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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Accompanying the document

**PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF
THE COUNCIL**

**Establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the
western Mediterranean Sea**

{COM(2018) 115 final} - {SWD(2018) 59 final}

ANNEX 1:

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Actors involved in the process

The Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) led the preparation of this initiative and the work on the impact assessment. Other Commission departments involved are: DG Environment (DG ENV), DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), the Legal Services and the Secretariat-General.

The proposal establishing a multi-annual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea is provided for in the 'Agenda Planning' (**2016/MARE/021**) and in the DG MARE's 2017 Management Plan.

Organisation and timing

The impact assessment has progressed in several steps since Mediterranean Member States' fisheries administrations met in September 2014 to discuss the way forward on how to implement the reformed CFP in the Mediterranean Sea basin. The meeting concluded that EU multi-annual plans should be developed for stocks shared among EU countries, with the Adriatic and western Mediterranean Sea selected as the first priority areas. Since then, numerous meetings have been organised to collect as many views as possible from the various stakeholders (see Annex 2 for more details).

An Impact Assessment Inter-Service Steering Group (IA-ISSG) covering all the upcoming proposals for multi-annual plans was set up by DG MARE in January 2015. The following Commission departments were invited to take part: the Secretariat-General, the Legal Service, DG ENV and DG GROW.

The IA-ISSG was consulted four times to discuss the following issues:

- the draft inception impact assessment (27 October 2015);
- the draft public consultation and its consultation strategy (22 December 2015);
- concrete aspects of the impact assessment such as defining the problem and the policy options (17 March 2016);
- the draft impact assessment report (23 May 2017).

The IA-ISSG was consulted again in writing on the final draft impact assessment on 30 June 2017. In between these consultations, informal contacts were held with the members of the steering group.

In addition, in February 2016 DG MARE set up a working group to coordinate the DG MARE multi-annual plans and impact assessments. The group comprises DG MARE staff working on multi-annual plans in different sea basins, DG MARE economists, experts in impact assessments and in markets and trade, and representatives from the Commission's Secretariat-General. The group has made good progress on topics such as better defining the nature of the problem definition, choosing the best options and determining what indicators to use in the modelling of impacts.

Consultation of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board

The draft impact assessment report was submitted to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board on 26 September 2017 for quality review. The Board analysed the draft report and issued a positive Opinion accompanied with its recommendations for improvement on 27 October 2017⁸⁵.

An overview of the Board's recommendations and the changes made compared to the earlier draft is provided below:

Board's recommendations	Changes made compared to the earlier draft
<p>1.1. The report could clarify the international and regional cooperation dimension of the proposal and the surrounding political expectations.</p> <p>1.2. It could better explain the relationship with other MAPs (i.e. Adriatic Sea, North Sea) and specify the changes the MAP would bring for the existing regulatory framework.</p> <p>1.3. The report could be more specific on which pieces of the framework would be replaced, amended or discontinued, e.g. regarding the MEDREG.</p>	<p>1.1. The international dimension has been further explained in Section 1 (page 6), in particular the GFCM mid-term strategy and the role of the FAO regional project COPEMED II.</p> <p>1.2. In order to clarify the relationship with other MAPs, a new section called 'Similarities and differences between multi-annual plans' has been integrated in Annex 5 (page 69).</p> <p>1.3. It has been clarified in Section 5 (page 30) that the national management plans would no longer be needed, as the future Regulation establishing the multi-annual plan (together with the Fishing Opportunities Reg.) would cover the main conservation aspects of the fisheries concerned.</p>
<p>2.1. The report could better explain the geographical scope of the initiative, i.e. why it covers only the western part of the Mediterranean, why not other parts around Sicily, and whether migration of fish outside of the EU waters is a problem.</p>	<p>2.1. The rationale of the geographical scope has been clarified in Section 5 (page 31). The scope has been confined to the western Mediterranean Sea for the following reasons: (i) it has similar environmental features, such as oceanographic conditions; (ii) it covers the most scientifically sound distribution of the stocks (see stocks' boundaries in Annex 7) and the fishing fleet of the Member States concerned; (iii) it facilitates regionalisation, since Member States have set up a High-Level Group for the adoption of regional measures in the same area.</p> <p>None of the areas of the strait of Sicily (i.e. sub-areas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16) have been included in this initiative as they are part of a different management unit where the stocks are shared and jointly exploited with non-EU countries. In this area, a multi-annual plan and a joint inspection scheme were adopted at international level in 2016 and 2017.</p>

⁸⁵ The Opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board will be published with the impact assessment report and the Commission proposal in the online Register of Commission documents (available [here](#)).

