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REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
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Izdajatelj: Republika Slovenija

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DOKUMENT JE ELEKTRONSKO PODPISAN

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Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
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Number: 342-126/2025/1

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Subject: Extension of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/974 of 16 May 2023 extending the derogation from Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 as regards the minimum distance from coast and the minimum sea depth for the ‘volantina’ trawlers fishing in the territorial waters of Slovenia

Dear Ms Vitcheva,

allow me to contact you with our request for the extension of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/974 of 16 May 2023 extending the derogation from Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 as regards the minimum distance from coast and the minimum sea depth for the ‘volantina’ trawlers fishing in the territorial waters of Slovenia, together with the proposed revision of the Management plan for marine commercial fishing in the territorial waters of the Republic of Slovenia, which is enclosed with this letter.

This Implementing Regulation remains in force until 27th March 2026.

The derogation for volantina fisheries allows Slovenian trawlers equipped with the “volantina” OTB trawls to fish in the territorial waters of Slovenia at less than 50 meters depth, in area between 1,5 and 3 nautical miles from the coast. This derogation it is crucial for the existence of Slovenian trawl fisheries as, due to geographical constraints, Slovenian territorial waters do not at any point reach a 50 m depth.

As was the case in our previous requests for derogation, this derogation request complies with conditions from Articles 13(5) and (9) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 of 21 December 2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1626/94; namely:

- derogation is justified by particular geographical constraints, as Slovenian territorial waters do

not at any point reach a 50 meters depth;

- "volantina" trawl fishery has no significant impact on the marine environment, including protected habitats;
- fishing with "volantina" trawls cannot be undertaken with other gears and does not interfere with gears other than trawls, seiners or similar towed nets;
- fishing concerns a limited number of vessels mentioned in the national fisheries management plan (11 vessels);
- fisheries are subject to a Management plan as referred to in Article 19 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006. The Management plan for marine commercial fishing in the territorial waters of the Republic of Slovenia was lastly approved by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia with the decision No. 34200-1/2021/3 on 18th August 2021 (the decision and the Management plan are enclosed with this letter);
- in the proposed revision of the management plan and in the Report on fishing activities with the volantina trawls in the strip between 1,5 and 3 miles from the coast in years 2022, 2023 and 2024 (attached to this letter), we provide the Commission with up to date scientific and technical justifications for such derogation;
- the requested derogation complies with the Article 8(1)(h) of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 since it relates to trawlers operating with mesh sizes not smaller than 40 mm;
- catches of species mentioned in Annex III of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 are minimal;
- volantina trawlers do not target cephalopods.

The findings from the Report on fishing activities with the volantina trawls in the strip between 1,5 and 3 miles from the coast in years 2022, 2023 and 2024 show that the catch of bottom trawls of the volante type is multi-species (multi-species fishing). In the period indicated 58 different commercial species were caught. The target fishing species remained whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*). The share of cephalopods in the catch was 17.84%.

Geographical and related administrative restrictions greatly reduce the area over which bottom trawls can be used in Slovenian waters. Without this derogation, the fishing sector using volante trawls would probably cease to operate due to insufficient fishing area.

Enclosed with this letter please find the following documents:

- Report on fishing activities with the volante trawls in the strip between 1,5 and 3 miles from the coast in the years 2022, 2023 and 2024;
- current Management plan for marine commercial fishing in the territorial waters of the Republic of Slovenia;
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia No. 34200-1/2021/3 from 18 August 2021 approving the Management plan for marine commercial fishing in the territorial waters of the Republic of Slovenia;
- proposed revision of the Management plan for marine commercial fishing in the territorial waters of the Republic of Slovenia, which will be adopted by a Government decision after its consideration by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF).

Finally, allow me to thank you and the Commission services in advance for your understanding and collaboration with regard to this request for the extension of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/974 of 16 May 2023 extending the derogation from Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 as regards the minimum distance from coast and the minimum sea depth for the 'volantina' trawlers fishing in the territorial waters of Slovenia.

I am hopeful that our justifications for the derogation, which are substantiated with technical and scientific data, will allow Slovenian fishermen to benefit from this derogation also in the future.

We remain at your disposal for any additional information.

Sincerely Yours,

Ana Le Marechal Kolar
Director-General