



MEDAC
MEDITERRANEAN
A D V I S O R Y
C O U N C I L



Co-founded by the
European Union

FISHERIES NEEDS FROM MSP

MEDAC Advice on Marine Spatial Planning and the Role of OECMs in the Mediterranean

Disclaimer – The contents of this PPT include only the MEDAC's view and the MEDAC observer's notes, and the Commission and the MEDAC are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information that it contains

Fishing in the Mediterranean Status, trends, main challenges


Snapshot of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

With landings, revenues and jobs stabilizing, fisheries continue to play a vital role in supporting food production, livelihoods and economy in the region.



83 000
Vessels

72 200 (87%)
in the Mediterranean Sea

81%
of the total fleet is composed
of small-scale vessels



Revenue

USD
8.05 billion

Estimated total contribution
to the regional economy

USD 3.1 billion
Direct revenue at first sale



Jobs

750 000

Along the value chain

197 000

Jobs on board

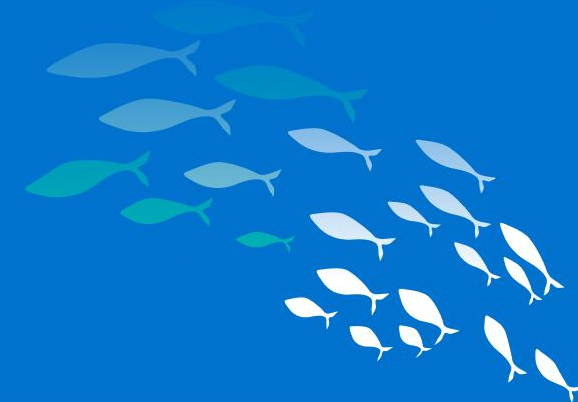
8% increase

Onboard employment since 2021



Average total annual catch
(2022–2023)

1 053 100
tonnes



Fishing in the Mediterranean Status, trends, main challenges

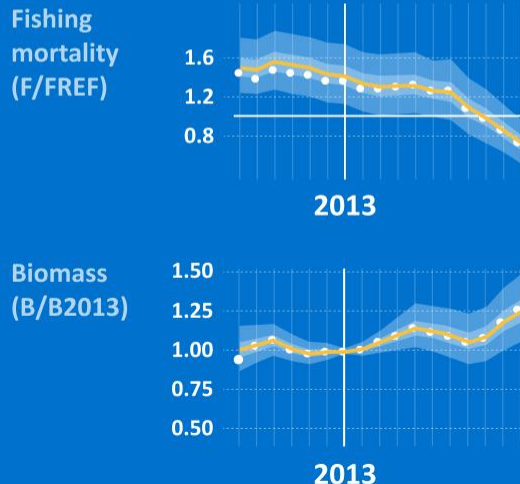
Fisheries resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Average fishing mortality is reaching sustainable levels, proving that effective fisheries management works.

Fishing mortality
50% decrease

Biomass
25% increase

Since 2013, when management plans started being implemented



Stocks in overexploitation

87%
In 2013

52%
In 2023

Species under management measures

Now sustainable

common sole
(Adriatic Sea)



-42% **+64%**
Fishing mortality Biomass

Since 2019

European hake
(Adriatic Sea)



-50% **+40%**
Fishing mortality Biomass

Since 2013

turbot
(Black Sea)



-86% **+310%**
Fishing mortality Biomass

Since 2013

Overall biomass levels

Anchovy, deep-water rose shrimp, common sole stocks
Within sustainable levels

Red mullet, giant red shrimp stocks
Close to sustainable levels

Article 44 of the EU Common Fishery Policy (Reg.1380/2013)

Tasks of Advisory Councils

[...] 2. **Advisory Councils may:**

a) **submit recommendations and suggestions** on matters relating to the management of fisheries and the socioeconomic and conservation aspects of fisheries and aquaculture **to the Commission and to the Member State concerned**, and, in particular, recommendations on how to simplify rules on fisheries management;

