

EUROPEAN UNION PROPOSAL FOR A GFCM RECOMMENDATION

on a multiannual management plan for fisheries on turbot and associated demersal species in the GFCM-GSA 29 (Black 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/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnets fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea;

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 turbot in GSA 29 the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) has concluded in its 16th session of 2014 that the stock is in overfishing and advised the adoption of a recovery plan;

CONSIDERING the proposal for a minimum structure of management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea presented to the 16th meeting of the SAC;

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;

NOTING that for turbot and associated species in GSA 29 the SAC has underlined that there is a high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated catches (IUU);

CONSIDERING that fisheries targeting turbot are multispecies in nature; management decisions should therefore be taken considering also associated species;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting turbot and associated stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability;

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 turbot and associated species in GFCM-GSA 29 "Black Sea" shall be developed, in line with the precautionary

approach, and designed to counteract and/or prevent overfishing (both direct and indirect) with a view to provide high long-term yields consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (hereafter MSY) and to guarantee a low risk of stocks collapse while ensuring sustainable and relatively stable fisheries.

2. The conservation objective shall be to achieve fishing mortality at MSY level no later than 2020.

3. The multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting turbot and associated species shall also pursue the reduction in Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (hereafter IUU) fishing activities on the GFCM-GSA 29.

4. Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) of GFCM whose vessels have been actively fishing for turbot and associated species in the GFCM-GSA 29 agree to implement such a multiannual management plan for the fisheries concerned and in accordance with the general and specific objectives and measures set by this recommendation.

5. Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) of GFCM whose vessels have been actively fishing for turbot and associated species in the GFCM-GSA 29 agree to implement actions established in the roadmap for fighting IUU fishing in the Black Sea adopted in 2013.

Geographical scope

6. The multiannual management plan provided by the present recommendation shall apply in the GFCM-GSA 29 "Black Sea".

Definitions

7. For the purpose of this recommendation:

- a) 'vessel actively fishing for turbot means any vessel equipped with bottom set gillnets authorised to fish for turbot.
- b) 'fishing day' means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel is present within the GSA 29 and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling of a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing of fish and fishery products
- c) 'Turbot' means fishes pertaining to the species *Psetta maxima*.
- d) 'associated species' means those species that (i) prey upon the target species, (ii) are preyed on by it, (iii) compete with it for food, living space, etc.; or (iv) co-occur in the same fishing area and are exploited (or accidentally taken) in the same fishery or fisheries, *inter alia*, picked dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*).
- e) 'bottom-set gillnet' means any net made up of a single piece of net held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed or capable of being fixed by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintain the gear in place either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

- f) 'fishing authorisation' means entitlement to engage in fishing activities during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery.

PART II

Specific objectives of the multiannual management plan for GSA 29

8. The operational objective of this plan shall be to maintain fishing mortality for turbot within agreed precautionary reference points, with a view to achieving F_{msy} no later than 2020.

9. Considering the current fishing mortality ($F_{curr} = 0.8$) and the estimated fishing mortality at MSY levels ($F_{msy} = 0.26$) confirmed by the SAC, the target fishing mortality (F_{target}) for the management plan shall be set at an intermediate level of 0.55 for the year 2017. The SAC-Working Group of the Black Sea, shall be requested to regularly assess this level.

The GFCM, on the basis of the SAC advice, shall review yearly the target fishing mortality (F_{target}).

10. Operational objectives in terms of fighting against IUU fishing activities which are relevant for the turbot and associated species fisheries shall be developed as defined in part VII of this recommendation.

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 turbot and associated species in GSA 29.

12. The SAC shall provide, on annual basis as from 2015, advice on the status of the stocks of turbot and associated species in GSA 29, including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to restore the size of Black Sea turbot stock and associated species at levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield at the latest by 2020. The evaluation of the SAC will include a socio-economic impact assessment.

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 level specified according to paragraph 9 is no longer appropriate to achieve the objectives specified in paragraph 1 above, it shall revise those parameters accordingly. 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 achieved.

15. In 2015, the SAC shall evaluate the effectiveness of the measures already applied at national level and advise on whether these measures could be applicable to the entire GSA 29.

16. In 2015, the SAC shall collect and analyse all available information and data referring to the associated species for turbot fisheries and, where appropriate, advise on minimum conservation sizes.

17. For the purpose of providing advice for the development of this management plan, the SAC shall organise adequate workshops. To this purpose, the SAC, through the Black Sea Working Group shall promote scientific cooperation and a harmonised approach amongst all Black Sea countries.

PART IV Fleet Management measures

18. Vessels authorised to fish turbot in the GFCM GSA-29 shall be indicated in a valid fishing authorisation, which shall specify the technical conditions under which those activities could be exerted. In the absence of such authorisation a vessel shall not catch, retain on board, tranship, land, store or sell turbot.

