

**EUROPEAN UNION PROPOSAL FOR A GFCM RECOMMENDATION ON A  
MULTIANNUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR FISHERIES ON SMALL PELAGIC  
STOCKS IN THE GFCM-GSA 17 (NORTHERN ADRIATIC SEA) AND ON  
TRANSITIONAL CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR FISHERIES ON SMALL  
PELAGIC STOCKS IN GSA 18 (SOUTHERN ADRIATIC SEA)**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objectives of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean are to promote the development, conservation, rational management and proper utilization of living marine resources;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, Article 2 therein;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic and, notably, Article 2 and 3 therein;

RECALLING the Guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area agreed during its 36 Session;

NOTING that for anchovy and sardine in GSA 17 the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) has recurrently advised not to increase the fishing effort and the fishing –mortality though the fishery is considered sustainable;

NOTING the strong changes occurred in 2010 as for the assessment of the status of the small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 that, with a view to focus scientists attention, call for a setting up of an agreed multiannual management system at multilateral level;

NOTING that for anchovy and sardine stocks in GSA 18 the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) is not yet in the position to establish a formal assessment

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stock collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries

CONSIDERING that the small pelagic fishery is multispecies and that management decisions should therefore be taken considering at least both sardine and anchovy;

CONSIDERING that small pelagic stocks play a fundamental ecological role in transmitting biomass and energy from short trophic webs towards higher trophic levels;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting small pelagic stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the state of exploited stocks and of the scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method to this end shall be established;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of GFCM Agreement that:

## PART I

### *General objectives, scope and definitions*

#### **General objectives of the multiannual plan**

1. A multi-annual management plan for the fisheries exploiting the small pelagic stocks in GFCM-GSA 17 "Northern Adriatic" must be developed and be coherent with the precautionary approach and designed to provide high long-term yields consistent with the maximum sustainable yield and to guarantee a low risk of stocks collapse while maintaining sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.
2. Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) of GFCM whose vessels have been actively fishing for the small pelagic stocks including, inter alia, sardine, anchovy in GFCM GSA 17 agree to implement such a multi-annual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.
3. A set of transitional precautionary management measures for the fisheries exploiting the small pelagic stocks in GFCM-GSA 18 "Southern Adriatic" must be developed in order to ensure that, pending formal scientific advice from the SAC, the stocks and fisheries are kept out undesirable state
4. Members and Cooperating non-Members of GFCM whose vessels have been actively fishing for the small pelagic stocks including, inter alia, sardine and anchovy in GFCM GSA 18 agree to implement such transitional management measures for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives set by this recommendation.

#### **Geographical scope**

5. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply in the GFCM-GSA 17 "Northern Adriatic" as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 which lies northward to the straight line connecting the point of 41° 55' N and 15° 08' E on the Italian coastline and the terrestrial border between Croatia and Montenegro.
6. The set of transitional measures provided by the present recommendation shall apply in the GFCM-GSA 18 "Southern Adriatic" as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 which lies from the coast lines 41° 55' N 15° 08' E (Croatia-Montenegro border) and 40° 04' N 18° 29' (Albania-Greece border).

#### **Definitions**

7. For the purpose of this recommendation

a) Vessel actively fishing for small pelagic stocks: means any vessel equipped with either trawl nets, purse seiners or other type of surrounding nets where the total catch of small pelagic stocks of sardine, anchovy and sprat, account for at least 50% of the catch in live weight.

b) Fishing day: means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within the GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 absent from port.

## PART II

### *Specific objectives of the multiannual management plan for GSA 17 and of the transitional measures for GSA 18*

8. Pending the identification of target reference points in line with the maximum sustainable yields, the general objectives of the plan set out in point 1 above shall be attained while maintaining:

a- the exploitation rate  $E (=F/Z)$  at less than 0,4 per year on appropriate age groups both for anchovy, sardine stocks while considering that the average natural mortality over the same age groups is of 0.81 for anchovy and 0.76 for sardine.

b- a precautionary mid-year spawning stock biomasses, estimated in a consistent manner with the same methodology, above 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy ( hereinafter SSBpa)

c- the levels of fishing fleet capacity and fishing effort at the levels authorized and exerted in the year 2011 for the exploitation of small pelagic stocks in GSA 17

9. In the event that the mid-year spawning stock biomass level falls below 179 000 tonnes for anchovy or 78 000 tonnes for sardine (hereinafter SSBlim), the procedure under paragraph 16e shall apply.

