# Multi-annual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea

2018/0050(COD) - 26/06/2019 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a multiannual fisheries management plan for the western Mediterranean Sea.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014.

CONTENT: the Regulation establishes a multi-annual management plan for demersal stocks (i.e. fish living on the seabed) in the western Mediterranean, in an area mainly covering French, Italian and Spanish waters.

***Scope***

The plan shall take account of the mixed nature of the fisheries and the dynamics between the stocks driving them, i.e. hake, red mullet, deep-water rose shrimp, Norway lobster (Nephrops norvegicus), blue and red shrimp and giant red shrimp. It shall also take account of by-catch species caught in demersal fisheries and demersal stocks for which sufficient data are not available. It should apply to the demersal fisheries (in particular, trawl nets, bottom-set nets, traps and longlines) carried out in Union waters or by Union fishing vessels outside the Union waters of the western Mediterranean Sea.

***Objectives of the plan***

The plan shall:

- be based on a fishing effort regime and aim to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the common fisheries policy (CFP), in particular by applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management;

- ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

- contribute to the elimination of discards and to the implementation of the landing obligation;

- implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in order to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem and on vulnerable habitats and protected species are minimised.

Measures under the plan shall be taken on the basis of the best available scientific advice.

***Fishing effort regime***

The Regulation shall ensure that the Council establishes maximum allowable fishing effort, expressed as numbers of fishing days, on an annual basis.

For the first year of implementation of the plan, except for geographical sub-areas in which the fishing effort has already been reduced by more than 20 % during the baseline period (2012-2017), the maximum

allowable fishing effort shall be reduced by 10 % compared to the baseline. For the second to the fifth year of the implementation of the plan, the maximum allowable fishing effort shall be reduced by a maximum of 30 %.

Where the best available scientific advice shows significant catches of a particular stock with fishing gear other than trawls, maximum allowable fishing effort may be set for such particular gear on the basis of such scientific advice.

***Technical conservation measures***

The Regulation provides for specific technical conservation measures, which cover all stocks and include recreational fishing, through regionalisation, in accordance with the western Mediterranean Sea.

Where the best available scientific advice shows that recreational fishing has a significant impact on the fishing mortality of a particular stock, the Council may set non-discriminatory limits for recreational fishermen.

When setting such limits, the Council shall refer to transparent and objective criteria, including those of an environmental, social and economic nature.

***Closure areas***

The use of trawls in the western Mediterranean Sea shall be prohibited within six nautical miles from the coast except in areas deeper than the 100 m isobath during three months each year and, where appropriate, consecutively, on the basis of the best available scientific advice. Other closed areas shall be possible where they ensure a reduction of at least 20% in catches of juvenile hake.

***Permanent cessation***

It is foreseen that the Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) should be amended so that fleet segments covered by the new rules can benefit from compensation in case of permanent cessation of activities fishing.

***Regional cooperation and co-management***

The Regulation makes it possible to establish regional cooperation between France, Italy and Spain with a view to submitting joint recommendations for certain measures to be taken by the Commission on issues such as landing requirements and technical conservation.

In order to contribute to the effective achievement of the objectives of the plan, and in accordance with the principles of good governance, Member States shall be allowed to promote participative management systems at local level.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 16.7.2019. Article 7 on the fishing effort regime shall apply from 1.1.2020.