<p>2.2. The analysis could assess why the current implementation of CFP has been slow and inefficient.</p>	<p>2.2. The driver ‘slow & poor implementation of the CFP and MEDREG’ has been further explained in Section 2 (page 16). It has been specified that the poor implementation of the CFP and the MEDREG is also due to the lack of control tools for small-scale fisheries, being the reason why actions plans have been undertaken in each Member State.</p>
<p>3.1. The report should better explain why a more ambitious policy option, reaching potentially higher Fmsy target levels, has not been considered. It should indicate the reasons for not taking such an option into consideration (e.g. too high economic and social aspects).</p> <p>3.2. The report could better describe the long-term expected impacts of the proposal, especially on the sustainability of the fishing sector. This should include the foreseen socio-economic impacts other than only changes in employment level.</p> <p>3.3. Also, the report could clarify whether any territorial impacts are expected.</p>	<p>3.1. Section 5 (page 28) contains more details on the reasons why a more ambitious option (such as the closure of the fishery) has been discarded early on, namely due to the enormous associated socio-economic costs, the lack of political support and the absence of a long-term solution (such as creating an effective regulatory framework).</p> <p>In addition, it has been clarified in Section 7 (page 28) the reasons why the results obtained under the MAP should be seen as a satisfactory and realistic balance between the environmental and socio-economic objectives of the CFP (i.e. in relation to high levels of overfishing, short timeframe to reach F_{MSY} and the complex multispecies nature of the fisheries).</p> <p>3.2. The long-term expected impacts for the fishing sector have been included in Section 7 (page 39). This part arises from the experienced observed in other sea basins where the implementation of multi-annual plans has improved the economic performance of many fishing fleets in EU.</p> <p>3.3. As included in Section 7 (page 39), potential territorial impacts would be minimised by the introduction of spatio-temporal closures in which the coastal zones would be reserved for more selective gears in order to protect nursery areas and safeguard small-scale fisheries.</p>

Evidence and external expertise used

The scientific and technical aspects of this impact assessment report were primarily carried out under the auspices of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), DG MARE and the European Market Observatory for fisheries and aquaculture (EUMOFA). More precisely, the **STECF** provided the biological assessment of the different policy options, as well as advice on various elements of the multi-annual plan. This work took place within two expert working groups in 2015 and 2016 (where over 15 fisheries experts met during 5 working days in each meeting). The mapping of the affected stakeholders and the socio-economic analysis were carried out in 2017 by **European Commission services** on economic analysis, market and impact assessments. **EUMOFA** provided supplementary data on market dynamics in the western Mediterranean.

The status of the demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea comes from the most recent work carried out by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the **GFCM** and the **STECF**.

In addition, three studies fed into this impact assessment:

- The study on the **Retrospective Evaluation of the MEDREG**⁸⁶ was used in particular for the review of Member States' implementation of the Regulation and the assessment of the extent to which the Regulation was fit to contribute to delivering the objectives of the CFP. The case study for the Gulf of Lions (the northern part of the western Mediterranean Sea) played an essential role in helping define the nature of the problem.
- **National management plans** adopted by Member States were thoroughly analysed by the STECF based on a dedicated study^{87,88}. The study and its STECF's opinion contributed to the definition of the problem, particularly in which regards the reasons why the existing national management plans were considered insufficient to reach sustainable fishing levels by 2020. All in all, both works considered that without changes to the regulatory framework, it is unlikely that the CFP's objectives will be achieved.
- The study 'Stock units: identification of distinct biological units (stock units) for different fish and shellfish species and among different GFCM-GSA' or **STOCKMED**⁸⁹ also contributed in the preparation of this impact assessment. The most scientifically sound stock units and their boundaries for 8 demersal species was used to illustrate the transboundary nature of many stock under this initiative and so the need to act at EU level. The main results are presented in Annex 7.

Finally, additional supporting material was collected through extensive bibliographic research of scientific publications, technical reports and books on this matter.