10. The objective of the transitional measures for the small pelagic fishery in GSA 18 is to start preparing the ground for a future management plan while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific assessment, the biomass level of the stock could drop below undesirable values with negative consequences also on the economic viability of the fisheries concerned.

## PART III

### *Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan*

11. Members and Cooperating non-Members of GFCM shall ensure adequate annual scientific monitoring of the status of the small pelagic stocks in GSAs 17 and 18 in particular of sardine and anchovy as well as of the fisheries concerned.

12. SAC shall provide on annual basis as from 2014 advice on the status of the small pelagic stocks (sardine, anchovy) in GSA 17, including catch forecasts in line with the precautionary approach and the maximum sustainable yields and in GSA18.

13. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM may review the content of the management plan.

14. Whenever the GFCM, on the basis of advice from SAC, finds that the fishing mortality or the exploitation rate and associated spawning stock biomass levels, specified in point 8 are no longer appropriate to achieve the objectives specified in point 1 above, then it shall revise those exploitation rate and/or biomass levels accordingly.

15. Where SAC advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the multi-annual plan are not being met the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to ensure that those objectives are met.

## **PART IV**

### ***Management measures***

16 a- When SAC considers that the mid-year spawning stock biomass level will continue to be equal or superior to 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy in the subsequent year and the exploitation rate has been less than 0,4, then the fishing effort, both in terms of capacity and fishing activity, for small pelagic shall be maintained at the level of 2011.

16b- When SAC considers that the mid-year spawning stock biomass level will continue to be equal or superior to 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy in the subsequent year and the exploitation rate is above 0,4, then GFCM shall decide on the modalities to ensure that there is adequate adaptation of the fishing effort with respect to the fishing effort exerted the previous year, either in terms of capacity and/or fishing activity, for small pelagic

16c- When SAC considers that the size of the stock is below the precautionary mid-year spawning stock biomass level of 109 200 tonnes for sardine and 250 600 tonnes for anchovy and above or equal to the biomass limit reference point, as set in point 9 above, then GFCM shall decide on the modalities to ensure that the fishing effort exerted the previous year, either in terms of capacity and/or fishing activity, is adapted according to the highest ratio, amongst the two species, of the difference between the precautionary biomass and the current biomass levels with respect to the difference between the precautionary biomass level and the minimum biomass acceptable level. (*i.e.*  $\frac{SSBpa-SSBcurr}{(SSBpa-SSBlim)}$ ).

16d- When SAC considers that the size of the stock of one of the two species (either anchovy or sardine) is above the biomass threshold reference point (SSBpa) whilst the current size of the stock of the other species is between the biomass limit reference point (SSBlim) and the

biomass threshold reference point (SSBpa) then GFCM shall decide on the modalities to ensure that the fishing effort exerted the previous year by the small pelagic fishing fleets, either in terms of capacity and/or fishing activity, shall be:

- i) kept unchanged if the stock size is greater than halfway between the SSBlim and SSBpa

or

-ii) adapted according to the difference between the precautionary biomass and the current biomass levels with respect to the difference between the precautionary biomass level and the minimum biomass acceptable level. (*i.e.*  $(SSBpa - SSBcurr) / (SSBpa - SSBlim)$ ).

16e- When SAC considers that the size of the stock of one of the two species (either anchovy or sardine) is above the biomass threshold reference point (SSBpa) whilst the size of the stock of the other species is below the biomass limit reference point (SSBlim), then GFCM shall decide on the emergency measures to be taken in order to ensure a recovery of the stock, including closure of the fishery.

Such decision shall take into account the evaluation by SAC of the different alternative management scenarios as well as the market and socio-economic consequences that these scenarios could imply.

16f- Where for whatever reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data) the SAC is not in a position of providing an accurate advice on the state of the small pelagic stocks and on the exploitation level, GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure sustainability of the fishery. These measures should be based on SAC recommendations taking into consideration the socio-economic elements pertaining to the relevant fishery. The revocation of these measures shall be subject to the availability of appropriate scientific advice.