19. CPCs shall maintain an updated register of those fishing authorisations. CPCs shall communicate to GFCM Secretariat not later than 30 November of the precedent year the list of active vessels for which such a fishing authorisation has been issued for the forthcoming year or years. This list will include the external identification number, the name of the fishing vessels concerned and, if applicable, the individual fishing opportunities allocated to them.

20. 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 turbot stocks and associate species 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 advice taking into consideration socio-economic elements

Part V Technical Conservation Measures

21. In addition to the provisions on minimum size of turbot already defined in Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2, picked dogfish smaller than the minimum conservation reference size in total length as reported below and measured to the lowest centimetre, shall not be caught, retained on board, transhipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale:

Picked dogfish	90 cm
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22. Notwithstanding paragraph 21, when due to unavoidable circumstances undersized specimens of picked dogfish have been effectively caught, masters of the catching vessel shall record those catches (estimated weight and numbers) of undersized specimens. CPCs shall establish an adequate mechanism for recording those catches.

23. Without prejudice to provisions foreseen in paragraph 21 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 of undersize fish landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale or used for human consumption.

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.

24. The SAC will provide advice in 2015 on appropriate minimum conservation sizes for any other associated species that is relevant to the turbot fishery. On the basis of this advice, the GFCM will define minimum sizes in 2015.

25. CPCs shall designate additional spatial/temporal restrictions, with respect to those already established, in which fishing activities shall be banned or restricted in order to protect aggregation areas of juveniles of turbot. CPCs will notify to the GFCM by 1 January 2015 the list of these areas and the restrictions applied.

26. In addition of the provisions defined for bottom set gillnets in Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2; CPCs shall cooperate to harmonize their legislation regarding maximum length and height of gillnets to achieve common standards as from 2016.

27. The GFCM Secretariat shall facilitate the cooperation between Members, including, where necessary, by ensuring that a scientific contribution is obtained from the SAC.

Part VI

Management of the fishing effort

28. The Members and Cooperating non-Members of GFCM shall communicate to GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2014 the list of all vessels using bottom set gillnets authorised to fish for turbot.

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

29. Any fishing vessel not included in the list established under point 25 above shall not be allowed to fish for, retain on board or land turbot if the vessel is engaged on a fishing trip in GSA 29.

30. 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 for turbot, as identified under point 28 above, at any time such changes occur.

31. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain updated the list of fishing vessels authorised to fish for turbot and place it on the GFCM website, in a manner consistent with confidentiality requirements noted by Members.

32. Trawlers and bottom set gillnets authorised to fish for turbot in GSA 29, irrespective of the vessel's length overall shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year.

33. 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 , 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

Specific measures to address Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities

34. It shall be prohibited to carry out fishing activities with passive gear which are not identifiable. For that purpose, passive gear, including its markers and intermediary buoys, shall permanently display the external registration letters and numbers displayed on the hull of the fishing vessel to which it belongs.

35. CPCs will establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels fishing in GSA 29 will declare all catches and by-catches of turbot. The obligations to declare catches will apply irrespective of the volume of the catch.

36. Each CPC shall designate ports or places close to the shore in which landings of turbot in GSA 29 may take place.

37. For each designated port, the port CPC shall specify permitted landing and transshipping times and places. The port CPC shall also ensure inspection coverage during all landing and transshipping times and at all landing and transshipping places.

38. It shall be prohibited to land or tranship from fishing vessels any quantity of turbot fished in the GSAs 29 at any place other than ports designated by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 36.

39. CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Executive Secretary by no later than 30 October 2014, a list of the designated ports in which landings of turbot in GSA 29 may take place. Any subsequent change that may occur to this list shall be promptly notified to the GFCM

40. The Members and Cooperating non-Members of GFCM shall engage to cooperate on the fight against IUU activities, in particular through sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities and organized crime.

Part VIII

National Programmes for Control, monitoring and surveillance

41. 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 inconsistencies and non-compliance with the measures and restrictions adopted by the GFCM.

42. 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 plan submitted by a CPC and cannot endorse the plan, the GFCM shall decide by mail vote, by 15 December, on the suspension of turbot fisheries for the CPC concerned in the subsequent year. The Compliance Committee shall adopt specific rules and procedures to prepare the necessary examination.

43. CPCs non-submitting the plan by the deadline specified in paragraph 42, are not allowed to carry out the turbot fisheries in the area until the plan is submitted and endorsed by the GFCM.

Annex I

The list referred to in [Part VI, Point 23] 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 turbot and fleet segment allocation and Operational Unit as identified in TASK 1 statistical matrix
- Time period authorized for fishing with trawlers, gillnet or any other gear likely to fish turbot (if any of such authorization)

Annex II

Guidelines for the preparation of specific monitoring and control plans for turbot in the Black 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 fisheries likely to catch turbot and associated species:

- ✓ 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 turbot and associated species. 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 turbot and associated species by weight in the country.
- Level of inspection of marketing
 - Inspection of 5 % of the quantities of turbot 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.