⁸⁶ MRAG(2016). Retrospective evaluation study of the Mediterranean Sea Regulation. Final report, p. 230. (Report pending publication by the Publications Office of the European Union).

⁸⁷ MAREA(2014). Scientific advice on the conformity of management plans with the requirements of the Common Fisheries Policy in the Mediterranean Sea. Specific Contract N°9, Task 4, Ad hoc scientific advice in support of the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy - Revised report 08.08.2014.

⁸⁸ [STECF\(2015\)](#). 49th Plenary Meeting Report (PLEN-15-02). 2015. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR 27404 EN, JRC 97003, 127 pp.

⁸⁹ [MAREA\(2014\)](#). Stock units: Identification of distinct biological units (stock units) for different fish and shellfish species and among different GFCM-GSA. STOCKMED Deliverable 03: FINAL REPORT. September 2014, 310 pp.

ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Intense consultation with stakeholders started in 2014 and continued through 2015, 2016 and 2017 (for details of the consultation meetings see Figure A1.1). The aims were to: (i) raise awareness about the alarming situation of the large majority of fish stocks in the Mediterranean Sea; (ii) agree on the need for urgent action at national, European and international levels; and (iii) collect input and views from as many stakeholders as possible on the best possible ways to address this situation.

For simplification, we have grouped the various activities under three types of consultation: the Mediterranean Advisory Council, the so-called 'Catania process' and the internet-based public consultation.



Figure A1.1 Overview of the main stakeholder consultation activities (from 2014-2017)

- **Mediterranean Sea Advisory Council (MEDAC)**

The MEDAC is the most representative fisheries stakeholders' organisation for the Mediterranean Sea region. It represents all the parties concerned by this initiative: the fisheries sector (including small-scale fisheries), trade unions and other interest groups such as environmental organisations, consumer groups and sports/recreational fishery associations which operate in the Mediterranean area under the CFP.

Since 2015, the MEDAC has in place a focus group specifically devoted to addressing the worrying state of demersal fisheries in the Gulf of Lions, and which now also covers the entire western Mediterranean. The focus group has held nine meetings with the participation of DG MARE, the European Fisheries Control Agency, the scientific research community, industry representatives and Member States fisheries administrations⁹⁰.

The MEDAC is currently preparing a recommendation on the management of the fisheries exploiting western Mediterranean demersal stocks. The impact assessment report has been enriched with the MEDAC's contribution to the public consultation and the Commission's participation to the various MEDAC focus groups.

- **Consultations through the 'Catania Process'**

In September 2014, a high-level meeting with the Mediterranean Member States was convened to discuss a strategy on the way forward for the implementation of the recently adopted CFP in the Mediterranean Sea basin. The main conclusion of that meeting was that EU multi-annual plans should be developed as soon as possible for those shared stocks. The Adriatic and western Mediterranean Sea were selected as the first priority areas. The meeting was followed by a seminar to evaluate the national management plans adopted under the MEDREG. The objective was to assess whether the national management plans were in line with the CFP and whether they were suitable to achieve the new goals. The year 2015 was a transitional period, during which the Commission participated in the various MEDAC meetings and started preparing what is known as the 'Catania Process'.

A high-level meeting on the status of the stocks held in Catania was the official starting point for the development of a new strategy for the sustainable exploitation of Mediterranean fisheries (February 2016). The seminar acknowledged the progress made with regards to scientific advice, the adoption (to a lesser extent) of management measures for certain fish stocks, and the fruitful inter-governmental cooperation via the GFCM. On the other hand, Catania also showed that these positive developments had not been translated into an improvement in the status of fish stocks. More than 90% of the evaluated commercial fish stocks are exploited well-beyond safe biological limits, while the state of many stocks remains unknown. To confront this situation, participants unanimously called for a renewed commitment on specific measures to restore Mediterranean fisheries.

Just after Catania, a ministerial conference took place in Brussels, involving fisheries ministers from EU and non-EU countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Some 19 out of 22 riparian countries were represented, as well as the GFCM, FAO and MEDAC. Discussions led to the identification of strong converging views in several key areas:

- the need to focus efforts on the stocks that are important for the sector's viability and to apply targeted and proportionate measures;

⁹⁰ Since 2015, the MEDAC has organised 9 focus groups on the demersal fisheries in the western Mediterranean Sea: Valletta, 28.03.2017; Rome, 21.02.2017; Ajaccio, 13.10.2016, Split, 20.04.2016; Rome, 17.02.2016; Saint Julian's, 10.11.2015; Madrid, 10.06.2015; Marseille, 23.04.2015 and; Rome, 1.03.2015.

