



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.D.1/ACD

Subject: Reply to MedAC letter Ref. 109/2023

Dear Mr Marzoa Notlevsen,

I would like to thank you for your letter 109/2023 in relation to the Landing Obligation and the western Mediterranean multi-annual management plan (West Med MAP)¹.

Indeed, weak compliance, undocumented discarding and misreporting of catches undermines the accuracy of catch- data and reporting, which in turn underpin the quality of scientific advice. The Member States and the Commission have worked in 2023 with the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) to review the exemptions to the landing obligation to improve the knowledge and possible improvements of the data. This is linked with the recent STECF assessment of the joint recommendations and published report² covering several sea-basins submitted by the Member States concerning the exemptions.

In addition, I would like to inform you that, according to the political agreement reached between the co-legislators on the new Control Regulation, after 4 years from the entry into force of the Regulation, vessels above 18m and considered at high risk of non-compliance must be equipped with a Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) system with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) to monitor compliance with the landing obligation.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014

² <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/61703874/STECF+23-0406+-+Ev+JRs+LO.pdf/5cf75911-6a7f-4aa5-be7d-3f371440b2bd>

Mr Antonio Marzoa Notlevsen
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Regarding the West Med MAP implementation, I would like to clarify two elements:

- the Commission has the legal obligation to report by 17 July 2024 to the European Parliament and Council on 1) the results and impact of the plan on the stocks concerned, and 2) the fisheries exploiting those stocks. Article 17 of the West Med MAP refers to the monitoring and evaluation of the plan rather than its amendment, which is subject to the conditions set out in Article 16 of the West Med MAP.
- when adopting the MAP in 2019, the co-legislator decided to follow a gradual approach to take into account the socio-economic specificities of the West Med demersal fisheries. The MAP includes a 5-year transition period to achieve MSY. After 1 January 2025, all provisions of the MAP will remain valid and then the provisions of Articles 4 and 6(1) will apply from 1 January 2025 onwards. The expiry of the transitional period does not mean that the other provisions under the West Med MAP are no longer applicable. The West Med MAP will not expire in 2024 and the Commission report to the EP and Council will be based on the targeted stakeholders consultation organised earlier this year as well as on the latest STECF report and best available scientific advice.

I want to reassure you that the European Commission attributes great importance to the proper consultation of stakeholders and the socio-economic assessment of management measures, which is why the West Med MAP targeted stakeholders consultation was organised this year in view of the Commission report.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation, with a view to achieving benefits for the marine environment and for the fishing communities who depend on it. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia RUBECK via the functional mailbox of the Advisory Councils MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

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