(b) inform the Commission and Member States of **problems relating to the management and the socio-economic and conservation aspects** of fisheries and, where appropriate, of aquaculture in their geographical area or field of competence and propose solutions to overcome those problems;

(c) **contribute, in close cooperation with scientists, to the collection, supply and analysis of data necessary for the development of conservation measures. [...]**

MEDAC structure and ties



European Commission
(DG MARE –
DG ENVI)

GFCM
General Fisheries
Commission for the
Mediterranean

SSF

Professional
fishers

Industrial
fishery

Processing,
marketing and
trade unions

MEDAC

Women
associations

Recreational
Sector

NGOs

Since 2022, organizations representing or having direct or indirect economic interests linked to the **use of the marine environment or maritime space** other than commercial fishing, aquaculture or the processing, marketing, distribution and retail of seafood can be AC members EC DEL.REG.(EU)2022/204 of 8 Dec 2021

The MEDAC workplan on the key topics is annually agreed with EC and approved by MEDAC members



49 MEDAC members

5 Working Groups and 6 Focus Groups

WGs: CFP, large pelagics, Recreational Fisheries, socioeconomic impact,
European Green Deal

FGs: Adriatic Sea, West Med, Strait of Sicily, Equal opportunities, East Med,
SSF

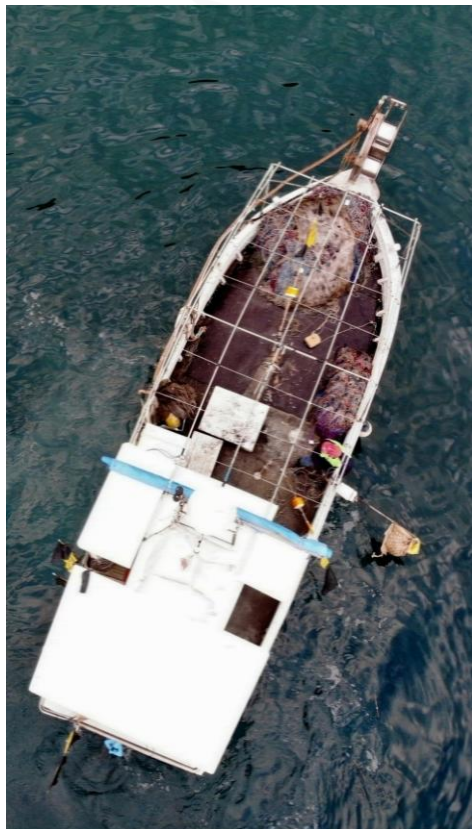


Executive Committee



**Shared advice to EC and MSs
on the future of fishery in the Mediterranean**
(by consensus or by majority including minority statements)

The role of MEDAC includes the **preparation of advice on fisheries management focused on sustainability**, in support of the fisheries sector in the Med, to be submitted **to the Member States and the European institutions** in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the CFP; MEDAC also proposes technical solutions and suggestions, related to joint recommendations too (ex. Art. 18 Reg.1380 / 2013) at the request of the Member States.
















en.med-ac.eu/pareri_lettere.php

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advice and letters

2026
advice and letters



-  MEDAC letter on the fuel crisis 
-  Annex MEDAC letter fuel crisis 
-  MEDAC advice on the call for evidence EU strategy for islands 
-  MEDAC advice on the call for evidence Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture 
-  MEDAC advice on the call for evidence of EU strategy for Coastal Communities 
-  MEDAC letter request of clarifications EC Communication on the allocation of FOs for SSF 