- the need to improve scientific cooperation, support small-scale fisheries and fight together against illegal fishing;
- the need for solidarity between countries to shoulder the additional burden of modernisation and control.

As a follow-up to this political momentum, a meeting with the fisheries directors of the eight Mediterranean Member States was held in June 2016. The idea was to make sure the general commitments became more than just paper commitments and that for the EU to turn its responsibilities into concrete actions. The meeting highlighted the priority areas for the adoption of additional national measures. For the western Mediterranean Sea, France and Spain proposed to establish a joint spatial/temporal closure in the Gulf of Lions to reduce the fishing effort and improve selectivity for hake. More concrete proposals from each Member State were discussed during the October meeting. However, these proposals and additional discussions within the MEDAC are yet to deliver specific measures to be implemented by the fishing fleets concerned.

The consultation process concluded with the signature of the Ministerial Declaration on the sustainability of Mediterranean fisheries (March 2017⁹¹). The Declaration lays down a new strategic framework for fisheries governance in the region and a set of five actions with measurable deliverables for the next 10 years. In other words, 15 Ministers of the Mediterranean and Black Sea and the EU Commissioner for Environment and Maritime Affairs and Fisheries committed to implement the following actions:

- Enhance data collection and scientific evaluation
- Establish an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework
- Develop a culture of compliance and eliminate IUU fishing
- Support sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture
- Greater solidarity and coordination in the Mediterranean

These new commitments should reverse the decline of stocks and strive for sustainability in Mediterranean fisheries. As a follow-up, the GFCM will prepare an annual report on the implementation of these actions, reflecting the reports provided by riparian countries.

⁹¹ [Ministerial Conference on the Sustainability of Mediterranean Fisheries](#); Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration (Malta, 30 March 2017).

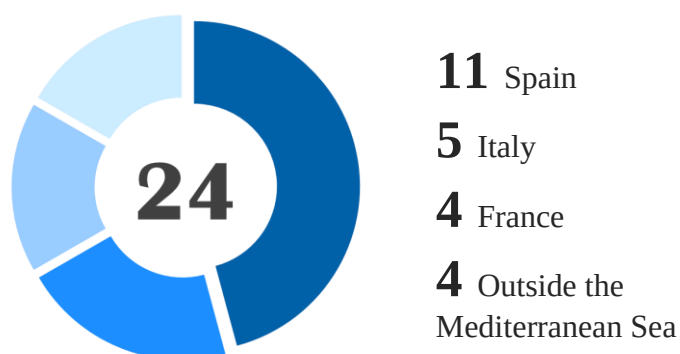
- **Public Consultation**

In May 2016, DG MARE launched an internet-based public consultation for the preparation of a 'multi-annual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea'. The overall objective was to gather inputs and views from stakeholders, particularly at the initial design of this policy initiative.

The consultation took place over 18 weeks from 30 May to 30 September 2016. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed format questions, of which six related to the respondents and 18 to the biological, technical and socio-economic aspects of fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean. Topics included the perception of the problem, management options and the scope and content of a possible multi-annual plan.

2.3.1 Profile of respondents

The consultation gathered a total of 24 replies from stakeholders residing or based in France, Italy or Spain and also from outside the Mediterranean Sea (i.e. Austria, the Netherlands and UK⁹²). The most active category was fishermen's associations, followed by the non-governmental organisations, citizens, public administrations, advisory councils, and recreational fishing associations. Contributions were missing from two categories, namely research or academic institutions and the processing sector (Figure A1.2).



		Answers	Ratio
Government institutions/public administrations	<div><div></div></div>	2	8.3 %
Research institutes/academic institutions	<div><div></div></div>	0	0 %
Advisory councils	<div><div></div></div>	1	4.2 %
Fishermen's associations	<div><div></div></div>	9	37.5 %
Recreational fishing associations	<div><div></div></div>	1	4.2 %
Processing sector	<div><div></div></div>	0	0 %
Non-governmental organisation	<div><div></div></div>	8	33.3 %
Citizens	<div><div></div></div>	3	12.5 %

Figure A1.2 Respondents by Member State (upper part) and by stakeholder category (lower part).