17. As from 2015 and based on the assessment by SAC of the impact of management measures referred to under Article 16 a-f, GFCM may consider adopting additional measures including catch limitations to achieve the objectives of this plan for the small pelagic fisheries in GSA 17 and 18.

#### Part V

#### *Technical Conservation Measures*

18. Fishing for fry of small pelagic stocks shall be prohibited with all fishing gears in GSA 17 and GSA 18.

19. Anchovy and sardine smaller than the minimum conservation size in total length as reported below shall not be caught, retained on board, transhipped, transferred, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale:

Anchovy                      9 cm

The minimum size in length may be converted into 110 specimens per kg of anchovy and 55 specimens per kg of sardine. Specimens which are smaller than the minimum conservation size are hereby named "*undersized specimens*".

20. The areas of aggregation of anchovy and sardine juveniles in their first year of life shall be protected from fishing activities with fishing gears suitable to catch them. Members shall communicate to GFCM the areas and period protected to this scope by making reference to the GFCM statistical grids as established by Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1<sup>1</sup>.

21 Notwithstanding paragraph 19, when due to an unavoidable circumstances undersized specimens of anchovy and/or sardine have been effectively caught, masters of the catching vessel shall record those catches (estimated weight and numbers) of undersized specimens in a specific section of the logbook. Without prejudice to provisions foreseen in paragraph 19 and when a system of avoiding discards and obligation to land all catches has been established by a CPC, the master of the fishing vessel will not be allowed to discard those catches and shall therefore land the fish caught independently of the size of the fish caught in line with the provisions stipulated by the CPC. All quantities landed shall be recorded

and shall not be displayed, offered for sale or used for human consumption.

21b) CPCs implementing a landing obligations scheme shall notify its content and characteristics to the GFCM Secretariat in advance of the subsequent GFCM plenary session with a view to inform the other Parties.

## Part VI

### *Fishing effort and fish capacity control*

22. The Members and Cooperating non-Members of GFCM shall communicate to GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2013 the list of all trawlers (single and pair trawlers), purse seiners and surrounding nets without purse line authorised to fish for small pelagic stocks and registered in harbours located in GSAs 17 and 18 or operating in GSA 17 and/or 18 although registered in harbours located in other GSA at the date of 31 October 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the reference fishing capacity for small pelagic stocks).

Trawlers and purse seiners are classified as fishing actively for small pelagic stocks when sardine and/or anchovy accounts for at least 50% of the catch in live weight.

The list shall contain for each vessel the information referred to in Annex I.

23. Any fishing vessel not included in the list established by point 22 above shall not be allowed to fish for, or retain on board or land any quantity greater than 20% of anchovy, and/or sardine if the vessel is engaged on a fishing trip in GSA 17 and/or GSA 18.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1

24 The CPCs of GFCM shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, any deletion from and/or any modification of the fishing fleets, as identified under point 22 above, for small pelagic stocks authorized to operate in GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 at any time such changes occur.

25 The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain updated the list of fishing vessels authorised to fish for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and/or GSA 18 and place it on the GFCM website, in a manner consistent with confidentiality requirements noted by Members.

26 The CPCs of GFCM shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of trawlers and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in GSA 17, both in terms of gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT) and in engine power (kW), as recorded both in the national and in the GFCM fleet registers, does not exceed at any time the reference fishing capacity for small pelagic stocks as established under paragraph 22 above.

27 Trawlers and purse seiners for small pelagic stocks as identified in paragraph 22 second paragraph above, irrespective of the vessel's length overall, shall not operate for more than 5 fishing days per week and shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year.

28. Each CPC shall ensure to set up adequate mechanisms in terms of recording each fishing vessel in a national fleet register, of recording vessels' catches and fishing effort via both the logbook and the remote sensing and monitoring of fishing vessels activities and landings via catch and effort sampling surveys according to the rules stipulated by each CPC.

The above 1st subparagraph is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM 33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system in the GFCM Area.

## Part VII

### *National Programmes for Control, monitoring and surveillance*

31. National Control Programmes for the implementation of the provisions of this recommendation shall be established by the concerned parties through specific plans. These plans shall contain the elements listed in Annex II and ensure, *inter alia*, a proper and accurate monitoring and recording of the monthly catches and fishing effort deployed so that a mechanisms is set-up at national level to avoid fishing effort overshooting.

