European Parliament
2024-2029

TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0388

Multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea

European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2026 on the multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean Sea (2026/2074(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea,

– having regard to Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union,

– having regard to Articles 3(1)(d), 4(2)(d), 43(2), 43(3) and 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

– having regard to Article 37 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC[1] (Common Fisheries Policy Regulation; CFP Regulation),

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and 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] (WestMed MAP Regulation),

– having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2022 on the implementation

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1 OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj.

2 OJ L 172, 26.6.2019, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1022/oj.

of Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation[3],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1380/2013, (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2018/973, (EU) 2019/472 and (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2549/2000, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005[4],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2023/2053 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, amending Regulations (EC) No 1936/2001, (EU) 2017/2107, and (EU) 2019/833 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2016/1627[5],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006 and (EC) No 1005/2008 and Regulations (EU) 2016/1139, (EU) 2017/2403 and (EU) 2019/473 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control[6] (Fisheries Control Regulation),

– having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Better Law-Making[7],

– having regard to the report by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) entitled ‘The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries 2025’,

– having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine

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3 OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 62.
4 OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1241/oj.
5 OJ L 238, 27.9.2023, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2053/oj.
6 OJ L, 2023/2842, 20.12.2023, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2842/oj.
7 OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2016/512/oj.

Strategy Framework Directive)[8],

– having regard to Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning[9] (Maritime Spatial Planning Directive),

– having regard to the report by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) of 10 December 2020 entitled 'Social Dimension of the CFP' (STECF-20-14),

– having regard to the 2026 report by the STECF entitled 'Social Data in EU Fisheries: methodology, dissemination, analysis and evaluation (STECF 25-02 & 25-13)',

– having regard to its resolution of 11 May 2023 towards a strong and sustainable EU algae sector[10],

– having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2023 on the small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives[11],

– having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2024 on the state of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives[12],

– having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2026 on the European Union regulatory fitness and subsidiarity and proportionality – report on Better Law-Making covering 2023 and 2024[13],

– having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2026 on the impact of the implementation of Directive 2014/89/EU, the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, on fisheries in selected fishing areas and sea basins[14],

– having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2026 on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy and follow-up[15],

– having regard to the Commission communication of 5 June 2025

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8 OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj.
9 OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/89/oj.
10 OJ C, C/2023/1074, 15.12.2023, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1074/oj.
11 OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 150.
12 OJ C, C/2024/5734, 17.10.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5734/oj.
13 OJ C, C/2026/4003, 26.8.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/4003/oj.
14 Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0181.
15 Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0315.

entitled ‘The European Ocean Pact’ (COM(2025)0281),

– having regard to the Commission communication of 28 April 2026 entitled ‘A Simpler, Clearer and Better Enforced EU Rulebook’ (COM(2026)0380),

– having regard to the report of 9 September 2024 by Mario Draghi entitled ‘The future of European competitiveness’,

– having regard to the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029 entitled ‘Europe’s Choice’ of 18 July 2024,

– having regard to the Commission communication of 29 January 2025 entitled ‘A Competitiveness Compass for the EU’ (COM(2025)0030),

– having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 October 2025 entitled ‘The Pact for the Mediterranean – One Sea, One Pact, One Future’ (JOIN(2025)0026),

– having regard to the Commission communication of 6 June 2025 entitled ‘Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2026’ (COM(2025)0296),

– having regard to the Commission staff working document of 29 July 2024 entitled ‘First report on the implementation of the Multiannual Plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean Sea’ (SWD(2024)0195),

– having regard to the Commission staff working document of 30 April 2026 entitled ‘Evaluation – Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy’ (SWD(2026)0120),

– having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A10-0279/2026),

A. whereas the Mediterranean Sea is one of the most diverse marine regions in the world, hosting marine ecosystems essential for numerous species, supporting coastal communities and economies that have been dependent on fisheries for millennia, serving as a cradle of civilisations and one of the cornerstones of Europe’s cultural, historical and economic identity;

B. whereas the Mediterranean fisheries sector is essential for employment, territorial cohesion and food security, social cohesion,

and development of coastal regions and sovereignty in the EU, playing a key role in economic growth, stability and job creation, and supporting a wider economic network whose viability depends directly on fishing and related activities, forming a key element of Europe's heritage in the Mediterranean;

