



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea
The Director

Brussels,
MARE/D1/D(2017)

**TO THE ATTENTION OF THE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS OF BULGARIA, CROATIA,
CYPRUS, FRANCE, GREECE, ITALY, MALTA, ROMANIA, SLOVENIA, AND SPAIN**

Subject: 2017 Official call for data on landings, discards, length and age compositions, fishing effort, biological parameters, trawl and hydro acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea.

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Union is expected to establish multi-annual plans for relevant Mediterranean fisheries catching demersal and small pelagic species, in particular, in areas totally or partially beyond the territorial waters of Member States (Council Regulation (EC) N° 1380/2013¹). Moreover, the promotion of improved scientific advice on the status of the main stocks in the Black Sea and on the fisheries exploiting these stocks is of outmost importance for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy in this particular region.

The scientific basis of these plans and the status of the different stocks shall come from an analysis carried out by scientists of EU Member States both at EU and national level as well as within the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM-SAC).

With a view to further support the scientific community in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea, the European Commission has given mandate to its Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) to adopt an operational work-programme in order to update the knowledge on the status of the exploited demersal and small pelagic stocks. One of the main tasks within this work-programme is to evaluate the exploitation levels with respect to their biological and economic productivity and the sustainability of the exploited stocks. It is intended to achieve this task by using both trawl and echo surveys as well as commercial landings/discards and fishing effort data as collected through and the Union Framework for data collection (Council Regulation (EC) N° 199/2008³), as well as other suitable scientific information collected through national and community funded studies and research projects, as well as regional projects such as

¹ 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 ([OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22](#)).

³ Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 of 25 February 2008 concerning the establishment of a Community framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy ([OJ L 60, 5.3.2008, p. 1](#)).

CopeMed, MedSudMed, Adriamed or EastMed (see specific mandate to STECF in ANNEX 1).

Since the launching of the STECF activities in 2008, thirty-four EWGs (<http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/medbs>) have already taken place, which have contributed to further analyze the available information and provide light on the biological state of the main Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks.

In 2017, the three STECF-EWGs and its scientists from all EU Mediterranean and Black Sea countries are expected to continue carrying out joint assessments, using different methods and data sources, on several stocks of important demersal and small pelagic species.

The full list of species for which STECF is expected to carry out assessments and whose data must be uploaded as provided in ANNEX 2, Appendix 1.7.

Following a similar approach as that implemented in previous years, the European Commission herewith asks Member States to provide, as soon as possible and **not later than**:

- **3th July 2017**, fisheries and surveys data in support of the forthcoming STECF EWG 17-09 and EWG 17-15 on Mediterranean stock assessments (parts I and II)⁴. This request shall apply to all Member States, with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania. Requested data are in detail:
 - **Fisheries data** (catches, landings, discards, and fishing effort) shall be submitted in accordance to Appendix 1 and 2 of ANNEX 2 and for **year 2016**;
 - **Biological data** (Maturity ogives at Length, Maturity ogives at Age, Growth parameters, Sex ratio at length, Sex ratio at age) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 3 of ANNEX 2 and for the **full time series (i.e. 2002-2016)**;
 - **MEDITS scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.1 of ANNEX 2 and for **year 2016**;
 - **MEDIAS scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 2 and for the **full time series (i.e. 2002-2016)**
- **31st August 2017**, fisheries and surveys data in support of the STECF-EWG 17-11 on Black Sea assessments⁵. This request shall only apply to Bulgaria and Romania. Requested data are in detail:
 - **Fisheries data** (catches, landings, discards, and fishing effort) shall be submitted in accordance to Appendix 1 and 2 of ANNEX 2 and for the **year 2016**;

⁴ The STECF-EWG 17-09 will take place in September 2017 (updated information such as registration and venue will be available at <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1709>). The STECF EWG 17-15 will be organised in November 2017 (<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1715>).

⁵ The STECF-EWG 17-11 must be confirmed (updated information such as registration and venue will be available at <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1711>)

- **Biological data** (Maturity ogives at Length, Maturity ogives at Age, Growth parameters, Sex ratio at length, Sex ratio at age) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 3 of ANNEX 2 and for the **full time series**;
- **Scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 2 and for the **year 2016**
- **31th March 2018**, acoustic surveys data (MEDIAS) collected in 2017 in support of the stock assessment prioritization needed for the 2018 STECF-EWG on Mediterranean stock assessments, part I. This request shall apply to all Member States, with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania. Requested data are in detail
 - **MEDIAS scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 2 and for the **year 2017**

The JRC Data Upload portlet will officially open for submissions on the **5th June 2017**.

In addition, the data submitted to the 2017 data call could be used in support of the three pilot projects⁶ funded under the Call for proposals MARE/2014/41 and entitled "Marine protected areas: network(s) for enhancement of sustainable fisheries in EU Mediterranean waters".