2.3.2 Main findings of the public consultation

⁹² Individual contributions are available on the website of DG MARE and can be downloaded at this [link](#).

The main findings of the public consultation have been grouped in three topics: the perception of the problem; towards an EU multi-annual plan; and technical/conservation measures most supported.

Perception of the problem

The **general problem**, as set out in the background document i.e. 'high levels of overfishing and limitations of the current management framework' was very well known to the respondents. Most respondents acknowledged the identified problems, although some fishermen's associations disagreed or remained neutral on this issue (Figure A1.3). According to them, other aspects such as anthropogenic impacts (e.g. industrial and urban wastewaters, oil spills, etc.) and climate change are equally important issues to be considered when defining the overall problem. It was also recognised that despite scientists' claims that 97 % of the assessed stocks are overfished, this percentage only represents a limited fraction of the total number of existing stocks in the Mediterranean Sea.

The large majority of respondents agreed that the **current management framework**, meaning the national management plans adopted under the MEDREG, would not be sufficient to meet the objectives of the CFP. The main reasons highlighted were:

- The National management plans have not been successful at reducing fishing mortality to sustainable levels. The plans still only address a limited number of types of fishing gear and do not contain common measures for shared stocks.
- The plans do not have the necessary provisions to achieve the following: the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2020, biological reference points, safeguard measures, an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries, and the landing obligation.
- The plans manage fisheries by fishing gear, but as Mediterranean demersal fisheries are highly multi-species, it would be more effective to have an approach by species or group of species.
- The plans do not include any measures on recreational fisheries.
- The plans are not properly monitored and enforced by the Member State authorities.
- The plans should better reflect the specific characteristics of each fishery and actively involve the stakeholders from the beginning of the process.
- The plans do not sufficiently incorporate existing environmental legislation, such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Furthermore, 67% of the respondents considered that complementing the current management framework with short-term measures at national or EU level would not be sufficient to meet the CFP objectives. The consultation suggests that emergency measures are not the solution to solve the identified problems in the long run. According to some respondents, emergency measures should be only used as a last resort, when objectives cannot be achieved any other way.

Another solution would be to **amend the current management framework**, but the consultation found that most stakeholders do not agree with this alternative. Respondents took the view that amending the current framework would not produce the desired results because the problems previously described would still persist. Besides, it would be very complex to adjust the different national management plans to common CFP goals, such as the MSY. In addition, the CFP's long-term approach would not be supported by the current national management plans, even once amended.

Most respondents took the view that the current management framework has been poorly implemented in many aspects and unequally in the different countries and fishing fleets. Two factors that have especially contributed to the framework's ineffectiveness are: (i) the lack of involvement of stakeholders (including the fishing sector) in designing the measures; and (ii) the lack of proper and effective controls. According to the consultation, increased surveillance would make it easier to enforce the rules and would in particular reduce illegal, undeclared and unreported catches.