C. whereas the geographical scope of the WestMed MAP Regulation is the 'western Mediterranean Sea', which is comprised of the waters in GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) 1 (Northern Alboran Sea), 2 (Alboran Island), 5 (Balearic Islands), 6 (Northern Spain), 7 (Gulf of Lions), 8 (Corsica Island), 9 (Ligurian and North Tyrrhenian Sea), 10 (Southern and Central Tyrrhenian Sea) and 11 (Sardinia Island), as defined in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1343/2011[16];

D. whereas the Mediterranean is one of the main fishing basins in the EU, with around 30 000 vessels in operation, making up about 58 % of the EU's fishing fleet, with approximately 81 % of these vessels being small in scale[17]; whereas these vessels are mostly managed as family businesses, which are essential for employment and the development of coastal communities;

E. whereas although the EU's fishing fleet in the Mediterranean has shrunk by 17 % since 2017, the sector still accounts for 47 % of EU fisheries employment, with 57 616 jobs in 2023, though this figure is almost 8 % lower compared to 2018[18];

F. whereas the sector supports European strategic autonomy and the resilience of food supply chains by providing high-quality products;

G. whereas the fishing sector needs to be made more attractive, particularly to younger generations, to secure generational renewal, improve its competitiveness and ensure the viability of the sector and related industries;

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16 Regulation (EU) No 1343/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on certain provisions for fishing in the GFCM (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean) Agreement area and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea (OJ L 347, 30.12.2011, p. 44, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2011/1343/oj).

17 Kramer, E., 'Implementation of the WestMed MAP Regulation – A review of existing evaluations', European Parliament Research Service, July 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/788147/EPRS_BRI(2026)788147_EN.pdf

18 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/788147/EPRS_BRI(2026)788147_EN.pdf

H. whereas the first STECF social report[19] observes a downward trend in employment in EU extractive fishing, identifying income uncertainty, high administrative and bureaucratic burden, physical hardship and limited training and business succession mechanisms as barriers for new entrants;

I. whereas supporting the diversification of fishing activities is important, with a view to enhancing the sector's profitability and fully harnessing the economic potential of the Mediterranean;

J. whereas the current fisheries management approach for the Western Mediterranean does not sufficiently integrate socio-economic effects of management decisions in line with the three pillars of sustainability, which may have a disproportionate impact on fishers, the processing industry and the livelihoods of coastal communities;

K. whereas, over the last seven years, fishing fleets in the Mediterranean have been subject to significant reductions in fishing effort, with some segments, such as the Spanish trawling fleet, experiencing reductions exceeding 44 %[20] between 2019 and 2026, while the French fleet saw a 42 %[21] reduction between 2019 and 2025, alongside a 30 % decrease in trawler fishing capacity linked to the 2022 fleet exit plan;

L. whereas, in addition to the fishing effort reductions introduced under the WestMed MAP Regulation, Western Mediterranean fleets are also subject to permanent and temporary spatial closures established by both the same regulation and other EU and Member State conservation measures; whereas the cumulative effect of these restrictions significantly reduces effective access to fishing grounds and limits the operational flexibility of fisheries businesses, including artisanal and small-scale businesses; whereas a holistic approach should therefore take these cumulative effects fully into account when assessing the proportionality and effectiveness of the

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19 European Commission: Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 'Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Social Data in EU Fisheries: methodology, dissemination, analysis and evaluation (STECF 25-02 & 25-13)', 2026. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-publishes-first-annual-social-report-fisheries-aquaculture-and-fish-processing-2026-06-22_en; https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC145884; https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/967d86a6-7105-11f1-9800-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

20 The Spanish Mediterranean trawling fleet went from approximately 230 annual days at sea in 2019 to an average of 130 days in 2026, a shift that quantifies as a 44% reduction in fishing effort

21 https://archimer.ifremer.fr/doc/00971/108280/121650.pdf

management framework;

M. whereas the current management system has relied mainly on linear reductions to fishing effort, which, in many cases, has brought the average annual activity of vessels below the profitability thresholds specific to each fleet segment, which should be assessed using robust socio-economic data;

N. whereas the fishing fleet, especially in the Mediterranean, has gone to considerable lengths to adapt and innovate in order to make its practices more sustainable, particularly in the trawling segment, by improving gear selectivity and making significant investments, while at the same time bearing major economic sacrifices as a result of successive reductions in the number of fishing days;

