental growth in captivity is recorded as aquaculture, so as to avoid partial or total double counting".

42. The data specifically requested on the aquaculture and fisheries components should be reported by contracting parties to the FAO, the GFCM and ICCAT in accordance with the formats established by these organizations. It is important to stress that flag States have the responsibility to collect and report catch data for vessels flying their flag, irrespective of whether the fish are destined for canneries or farms.

43. However, the separate account of the capture and aquaculture components is often difficult to implement. The key point in the collection of statistics from tuna farming remains the measurement/estimation of the number and weight of the fish introduced in the cages.

44. When such techniques are not yet well or completely developed, and considering the uncertainties associated with quantifying fast-moving fish, it would be practical to consider additional sources of information that can be used to complement or cross-check such data. For example, the outputs from farms can be estimated quite accurately and, with a good estimate of growth rates, the initial input into the farms can be back-calculated. Similarly, trade data can be used to validate or complement output reports, although at the current time not all ICCAT contracting parties that import BFT (or its products) provide summaries of the Bluefin Tuna Statistical Documents to ICCAT. Thus, full implementation of the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Program (which has been recently amended to include information on farming) will strengthen its ability to serve as a validation tool.

45. It is also necessary to ensure that standard types of measurements are used when reporting data, in order to ensure consistent interpretation and comparisons. In general, all fish measurements of weight should be reported in round weight (live weight) and all measurements of size should be reported in fork length in accordance with the ICCAT Field Manual. Although conversion factors and length-weight relationships are available for wild BFT, these do not necessarily apply to farmed BFT. Furthermore, the relationships and conversion factors may change depending on the duration of the farming operations, the feed used, and other factors. It is recommended that accurate conversion factors and relationships between measurement types be developed for the different types of farming operations.

Recommendations and Resolution cited:

[Res. 94-05] Resolution by ICCAT Concerning the Effective implementation of the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Program.

[Rec. 97-04] Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Implementation of the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Program on Re-export.

[Rec. 02-08] Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning a Multi-year Conservation and Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the east Atlantic and Mediterranean.

[Rec. 03-16] Recommendation by ICCAT to Adopt Additional Measures Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing.

[Rec. 03-19] Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Amendment of the Forms of the ICCAT Bluefin/Bigeye/Swordfish Statistical Documents.

[Rec. 04-06] Recommendation by ICCAT on Bluefin Tuna Farming