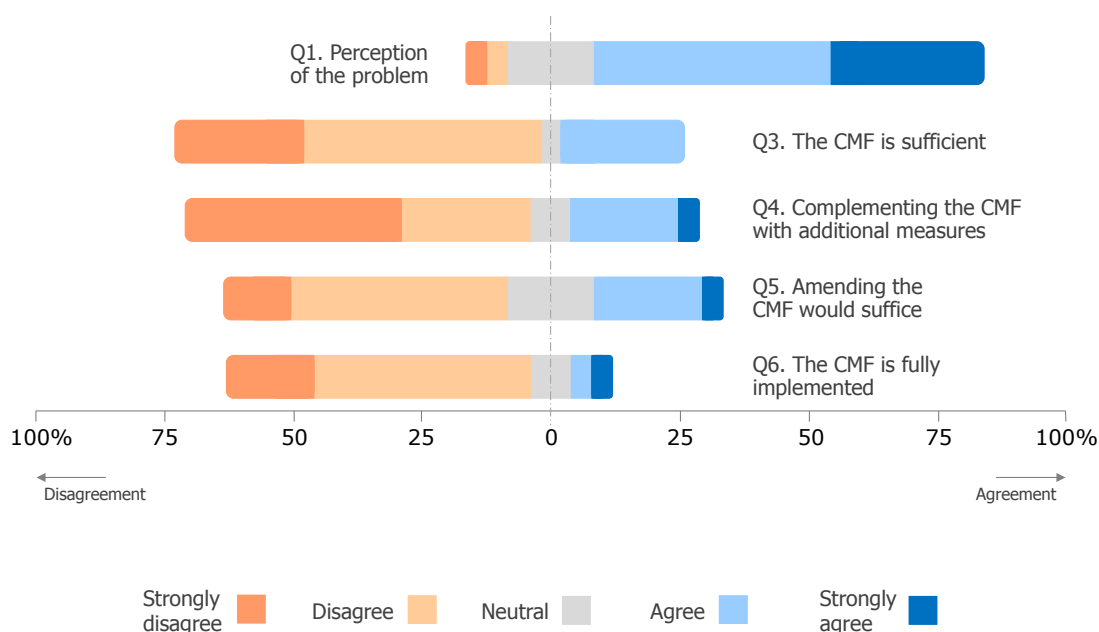


Figure A1.3 Perception of the problem (as described in the questionnaire) and of the current management framework (CMF)

Towards an EU multi-annual plan

Taking an overall view of the contributions to the consultation, we can see that most respondents regard an EU multi-annual plan for fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea as the best possible long-term solution (see Figure A1.4). In the respondents' view, this approach is justified by the multi-species nature of the fisheries, the various Member States involved and the interactions between the different gears and types of fisheries. Only three respondents disagreed with this option, opting instead for a management framework for specific areas at local level.

The large majority of respondents supported the introduction of the following **objectives** in the multi-annual plan:

- attaining maximum sustainable yields (MSY);
- adopting an effective and transparent management framework;
- strengthening control, monitoring and surveillance systems;
- ensuring the socio-economic stability of the fishing sector (detailed results are provided in Table A1).

It was also considered important to include additional objectives such as: (i) ensuring an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries and contributing to the achievement of good

environmental status; (ii) addressing incidental catches of vulnerable species; (iii) establishing co-management schemes.

According to the respondents, the multi-annual plan should contain the following **elements**, in order of importance: the scope in terms of stocks, fisheries and area; quantifiable targets and timeframe; safeguards and remedial actions, emergency measures; and provisions to implement the landing obligation (detailed results are provided in Table A1.1).

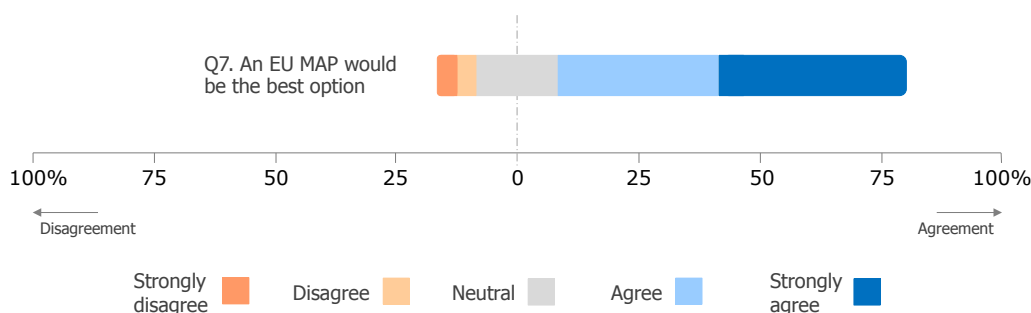


Figure A1.4 Respondents' opinion of the policy option of establishing an EU multi-annual plan (MAP).

Another important aspect is which **species** are to be included in the multi-annual plan. The public consultation showed that hake is the most emblematic species defining demersal fisheries in the western Mediterranean Sea. This species was followed by red mullet, blue and red shrimp, monkfishes and octopus and, to a lesser extent, blue whiting, giant red shrimp and deep-water rose shrimp. Respondents also suggested additional species such as striped red mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*), seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*), common pandora (*Pagellus erythrinus*), spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*), and mantis shrimp (*Squilla mantis*).