O. whereas these efforts have included major technical adaptations and investments to improve gear selectivity and reduce the impact of fishing activities, such as the use of 45 mm square or 50 mm diamond meshes, selection grids for juvenile fish, larger mesh panels and flying doors, with around 55 %[22] of the Spanish fleet already having integrated these measures and other technical improvements in recent years; whereas Member States should be encouraged to promote the effective and proportionate implementation of such measures and ensure appropriate control of their application, with a view to supporting a level playing field and ensuring fair treatment of fishers across the region, particularly in the light of issues raised by the joint implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 and the WestMed plan;

P. whereas adaptation and innovation remain essential measures to ensure that fishing activities align with the objectives of ecosystem-based fisheries management;

Q. whereas fishing fleets in the Mediterranean continue to make substantial economic sacrifices as a result of successive reductions in the number of fishing days, while also facing cumulative pressures from rising energy and fuel costs, demands associated with the decarbonisation process and increasing competition for maritime space;

R. whereas the compensatory measures applied to and introduced by the Mediterranean fleet have helped to partially mitigate the socio-economic impact of successive reductions in fishing effort, yet these measures have not sufficiently offset the pressures faced by many fishing businesses, leaving some on the brink of profitability or below

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22 https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/prensa/ultimas-noticias/detalle_noticias/el-ministerio-de-agricultura--pesca-y-alimentaci-n-asigna-2.454-d-as-adicionales-de-pesca-a-la-flota-de-arrastre-de-fondo-del-mediterr-neo-por-el-uso-de-puertas-voladoras/631adc63-02ad-4fd7-909f-5b56461ac2fa

it, and are not adequate to safeguard the medium- and long-term viability of the sector;

S. whereas long-term predictability and a comprehensive plan are needed to secure the sustainability of both fish stocks and the fishing sector;

T. whereas the recently adopted options for compensation measures enable respective fleets to recover a portion of the restricted fishing effort by undertaking voluntary conservation actions, which entail additional costs for operators;

U. whereas the STECF and the GFCM have highlighted persistent data gaps in connection with demersal stocks; whereas, according to the Commission's 2024 report on the implementation of the WestMed MAP Regulation, 7 out of the 20 Western Mediterranean demersal stocks were not subject to an analytical assessment, and scientific assessments may rely on data from previous years, limiting their ability to fully reflect the most recent developments in fisheries[23];

V. whereas it is essential to update and expand scientific studies and increase resources for data collection to ensure management is based on the best available knowledge; whereas the development of disaggregated socio-economic impact indicators remains necessary, while management decisions for the mixed fishery should take a multi-species approach rather than rely solely on the assessment of a single species, which may not represent the mixed fishery as a whole or the operating conditions of each fleet segment, while also safeguarding the recovery of vulnerable stocks;

W. whereas recent scientific studies[24] point to a recovery in biomass for certain demersal stocks, revealing potential discrepancies between scientific surveys, model-based assessments and management decisions, making it necessary to improve the coordination of scientific fisheries research at EU, national and regional level and to better reflect all stressors, such as climate change, heatwaves, pollution, natural mortality, habitat quality, changes in recruitment and interactions between species;

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23 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/788147/EPRS_BRI(2026)788147_EN.pdf; European Commission, Report on the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022, COM(2024)0322 and accompanying SWD(2024) 195, 29 July 2024

24 https://www.ba.ieo.es/es/investigacion/grupos-de-investigacion/ecobred/proyectos/2713-sosmed-mejora-del-conocimiento-cientifico-tecnico-para-la-sostenibilidad-de-las-pesquerias-demersales-del-mediterraneo-occidental-gsa5-islas-baleares-2021-2023?utm_sour

X. whereas, in particular, the management approach of the WestMed MAP, which links fishing effort to the state of the most vulnerable stock, has in effect created choke species effects, disproportionately affecting mixed fisheries and the economic viability of the sector, while so far failing to deliver conservation benefits proportionate to the restrictions imposed; whereas the conservation benefits and socio-economic effects of these restrictions should be assessed together;

Y. whereas recent scientific advice from STECF highlights the recovery of certain stocks, such as hake, yet these positive developments have not resulted in an adjustment of the management methodology to enable more adaptable fishing days[25], highlighting the need for management to reflect scientifically demonstrated improvements while safeguarding the recovery of all stocks concerned; whereas consideration could be given to management strategies based on an overall assessment of the main exploited stocks, such as through a weighted index approach, provided that the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for each stock is safeguarded;

