

The Agriculture Committee

Final document pursuant to article 127 of the Rules of Procedure,

on the

**Communication from the Commission on the State of Play of the Common Fisheries Policy and
Consultation on the Fishing Opportunities for 2018**

(COM(2017) 368 final)

The Agriculture Committee of Italy's Chamber of Deputies,

Having examined the Communication of the Commission on the State of Play of the Common Fisheries Policy and Consultation on the Fishing Opportunities for 2018 (COM(2017) 368 final);

Noting that by relaunching the annual exercise of setting the total allowable catches (TAC) and the annual national quotas for the following year, the Communication not only marks the first step forward towards setting the fishing opportunities for 2018 but, for the first time, reports on the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as reformed in 2013;

In this latter connection, noting that:

The Communication addresses the progress made in achieving sustainable fisheries, and in particular reports on progress in achieving sustainable fisheries, and especially in ensuring that the exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield, which will also contribute to achieving good environmental status in European seas by 2020;

For the Mediterranean, the Communication stresses the fact that progress towards a better alignment of fishing capacity with fishing opportunities has not been as positive as in other sea basins, and that while important political agreements to achieve environmental, economic and social sustainability have been reached, further efforts are needed, especially to reduce the high levels of overfishing in the Mediterranean, and to implement the landing obligation;

Accordingly, the Communication stresses the need to guarantee – for the Mediterranean - greater commitment to build on and implement the objectives and targets agreed at the political level, on data collection, scientific evaluation, ecosystem-based fisheries management, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, sustainable small-scale fishing and coordination in the Mediterranean, including by creating more protected marine areas;

Noting that despite the fact that the CFP objectives are ambitious, the results achieved so far have not been so encouraging with regard to the Mediterranean Sea, both in relation to the conservation of fish stocks and above all to the possibility of fishing by small-scale fishing vessels that are an important sector for Italy, not only in terms of the numbers involved but also of the historical and cultural heritage that small-scale fishing represents;

Noting also that:

The Communication confirms for 2018 that the fish stocks and the main fisheries will be managed at the EU level under multiannual plans and according to the annual TAC limits;

With regard to the total TAC for 2018, the Communication offers fishing opportunities which will follow the CFP objectives and be based on the best available scientific advice. Where no scientific advice is available, the Commission will apply the precautionary approach in line with the CFP objectives;

The Communication stresses the fact that the reformed CFP is fostering more decentralised governance, including multiannual plans and delegated acts adopted through regionalisation;

Considering, in light of the available data on the results of the first application of the Common Fisheries Policy, the need not only to decentralise fisheries management but also to acknowledge, for regulatory purposes, the specific features of different regions and different fisheries practices;

Recalling in this connection that Italian fishing is mainly small-scale, mostly using vessels with small crews, and that this feature is a powerful feature of the identity of the people involved, which should be protected, albeit within the scope of the European policies for fisheries and for the sea;

Deeming, therefore, that it is necessary to acknowledge the distinctive character of fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea, in terms both of its particular fishing practices and typologies, and of the widely differing fishing practices there, that is to say, those of the Member States of the European Union which are tightly regulated, and those of the North African and Eastern shore states, which are not subject to the same rules and regulations, and lastly, the vessels flying a variety of different flags which fish outside the territorial waters, operating in the absence of any kind of control;

Considering the need to implement specific projects for the Mediterranean Sea that do not refer solely to catch limits but also to types of fisheries practices, the specific types of vessels used, and the peculiar features of the sea basin itself;

Noting moreover that fish resources must be protected by continuing and strengthening the fight against illegal fishing and encouraging forms of cooperation between the countries bordering the Mediterranean;

Deeming, lastly, that the crucial need to rebuild the fish stocks must also be accompanied by measures to protect those who harvest them, also by introducing measures to protect fishers' incomes;

Noting the need for this final document to be forwarded promptly to the European Commission within the framework of the political dialogue and to the European Parliament and the Council,

has expressed a positive judgement on the Communication, with the following remarks:

a) account must be taken, both when assessing the results of the reformed CFP since its entry into force, and when establishing the fishing opportunities for 2018, of the specificity of the Mediterranean Sea in comparison with other European sea basins, with regard to the following:

1) the types of fishery practices;

2) the specific type of vessels used;

3) the geopolitical features of the basin, with its widely differing fisheries, namely, the strictly regulated European Union Member States, the North African and Eastern shore countries which are not subject to the same rules, and fleets flying a variety of different flags, fishing outside the territorial waters and operating in the absence of any control whatsoever;

b) Consequently, when establishing the fishing opportunities for 2018:

1) Strategies must be designed, and forms of cooperation promoted between the states bordering on the Mediterranean Sea;

2) when setting the annual TACs of small pelagics in the Adriatic Sea, account must be taken of the differences between the fleets of the different countries bordering on the basin;

3) more efforts must be put into regionalising fishing by increasing the decentralisation of fisheries governance;

4) the objective of preserving fish stocks which forms the core of the CFP must be robustly pursued, jointly with the objective of ensuring decent living standards to fishers.