One important part of the multi-annual plan which is repeatedly mentioned is the need to **reduce the impact on juvenile individuals**. 92% of respondents considered it important or very important to include measures addressing this problem. In the respondents' view, the most effective ways to achieve sustainability and increase the selectivity of fishing gear are: spatial-temporal closures, real-time closures (i.e. the fishery in a particular area stops when a threshold or percentage of juveniles is reached in the catch) and the protection of essential fish habitats. Respondents also agreed on the need to include provisions in the multi-annual plan to **strengthen control, monitoring and surveillance systems**.

All in all, the respondents to the public consultation see the multi-annual plan as an **adaptive and transparent management framework which integrates co-management principles, as well as the socio-economic and ecosystem dimensions**.

Technical/conservation measures most supported

Nearly all respondents at one stage or another of the public consultation supported the combination of several technical/conservation measures as the best way to manage western Mediterranean demersal fisheries (see Table A1.2). The measures most widely supported were:

- Spatial/temporal closures for the protection of juveniles and spawners. This is considered the most relevant measure by all stakeholder categories, including fishermen's associations, public administrations and NGOs.

- Having a list of authorised fishing vessels, which would make it possible to set effort ceilings.
- Fishing effort limitations, such as limitations on the number of fishing days. For example, a reduction of one fishing day per week during 6 months (equivalent to a 10 % reduction in fishing effort) has been tested in the Balearic Islands. According to the respondent, the measure yielded positive results and was well received by the fishing sector.
- Total daily catch limits, as an alternative to the setting of total allowable catches (TACs) for single species. This has been applied by Spain in some fisheries (e.g. dolphinfish), although no fishermen's association put forward this type of measure.
- Technical modifications to improve the selectivity of the fishing gear, such as having sorting grids, banning the use of diamond meshed nets of 50 mm or increasing twine thickness.
- Adjust the minimum conservation reference sizes to the most scientifically sound size at first maturity, in particular for hake.
- Regulate recreational fisheries, initially by introducing a list of authorised vessels and a maximum number of fishing days.
- Introduce co-management schemes to involve all stakeholders from the beginning of the process.

The public consultation also looked into the question of identifying alternative measures for Mediterranean demersal fisheries, such as the **setting of fishing opportunities** or TACs. This measure was mostly supported by NGOs and citizens. However, none fishermen's associations or public administrations supported it, due to the complex implementation of TACs in highly multi-species and multi-gear fisheries. Respondents also stressed that an increase in discards would be likely if TACs were ever applied.

The **landing obligation** was introduced in the CFP to improve the selectivity of fishing techniques. On this issue, the public consultation shows that the most important aspect in the western Mediterranean Sea is to reduce as much as possible catches below the minimum conservation reference sizes set in Annex III to the MEDREG. To achieve this, the large majority of the respondents supported the use of spatial/temporal closures and gear modifications. Respondents also recommended strengthening control measures to discourage black market for undersized individuals. On the other hand, respondents considered less effective the introduction of '*de minimis*' or market incentives as a solution for the landing obligation.

The public consultation also made it possible to identify the best ways to **mitigate socio-economic impacts** on fishing fleets and coastal communities that depend on demersal fisheries. On top of the support from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), respondents considered it very important to increase the added value of fish products by improving their quality, presentation and labelling. Respondents also suggested prioritising the promotion of local, fresh fish over imported products. Several respondents also highlighted that ecolabelling is essential for small-scale fleets.

Table A1.1 Respondents' opinion of the possible objectives, elements and species to be included in a multi-annual plan. The bars indicate the proportion of the combined percentages of the replies "very important" and "important".

Q8. Objectives		Answers	Ratio
To attain sustainable exploitation of the stocks driving demersal fisheries		23	96%
To adopt an effective and transparent management framework		23	96%
To ensure socio-economic stability of the fishing sector		19	80%
To strengthen control, monitoring and surveillance systems		21	87%

Q9. Elements

Scope in terms of stocks, fisheries, area		23	96%
Quantifiable targets with timeframe for achieving them		23	96%
Safeguards and remedial actions		21	88%
Provisions to implement the landing obligation		14	58%
Emergency measures		16	77%

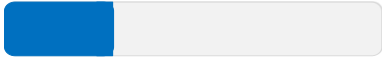
Q10. Species

Red mullet		19	80%
Deep-water rose shrimp		14	58%
Giant red shrimp		15	63%
Hake		22	92%
Blue whiting		16	67%
Monkfish		17	71%
Blue and red shrimp		18	76%
Norway lobster		16	67%
Octopus		17	71%

Table A1.2 Respondents' opinion of the possible technical/conservation measures to be included in a multi-annual plan. The bars indicate the proportion of the combined percentages of the replies "very important" and "important".