Marine Spatial Planning for Sustainable Blue Economy & Nature Protection

- MEDAC welcomes MSP as a strategic governance **tool to balance ecological protection, food security, long-term sustainability of fisheries, and socio-economic viability** in the Mediterranean
- MSP must reflect the **specificities of Mediterranean seas**: multi-use, data gaps, high fishing dependency, transboundary stocks
- MSP should **build on existing fisheries management tools and frameworks** (GFCM measures, FRAs, seasonal closures) rather than replace them
- **Stakeholder participation**, especially fisheries, is essential from the earliest stages of planning

Stakeholder Participation as a Core MSP Principle

- MEDAC calls for **structured and continuous consultation** of stakeholders within MSP processes and stresses the **full inclusion of small-scale and industrial fisheries in decision-making and mapping** exercises
- Fisheries representatives, including small-scale and industrial fleets, must be:
 - involved from the **earliest planning** stages
 - **meaningfully engaged** at national and regional level
- Levels of stakeholder involvement **currently vary significantly** among Member States, creating inconsistency and legitimacy risks
- **Existing spatial fisheries measures** (FRAs, trawl bans, closures) must be fully **integrated** into MSP plans
- MSP **should help reduce conflicts** through:
 - clear spatial prioritization
 - avoidance of cumulative pressure on fishing grounds

Fishing in the Mediterranean Status, trends, main challenges

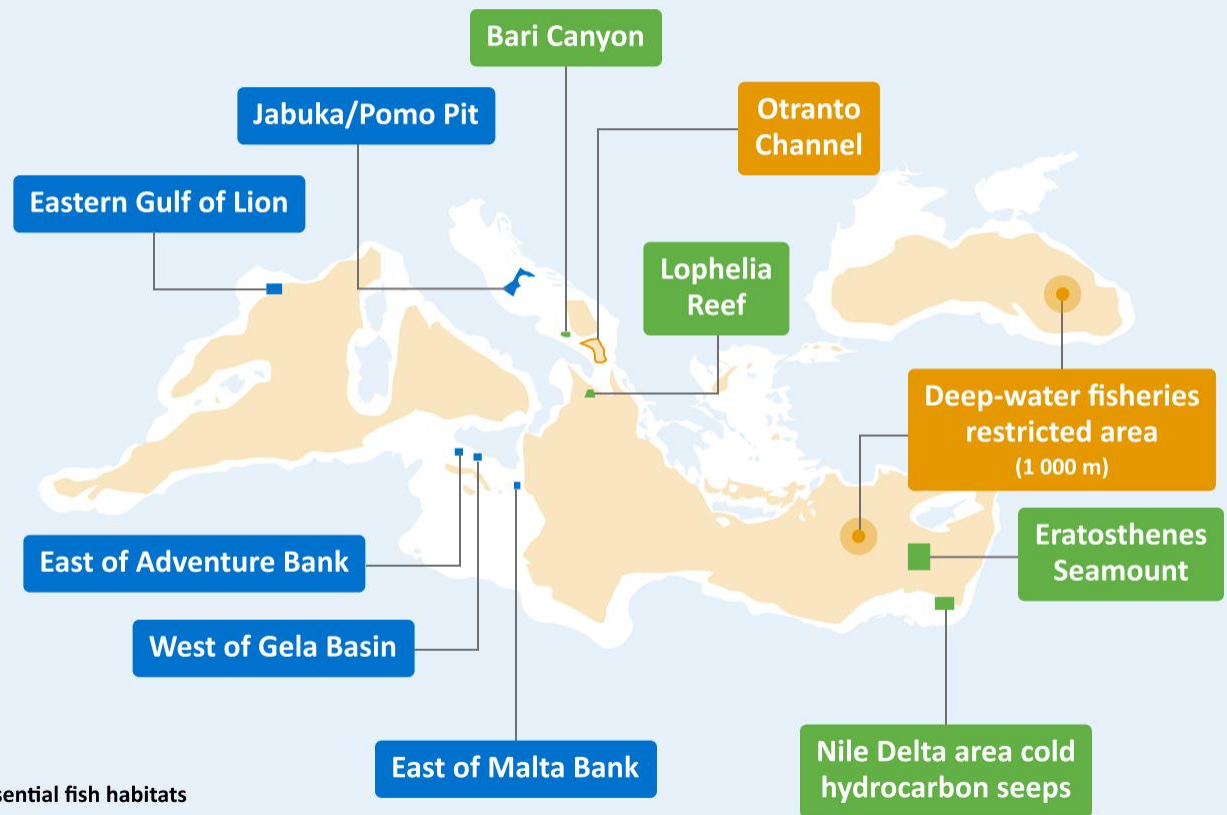
Fisheries restricted areas in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Specific fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted in these geographically defined areas to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems and improve the sustainable exploitation of marine living resources.