Data have to respect the format provided in ANNEX 2 (Appendices from 1 to 4). It should be noted that Appendix.1.2 has been updated to comply only with the vessel length class coding as defined in EC 949/2008, in line with the Economic Data Call.

Detailed information on the working procedures in respect to the deadlines can be traced in ANNEX 3 (*Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups*). **According to these an operational deadline for STECF Med Stock assessment part I (EWG 17-09) will be held on 8th of September 2017 and for STECF Med Stock assessment part II (EWG 17-15) on 10th of November 2017.**

Data issues identified in 2016 by the STECF-EWGs, scientists, as well as the JRC Data Collection Team can be traced on-line: (a) in an interactive way at the 'Coverage Reports' Website of the JRC Data Collection Team⁷ and; (b) in the Coverage Report of the DCF Mediterranean and Black Sea Data Call 2016⁸. Given the importance of using the longest time series of fisheries information for a better scientific advice and understanding of the

⁶ **SAFENET**: Sustainable fisheries in EU Mediterranean waters trough network of MPAs in the Western Mediterranean (GFCM GSAs 6,7,8,9,11; countries Spain, France, Italy), SI2.721708. **MANTIS**: Marine protected Areas Network Towards Sustainable fisheries in the Central Mediterranean (GFCM GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; countries Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Malta), SI2.721911. **PROTOMEDEA**: Towards the establishment of Marine Protected Area Networks in the Eastern Mediterranean (GFCM GSAs 22, 25; countries Greece and Cyprus), SI2.721917.

⁷ 'Coverage Reports' website available at <http://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/coverage/graphs-medbs>

⁸ European Commission (2016). Scientific information systems and databases: Coverage Report of the DCF Mediterranean and Black Sea Data Call 2016. Joint research Centre - D.02 Fisheries and Aquaculture Data Collection Team, 17 pp (**JRC XXX**).

stock's population dynamic, Member States are highly recommended to go through the abovementioned coverage reports and identify their past data submission gaps or inconsistencies.

Note that especially for the GSAs 17-18, and in the light of the implementation of Multiannual Plan on small pelagic stock in the Adriatic Sea, it is essential that Member States will deliver the same datasets as the ones used under GFCM/FAO working groups/committees/meetings to perform intercalibrations and/or assessments.

If MS decide to revise and resubmit the data time series, a justification must be requested to JRC Data Collection team to gain overwrite/append rights.

To improve data transmission and quality checking, in 2016 the JRC portlet has been changed along with the digital format of the files and the implementation of a file naming convention. Files are requested as Comma Separated Values (.csv) and only one file for each table will be accepted at upload. Full details of the data transmission procedures are detailed in ANNEX 4.

Scientific experts will be invited to attend the forthcoming STECF EWGs and whenever considered advisable, and according to each national scientific coordination system, are expected to have with them the equivalent data sets, by GFCM-GSA concerned, just to overcome possible technical problems of data uploading by Member States. Any use of data different from those uploaded by Member States will be duly justified and recorded in the STECF EWG report.

The European Commission reminds Member States that according to Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008, Member States must make detailed and aggregated data available to end-users to support scientific analysis as a basis for fisheries management.

Member States shall take note of the new Data Validation Tool (provided by DG JRC and downloadable from <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dc/medbs>) and are encouraged to use it in order to avoid errors at upload time to the JRC portlet, to support the data submissions and enhance the data quality.

For further clarifications and guidance, you may contact:

Data submission team (JRC-DATASUBMISSION@ec.europa.eu)

Giacomo Chato Osio (giacomo-chato.osio@ec.europa.eu)

Alessandro Mannini (alessandro.mannini@ec.europa.eu)

Member States are requested to provide information collected under Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (EU data Collection Framework), Commission Regulation No 665/2008 and Commission Decision 2008/949/EC. In addition, we invite Member States to authorize the scientists to make use of all the necessary data as collected in research projects funded at national level only. In this context, we remind Member states their obligations under Article 4(3) of the Treaty of the European Union.

We expect that scientists, in order to complement what is collected under the EU Data Collection Framework Regulation, will make available and use of all data collected through the regional and research projects and studies funded by the European Community.

We look forward to your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Veronika VEITS
Director

Encl.: Annex 1: Mandate to STECF; Annex 2: Data Call - Specifications; Annex 3: Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups; Annex 4: Data Call Transmission Instructions

c.c.: *Fisheries Directors and Permanent Representations of Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia.*
DG MARE: Mses Laine V., Benini F., Veits, V., Garzon I., Roller E., Jepsena I., Messrs , Lamplmair F., Donatella F., Kloppenborg B., Daniel P., Mitolidis S., Biagi F., Perez Perera A., Maravelias C.
JRC: Messrs Martinsohn J., Doerner H., Osio G.-C., Mannini A.