Z. whereas the health of marine ecosystems is influenced by multiple factors, including climate change, rising sea temperatures, pollution, habitat loss, invasive species and natural predation, and effective conservation strategies should therefore address these pressures through a comprehensive and integrated approach;

AA. whereas, particularly in certain areas of the Western Mediterranean, such as GSAs 7, 8 and 11.2, certain fleets operating in mixed demersal fisheries do not specifically target European hake but are nevertheless affected by management measures linked to the status of that stock;

AB. whereas, since its introduction, the WestMed MAP has yielded mixed results, with positive signs of recovery for certain stocks, such as the deep-water rose shrimp, but a slower stock recovery for others, particularly hake, which is the most vulnerable stock; whereas several recently introduced management measures require sufficient time to produce measurable results and should be subject to a proper assessment of their biological, economic and social effects; whereas these results should be properly considered when deliberating further reduction or management measures affecting fishing opportunities;

AC. whereas these developments have been achieved at a high economic

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25 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/788147/EPRS_BRI(2026)788147_EN.pdf; European Commission, Report on the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1022, COM(2024)0322 and accompanying SWD(2024) 195, 29 July 2024

and social cost for the Mediterranean fleet and coastal communities; whereas future management decisions should aim at consolidating what has been achieved and at better ensuring the socio-economic sustainability of the concerned fleets and communities;

AD. whereas recent studies[26] have revealed positive developments in biomass in the Western Mediterranean and a reduction in overfishing, with the latest FAO reports[27] indicating that the proportion of overfished stocks in the Mediterranean is now at its lowest level in the entire time series;

AE. whereas the WestMed MAP currently provides limited conditional flexibility in setting fishing effort; whereas the application of the current effort regime may result in differences between fleets, increased legal uncertainty and economic unpredictability for the fleets concerned, and further improvements to predictability should therefore be examined in the light of the specific features of the effort regime and the conservation objectives of the plan;

AF. whereas the mixed nature of fishing in the Mediterranean, where multiple species are caught simultaneously, requires adaptive management measures that take into account fleet selectivity, gear innovation and socio-economic resilience, while also considering interactions between species, the effects of climate change and other pressures on marine ecosystems and ensuring the protection of vulnerable species; whereas management rules should reflect the specific characteristics of the various fleet segments where certain administrative segmentations do not always match the realities of Mediterranean fisheries;

AG. whereas the fishing sector in the Mediterranean is diverse, with variations in impact, selectivity, mobility and dependence on demersal stocks; whereas a standardised approach does not address all circumstances, and management measures should remain proportionate and tailored to the specific characteristics of each occupation;

AH. whereas Article 9(5) of the CFP Regulation recognises the practical challenges of achieving MSY for all stocks at once in mixed fisheries; whereas management measures should avoid the premature closure of fisheries or a reduction in activity that would undermine economic and social viability, while ensuring that conservation objectives are met for each stock;

AI. whereas maritime spatial planning should support the balanced

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26 European Commission: Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, ‘Monitoring the Performance of the Common Fisheries Policy (STECF-Adhoc-25-01)’, 2025.

27 FAO, ‘The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries 2025’, 2025.

coexistence of all activities, such as professional fishing, marine protected areas, strictly protected areas, ecosystem restoration and renewable marine energy development, while taking due account of fishing activities in traditional fishing grounds;

AJ. whereas the biological, economic, social and territorial effects of conservation measures should be assessed regularly to ensure their effectiveness and optimal practical implementation, particularly from the perspective of fishing communities;

AK. whereas its resolution of 17 September 2026 on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy and follow-up[28] calls for several targeted improvements, such as the landing obligation, the Western Mediterranean MAP Regulation, the Deep-Sea Access Regulation[29], the Common Market Organisation Regulation[30], and the implementation of the Fisheries Control Regulation;

AL. whereas illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and particularly the activities of non-EU fleets in the Mediterranean, remain insufficiently monitored and controlled, contributing to the deterioration of stocks and unfair competition, to the detriment of the EU fleet, the sectors that depend on it and the prosperity of coastal communities;

AM. whereas there is a need to reinforce cooperation with coastal countries, strengthen customs and import controls and improve the traceability of fisheries imports to address these challenges and support the vitality of coastal communities;

AN. whereas efforts are being made by fishers to make a positive environmental contribution by removing waste from the sea during their fishing activities, as demonstrated by different initiatives;

AO. whereas the proliferation of invasive species is further complicating fisheries management in the Mediterranean;

AP. whereas for fisheries and aquaculture in the Western Mediterranean, dedicated EU funding, such as under the current European

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28 Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0315.

