

Fisheries resources: conservation and sustainable development in Mediterranean Sea, action plan

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PURPOSE : to lay down a Community Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean Sea under the Common Fisheries Policy. **CONTENT** : Mediterranean fisheries represent an important and vital sector of the Community fisheries. The Mediterranean Sea and the fisheries carried out there are characterised by a number of distinctive features with important implications for the conservation policy under the Common Fisheries Policy. These features include: relative extension of national vs. international waters, straddling and shared stocks, overall characteristics of fishing activities, availability of scientific information and a number of other considerations, e.g. leisure fisheries. Some of these features are not exclusive to the Mediterranean, but they are more pronounced in this region. On the basis of the guiding principles and objectives outlined in the previous sections, the Commission considers that a number of actions at Community level should be taken in order to achieve the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy in the Mediterranean Sea. In this Action Plan, the following specific fields of actions are foreseen at Community level and described below:

- establishing a concerted approach over the jurisdiction of maritime waters, - reducing overall fishing pressure, - applying catch limitations where possible, - improving the current exploitation pattern and reducing negative effects on stocks and the environment, - improving control and enforcement, - strengthening scientific structures and improving scientific knowledge, - greater stakeholders' involvement in the consultation process.

The Action Plan is presented as relevant priority initiatives for the next three years. Actions taken in the context of this Action Plan should include the widest possible consultation with stakeholders, the scientific community and national administrations at the earliest stages of the process. This orientation should allow exchange of opinions, debate and final agreement within the framework of ACFA, Advisory Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture, the STECF and the Council.