

General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM): fishing in the GFCM Agreement area. Recast

2021/0248(COD) - 12/07/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 645 votes to 4, with 3 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain provisions for fishing in the GFCM (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean) Agreement Area (recast).

The Regulation lays down the detailed rules for the application by the Union of the conservation, management, exploitation, control, marketing and enforcement measures for fishery and aquaculture products adopted by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

The Regulation aims to implement existing GFCM measures that are binding on the contracting parties. It will thus ensure that EU law complies with the international obligations adopted by the GFCM, to which the EU is a contracting party.

The Regulation contains fisheries management, conservation and control measures applicable to certain species. It includes chapters on European eel, giant red shrimp, blue and red shrimp, red coral, demersal fisheries, small pelagic fisheries, blackspot seabream, dolphin fish, turbot and piked dogfish.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the Commission's proposal as follows:

The amended text stressed that the Union must ensure that Union fishing activities outside Union waters are based on the same principles and standards as those applicable under Union law, while promoting a level playing field for Union operators vis-à-vis third country operators.

It is necessary to adopt provisions including the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), where designated by the Commission, as the body which receives control and inspection information, such as at-sea inspection reports, from the Member States.

Management measures and recommendations should be based on the best available scientific advice. The advice upon which management measures are based should itself be based on the scientific use of relevant data on fleet capacity and activity, on the biological status of exploited resources and on the social and economic situation of fisheries. Those data need to be collected and submitted in time to allow the subsidiary bodies of the GFCM to prepare their advice, which should take into consideration **biological, socio-economic and environmental aspects**.

Regarding **red coral**, it should be noted that the capture and retention on board, transshipment or landing of red coral should be prohibited for recreational fisheries purposes.

By way of derogation, the use of remotely operated underwater vehicles (ROVs) is permitted exclusively for scientific purposes within the GFCM research programme until the end of that programme.