Q11. Measures to manage the fishery		Answers	Ratio
To establish spatial/temporal closures		23	96%
To establish seasonal or daily catch limits		15	63%
To set ceilings for fishing capacity and/or fishing effort		21	88%
To address the selectivity of fishing gear		23	96%

Q12. Measures to implement the landing obligation

"De minimis" exemptions		11	46%
Measures designed to minimise unwanted catches by modifying the gear structure		20	84%
Measures designed to minimise unwanted catches by spatial/temporal closures		21	87%
Market incentives		7	29%

Q13. Measures to minimise socio-economic impacts

To improve the added value of fish products, including the use of 'ecolabelling		18	75%
To promote the setting of new/support existing producer organisations		16	67%
To provide public support under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund		20	84%

Q14. Other measures not yet applied

To establish fishing opportunities (output quotas)		10	42%
To increase the mesh size to avoid catches of juvenile fish		18	75%
To establish new Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes		18	75%

ANNEX 3: WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS INITIATIVE AND HOW

The objective of this annex is to set out the practical implications of the initiative for the various parties who will be affected by the preferred option (i.e. multi-annual plan).

Stakeholders' category	Who is affected and how?
Member States public administrations	<p>The French, Italian and Spanish national public administrations. Autonomous regions, such as Sardinia, Catalonia or Andalusia, would be also involved as they share the fisheries remit with their national governments.</p> <p>The practical implications would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The three Member States concerned would be required to adopt effort levels through a Council Decision every year in order to adjust the current fishing mortality to F_{MSY} targets. – They would need to agree on an effort allocation key. Then each Member State would need to establish a mechanism to allocate its national effort quota within national fleets. – They would need to monitor the effort quota by their vessels to ensure compliance at national level. – They would need to gather in sub-regional groups to develop <i>ad-hoc</i> technical measures to be adopted by the Commission via delegated acts (regionalisation). – They would also be required to use their competences on surveillance and control (Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 and associated legislation) in order to enforce the landing obligation and any new measures adopted within the regionalisation process. – Finally, they would need to comply with the monitoring requirements specified in the above-mentioned Control Regulation and in the Data Collection Framework, as well as any new monitoring requirement adopted in the multi-annual plan. <p>The multi-annual plan would create some new administrative costs during the first years of implementation of the policy (e.g. setting the effort regime), compared to the current situation. After this transitional period, it is expected that the administrative costs will reduce, stabilise and be more proportionate with the benefits of achieving the goals set.</p>

Stakeholders' category	Who is affected and how?
Fishing sector	<p>This initiative would affect primarily fishermen fishing for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea, meaning round 13 000 vessels. A detailed description of the affected stakeholders is provided for in Table 2.2 (Chapter 2).</p> <p>The practical implications would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The fishing sector would have to comply with the rules set in the multi-annual plan, in particular, the fishing effort levels. – They would need to provide accurate catch and effort data and have a closer relation with scientists, as this will play a decisive role in the monitoring process. – They would also contribute with their skills and knowledge in the conception of measures under regionalisation, either directly or within their participation in Advisory Councils. – Since the fishing sector has the skills and the means to change their behaviour and adapt to new measures and cope with them in the most efficient way, they should make efforts to facilitate achieving the objectives of the CFP with minimum economic burden. The EMFF would also contribute to this end by giving financial support to a number of initiatives concerning market organisation, advisory services, partnerships between scientists and fishermen, diversification of activities, permanent and temporary cessation of fishing activities, purchase of selective gear.
European Commission	<p>The practical implications would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – With the support of its scientific, technical and economic advisory committee for fisheries (STECF), EC would need to monitor the state of demersal stocks and the socio-economic impacts on the fishing sector. – EC would need to adopt annually a proposal setting adequate fishing effort levels for the following year. – EC would need to monitor the amount of fishing effort uptake by Member States to ensure they remain within their national levels. – EC would need to adopt delegating acts, either setting provisions of the landing obligations or establishing additional conservation or technical measures within the framework of the multi-annual plan. – EC would need to report to the Parliament and Council on the implementation and impacts of the multi-annual plan five years after its entry into force and then every five years.