29 Regulation (EU) 2016/2336 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 establishing specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks in the north-east Atlantic and provisions for fishing in international waters of the north-east Atlantic and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002 (OJ L 354, 23.12.2016, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/2336/oj).

30 Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 671, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1308/oj).

Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), is essential for safeguarding the sustainability and competitiveness of the sectors operating in the region, for supporting fisheries local action groups (FLAGs) and for fostering the development of coastal communities in the region; whereas this funding should remain separate and dedicated, with sufficient and appropriate resources matching the challenges faced by the sector, avoiding the risk of resources being reduced or diluted into generic funds, which could undermine the sector's capacity to modernise, remain competitive and support coastal communities;

AQ. whereas the EMFAF provides vital support for the sectors in the Western Mediterranean, which includes modernisation and renewal, decarbonisation, generational renewal, the adoption of more selective fishing gear, and compensation for temporary cessations;

AR. whereas the long-term viability, sustainability and competitiveness of fishing and related industries depend on a balanced relationship between fishing capacity and available resources, which requires ongoing adjustment, diversification, retraining and support for coastal communities;

Reforming the multiannual plan for the Western Mediterranean

1. Highlights the efforts made by the sector to adapt to the requirements of the MAPmultiannual plan and which have resulted in a significant reduction in fishing mortality, a significant recovery of assessed stocks, increases in biomass levels and a significant move towards maximum sustainable yield; stresses that these measures have had a high social cost, with a reduction of more than 40 % in trawling effort between 2020 and 2024 and a decrease in both employment and average wages[31]; believes that more flexibility is needed from the Commission and the Member States concerned in the implementation of the MAP, and calls for a new approach in order to ensure the viability of the sector and of the coastal communities concerned;

2. Reiterates its call for a targeted revision of the Regulation on the multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean, incorporating the changes and adjustments identified in this report and, in this regard, urges the Commission to present by 1 December 2026 a legislative proposal to amend Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 (WestMed MAP), taking into consideration the input of stakeholders in the public consultation on multiannual management plans, as well as basing any changes on the best available scientific advice, and addressing the following changes in relevant articles:

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31 First report on the implementation of the Multiannual Plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean Sea,(COM(2024)0322).

(a) revising the existing fishing effort reduction rules included in Articles 4 and 7 to adjust the existing mixed fisheries management approach, which has proven insufficient to adequately address the specific challenges of mixed fisheries, as applied in other multiannual plans, which:

- replaces the rule whereby annual fishing effort is determined by reference to the most vulnerable stock (Article 4(3)) with a mixed-fisheries approach that takes account of all stocks caught simultaneously, as well as considers, on a case-by-case basis, other conservation measures;

- maintains the objective of achieving the CFP objectives of maintaining populations of species above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for each stock, however, while taking into account the difficulty of exploiting all stocks at MSY simultaneously in a mixed fishery, in particular where this may lead to a premature closure of the fishery with disproportionate socio-economic consequences;

- recognises that the state of species is influenced not only by fishing effort but also by exogenous factors, such as climate change and predator species;

- takes into consideration the best available scientific advice, the biological status of all main exploited stocks, such as through a composite weighted index, and the effects of climate change on the distribution, abundance and productivity of Mediterranean fish stocks;

- takes account of gear selectivity and progress made by fleets in reducing unwanted catches and fishing mortality on the stocks concerned, as well as of the specific socio-economic and operational circumstances of the fisheries and geographical subareas concerned;

(b) with a view to providing long-term predictability for fishers and the processing sector, introducing adaptive flexibility mechanisms that:

- provide a flexible mechanism for the transfer of unused fishing effort from one calendar year to the next by allowing the annual carry-over of up to 10 % of unused fishing effort, where possible and subject to the best available scientific advice, as well as the conservation objectives and compliance with Articles 15 and 16 of the CFP Regulation;