11

FRAs covering 1 760 000 km²

- Protection of essential fish habitats
- Protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems
- Protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and essential fish habitats



Policy coherence with existing measures

- MSP must **fully consider and build upon existing fisheries management** measures, including:
 - GFCM Recommendations
 - EU fisheries regulations
 - spatial measures such as FRAs, closures and technical restrictions
- New spatial designations under MSP or OECM frameworks should not duplicate or undermine existing management tools and **MSP should map existing MPAs and potential OECMs**
- MEDAC stresses the **need for policy coherence** between MSP, the CFP, and conservation frameworks (Ref. 113/2024)
- MEDAC **supports OECMs as complementary tools** to MPAs for biodiversity protection, noting that Fisheries-related spatial measures can qualify as OECMs if properly governed and monitored

- **Recognise the value of traditional and local** ecological knowledge in identifying, designing and managing MSP measures and OECMs
- **Assess cumulative impacts** of spatial restrictions on fisheries before introducing new MSP or OECM measures
- Provide **financial and technical support mechanisms**, including EU funds such as EMFAF, to mitigate possible negative effects on the fishing sector
- **Consider co-management approaches**, enabling fishers to directly participate in the governance and management of OECMs

Governance, Data & Knowledge: Preconditions for Success

- MEDAC highlights the need for:
 - **transparent and accessible** spatial data
 - **consideration of socio-economic** impacts in MSP and OECM designation
- MSP should promote **joint research initiatives** to assess the ecological and socio-economic effectiveness of OECMs, with particular attention to:
 - fisheries sustainability
 - impacts on fishing activities and communities
- MEDAC calls for a common EU–GFCM approach to OECMs in the Mediterranean

For the full MEDAC Advice 318/2025

“MEDAC Advice on Marine Spatial Planning and the Role of OECMs in the Mediterranean”

https://www.med-ac.eu/files/documentazione_pareri_lettere/2025/10/318_2025_medac_advice_msp_oecm.pdf

The human dimension of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Fisheries provide vital livelihoods for both men and women and remain integral to the social and economic fabric of coastal communities, underscoring the need for inclusive and sustainable policy support.

On average, **1 in every 1 100** coastal residents is a fisher

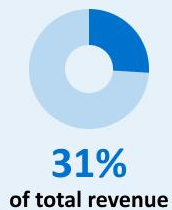
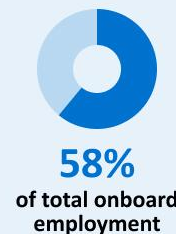
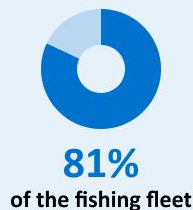
Ageing workforce shows initial signs of improvement

	Over the age of 40	Under the age of 25
2023	41%	20%
2020	52%	10%
2018	49%	17%



Women hold **28%** of all jobs along the fisheries value chain

Small-scale fisheries play a vital role



Average annual remuneration

USD 7 145

17.5% increase

Since 2020

Per fisher

Large variation among subregions and fleet segment groups



Share of GFCM countries offering social protection

74%
Health coverage

78%
Old age pension

57%
Unemployment benefits

Access to social protection continues to expand



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For further info
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