32. Those National control Programmes and plans shall be communicated each year to the GFCM Secretariat, during the last quarter of the precedent year and not later than 30 October each year. If the GFCM finds a serious fault in the plans submitted by a CPC and cannot endorse the plan, the GFCM shall decide by mail vote, by 15 December, on the suspension of small pelagic fisheries for the CPC concerned in the subsequent year. The Compliance Committee shall adopt specific rules and procedures to prepare the necessary examination.

33. CPCs non-submitting the plan by the deadline specified in paragraph 32 above, are not allowed to carry out the small pelagic fisheries in the area until the plan is submitted and endorsed by the GFCM.





## ANNEX I

The list referred to in Part VI, Point 22 shall contain for each vessel the following information:

- Name of vessel
- Vessel register number (code assigned by Members)
- GFCM registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registries (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate Y/N)
- Vessel type , length overall and gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s), and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear(s) used for small pelagic and fleet segment allocation and Operational Unit as identified in TASK 1 statistical matrix
- Time period authorized for fishing with pelagic trawlers or purse seiners for small pelagic (if any of such authorization)

## ANNEX II

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF SPECIFIC MONITORING AND CONTROL PLAN FOR SMALL PELAGIC IN THE ADRIATIC SEA**

Specific monitoring and control plans shall clearly define the following:

#### ***a) Means of control***

Description of human, technical and financial means specifically available for the implementation of the plans. Particular attention shall be given to the description of the patrol vessels, including details on the organisms managing them as well as their spatial and temporal autonomy and on board facilities (number of beds, etc).

#### ***b) Annual fishing plans***

The details of any system in place for national monitoring and control of the fishing plan. The methodology to ensure the respect of rules of recording of catches (completion/submission of logbooks; landing declarations and sales notes) and the mechanisms established to cross-check and verify information received from different sources.

#### ***c) Sampling methodologies***

Each country shall specify and describe which sampling strategy will be applied to verify weighing of catches at first sale as well as sampling strategy for vessels not subject to logbook/landing declaration rules.

#### ***d) Inspection protocols***

Define inspection tasks and procedures in accordance with inspections and proceedings to ensure in particular continuity of evidences observed during inspections.

#### ***e) Guidelines***

Explanatory guidelines for inspectors, producer's organisations and fishermen, regarding the set of rules in place for the small pelagic fishery:

- ✓ Rules of completion of various documents including completion of inspection reports, fishing logbooks, transshipment declarations, landing and take-over declarations, transport documents, sales notes,
- ✓ Technical measures in force, including mesh size and/or mesh dimensions, minimum catching size, temporary restrictions, etc,
- ✓ Sampling strategies,
- ✓ Cross-check mechanisms

#### ***f) Inspection benchmarks***

- ✓ Objective

Each country shall set specific inspection benchmarks in accordance with risk-based methodologies.

✓ Strategy

Inspection and surveillance of fishing activities shall concentrate on fishing vessels likely to catch small pelagic. In addition to specific benchmarks defined, random inspections of transport and marketing of this species shall be used as a complementary cross-checking mechanism to test the effectiveness of inspection and surveillance. Moreover the strategies and action plans for the control of markets and transport shall be included.

✓ Priorities

When defining risks, different gear types shall be subject to different levels of prioritisation, depending on the extent to which the fleets are affected by fishing opportunity limits. For that reason, each country shall set specific priorities.

✓ Target benchmarks

Member countries shall implement their inspection schedules taking account risk based methodologies and defining specific targets. Minimum benchmarks are defined below.

- Level of inspection in ports
  - As a general rule, the accuracy to be achieved should be at least equivalent to what would be obtained by a simple random sampling method, where inspections shall cover 20 % of all landings of small pelagic by weight in the country.
- Level of inspection of marketing
  - Inspection of 5 % of the quantities of small pelagic offered as first sale.
- Level of inspection at sea

**Flexible benchmark**: to be set after a detailed analysis of the fishing activity in each area by analysing VMS tracks and the results of aerial surveillance. Benchmarks at sea shall refer to the number of patrol days at sea in the management areas.

***g) Joint operations***

Concerned countries shall define together on joint actions at sea and ashore to fight against illegal and unrecorded catches. That joint actions shall be defined in accordance with control and inspection criteria and priorities agreed between them.