- enable multiannual programming framework so operators can make long-term decisions, while preserving the ability

to adapt this framework to fit in with the latest scientific advice;

- ensure that any significant reduction in fishing effort is based on a careful assessment of the economic, biological and social impacts and on proper consultation with those affected;

(c) including stabilisation mechanisms that:

- limit reductions in the number of fishing days to maximum 20 %, where possible and subject to the best available scientific advice, while taking account of fleet-segment-specific profitability thresholds;

- explicitly include socio-economic impacts in decision-making (Article 3), considering employment, fishers' income, business viability, the supply of fishery products and food security in the EU;

- ensure the stability of compensation mechanisms throughout the management cycle, diversifying it, and setting multiannual duration of measures providing entitlement to additional fishing days, and allowing for them to be adjusted during the year when conditions allow;

- assess the possibility of recognising half-days of fishing in the calculation of fishing effort to provide better stability and long-term predictability for the sector;

- review effort groups segmented by vessel length and geographical sub-area (GSAs) to reflect actual fishing patterns and fleet impacts, and adjust them where scientifically and operationally justified;

- clarify the treatment of vessels engaged in pelagic trawling (OTM) and the application of the term 'mixed fishery' to provide regulatory certainty and support the coherent application of stabilisation measures;

3. Welcomes both the call for evidence for an impact assessment on the multiannual plan, published by the Commission on 26 May 2026, and the Commission's commitment to assessing and addressing the socio-economic effects of measures taken since 2019, with a particular focus on developing employment and the fleet, on the economic and social resilience of coastal communities and on the effectiveness of compensatory measures, as major adaptations have been done already by a majority of the trawl fleet to make fishing practices more sustainable;

4. Stresses that the initial five-year fishing-effort reduction phase under

Article 7 of Regulation EU 2019/1022, based on a progressive reduction of fishing effort from 2020 to 2024, has ended; considers, therefore, that the management framework of the WestMed must enter a new phase focused on consolidating the results achieved, moving away from systematic reductions in fishing days and enabling increases in fishing opportunities where scientific evidence supports this and stocks are managed sustainably, with the aim of restoring the economic and social viability of the Mediterranean fleet, in line with the overall CFP objectives;

5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States concerned, before proposing or adopting management measures, such as further restrictions or amending technical conservation measures within their respective competences, to hold mandatory consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including organisations representing small-scale operators, such as cofradías, prud'homies and Italian cooperatives, allowing sufficient time for them to contribute;

6. Calls on the Commission to provide a written explanation if its proposal differs significantly from the views expressed by stakeholders during the consultation process;

7. Calls on the Commission to review, as a matter of urgency, the specific conditions faced by the red shrimp fishery, which is the only fishery subject simultaneously to two restrictive management measures – a quota system and limits on fishing days – with a view to retaining only the fishing days as the most effective and proportionate management measure, as the current dual system has created regulatory burden and has severely undermined the economic and operational viability and predictability of this fishery in the Western Mediterranean; underlines that this review should be carried out in line with the best available scientific advice;

Strengthening fisheries governance in the Mediterranean: science, monitoring and regional cooperation

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up coordination of scientific fisheries research, using the most up-to-date data at EU, national and regional level, and to improve interoperability and exchange between EU, GFCM and national technical institute databases, with increased resources for data collection, stock monitoring and the assessment of insufficiently documented stocks, and with regular reviews of management measures based on clear indicators, taking account of local knowledge, regional circumstances and factors outside fisheries that affect the state of resources; calls on the Commission to ensure that the scientific basis for annual decisions on fishing opportunities and fishing effort is published in a transparent and accessible manner before those decisions are adopted;

9. Highlights the importance of applying a holistic approach in scientific cooperation, taking into account the effects of climate change, shifts in ocean conditions, interactions between species and other pressures, and supports the continuation of independent surveys like MEDITS; calls for the publication, on an annual basis, of a consolidated and publicly available report on the state of stocks and catches in the Western Mediterranean;

10. Stresses the importance of strengthening the collection of scientific data on Mediterranean fish stocks, given that, in the most recent assessment, only 13 of the 20 stocks[32] considered could be analytically assessed due to insufficient data; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States for a dedicated scientific programme with national scientific institutes and the GFCM to examine the effects of climate change on fisheries, including recruitment, distribution, natural mortality and marine habitats, and to develop species-specific indicators for use in management and funding decisions, recognising that sound data and advice are the foundation for effective fisheries policy; calls on the Commission and Member States to continue strengthening the availability and quality of data relevant for effective fisheries management, including data needed to support the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach in the Western Mediterranean to support the sustainability and competitiveness of the sector;

11. Urges the Commission to give due weight to assessments from the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee when formulating the WestMed Plan management measures, alongside STECF advice, and to review reference points and models for key stocks such as hake, so that decisions are grounded in the most accurate scientific information and adequately reflect the biological reality observed, as well as to develop harmonised indicators for assessing the combined impact of fisheries management, protected areas, recreational fishing and other uses of maritime space on the activity of professional fishing fleets;

12. Is deeply concerned about reports of IUU fishing, particularly by non-EU countries in Mediterranean waters, including in Member States' exclusive economic zones; notes, in particular, the use of driftnets by certain non-EU vessels in the Alboran Sea, including by vessels from Morocco and Algeria, which undermines marine biodiversity and fair competition; is concerned that such catches may enter the EU market under conditions of unfair competition with the EU fleet; recognises that similar challenges affect other EU waters; urges the Commission and the European Fisheries Control Agency

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32 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/788147/EPRS_BRI(2026)788147_EN.pdf.

(EFCA) to increase monitoring and control of non-EU-flagged fleets across the Mediterranean basin, and calls for enhanced cooperation with the Member States and the authorities of relevant non-EU countries to address these issues;

13. Calls for stronger coordination of import controls at EU level, including through the establishment of a European import control office, with a view to preventing fishery products derived from IUU fishing from entering the internal market; stresses the need to strengthen the resources of the competent Member State authorities and the Commission for import controls, as well as the EFCA's supporting and coordination role within its mandate, regardless of the sea basin of origin; emphasises the need to ensure effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for importers and operators who place fishery products derived from IUU fishing on the EU market and underlines the importance of ensuring that all measures are compatible with World Trade Organization obligations and applied in a fair and non-discriminatory manner;

14. Urges the Commission to boost regional cooperation by integrating the WestMed MAP into the broader framework of the EU's neighbourhood policy; welcomes the objectives of the Pact for the Mediterranean to strengthen cooperation on fisheries governance, compliance with international standards and enhanced control, inspection, monitoring and surveillance to address IUU fishing; emphasises the need for more convergence of management rules and control standards among Mediterranean countries, both EU and non-EU countries, to ensure a level playing field and effective conservation, and calls on the Commission to make fisheries related issues one of the main priorities in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and ensure the effective implementation of these commitments;

15. Recalls that spatial management measures and marine protected areas should be adopted on a case-by-case basis, be targeted, proportionate and tailored to local circumstances, draw on the best available scientific knowledge, targeted impact assessments, and involve thorough stakeholder consultation; stresses the importance of ensuring fair access to fishing grounds and avoiding disproportionate restrictions that are incompatible with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy;

16. Stresses the need to prioritise targeted conservation measures where scientific advice demonstrates that they achieve the required reduction in fishing mortality instead of general reductions; calls, therefore, for improved coordination between the WestMed MAP, spatial restrictions and maritime planning, including assessment of the displacement of fishing effort, their cumulative effects and their economic and social consequences as well as the combined effects of regulations, in order to ensure that measures are effective, balanced and adapted to regional realities;

17. Calls for Western Mediterranean fishing to be recognised, including its major public interest and socio-economic importance, in maritime planning in the region, taking into account its specific spatial characteristics and operational needs, while ensuring balanced coexistence with conservation objectives and other maritime activities;

18. Calls on the Commission to strengthen cooperation at local level through direct dialogue with coastal authorities and fisher's organisations, including small-scale operators, in the Mediterranean, recognising their key role in sustainable resource management and the practical implementation of conservation measures;

19. Calls on the Commission to establish a financial support framework for the removal, management and valorisation of invasive alien species affecting fishing activities; encourages their safe valorisation through circular economy solutions, in accordance with Article 19(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014[33]; recognises the role of fishers as active partners in cleaning and restoring the marine environment; calls, therefore, for compensation for the costs arising from actions such as the removal of invasive alien species, such as *Rugulopteryx okamurae*;

20. Calls on the Commission to adopt a holistic approach to management in the Western Mediterranean, taking into account all pressures on the marine ecosystem, including climate change, the increase in marine pollution and the proliferation of invasive species, and to ensure that these factors are integrated into the assessment and management of the plan;

21. Calls for effective climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to address climate-related risks in a timely manner and avoid the escalating risks and costs of delayed action in the region;

Providing equitable support for Mediterranean fisheries

22.. Reiterates its position to ring-fence a budget of at least EUR 7,29 billion for fisheries and aquaculture, as outlined in Parliament's position for the next European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund under the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework, ensuring that this allocation is provided as a specific budget line and is not absorbed into generic purpose funds; calls, furthermore, on the concerned Member States to dedicate a portion of funding explicitly for the Western Mediterranean to directly fund structural support and provide financial compensation for the socio-economic consequences caused by the reduction in fishing days, with

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33 Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/1143/oj).

support targeted at fleet modernisation and renewal, including selective gear, low-emission engines, digital monitoring, temporary cessations, generational renewal, improved safety and working conditions on board, and economic diversification programmes; stresses the importance of more public support, including, where appropriate, through financial support instruments, to maintain the resilience, competitiveness and future of the sector;

23. Stresses the need for the Commission to review and increase the ceiling for *de minimis* aid for the fisheries sector and to consider other additional support per vessel under EMFAF funding to directly cushion Western Mediterranean fisheries against rising energy and fuel costs and the multiple pressures faced by the Mediterranean fleet; considers that this instrument should remain an essential part of EU support to ensure the economic viability and modernisation of the sector in the region; emphasises that the green and energy transitions for fisheries must be socially just and economically sustainable, with investments in energy efficiency, working conditions and vessel modernisation made available, in particular, to small and medium-sized fishing businesses;

24. Calls for specific measures to make fishing professions more attractive in the Western Mediterranean, including support for vocational training, assistance for young Mediterranean fishers to set up in business, and measures to promote gender equality and the improvement of health and safety in the sector;

25. Calls on the Commission and the Member States concerned to strengthen measures for compensation and incentives for the removal of marine litter and for the sector’s contribution to the clean-up of the seabed, ensuring adequate funding, and to ensure that such measures are implemented in a manner that does not create additional burdens for fishers, in support of protecting and restoring Mediterranean marine biodiversity and ecosystems;

26. Reiterates its call on the Commission to present a simplification package for fisheries and aquaculture that ensures the achievement of all three pillars of sustainability; highlights that simplification must not weaken environmental objectives or transparency, control and scientific data collection, and must effectively reduce the administrative burden on operators;

27. Stresses, with regard to the pending roll-out and implementation of the future Vision 2040 for Fisheries and Aquaculture, the importance of a European blue food plan to strengthen the sustainable production and consumption of EU fisheries and aquaculture products, including in the Western Mediterranean, and to raise awareness of their nutritional, environmental and socio-economic value; stresses that the Commission and the Member States concerned should put in place measures to foster generational

renewal by supporting young fishers' access to finance, training, digitalisation, innovation and entrepreneurship, taking into account the specific needs and characteristics of the sector in the region;

28. Calls on the Commission, Council and Member States, within their respective competences, when preparing management measures, such as considering further reductions in fishing opportunities or fishing efforts, to ensure that measures already adopted are given proper time to produce measurable results and be subject to a proper assessment of their biological, economic and social effects, to carry out a scientific cost-benefit analysis, to base new decisions on the best available scientific advice and objectively assessments, to retain alternative measures if they are more effective, with a view to ensuring a stable and predictable regulatory framework that better enables achieving the general objectives of the MAP as well as for companies to better be able to plan investments;

29. Recalls that fisheries sustainability must be assessed in a balanced way across environmental, economic and social pillars of the common fisheries policy, in accordance with Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013; recalls that the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy is an exclusive competence of the Union under Article 3(1)(d) TFEU, and that its effectiveness and proper functioning require a coherent European approach, avoiding fragmentation while making full use of regional cooperation; calls on the Commission to report to Parliament within three years of entry into force of the revised regulation on biological, economic, social and territorial impacts, including incomes, employment, generational renewal, the resilience of coastal communities, the state of main fish stocks, in particular the most vulnerable stock, marine environment and the combined impact of other EU maritime policies on fishing activity;

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30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.