



Brussels,
MARE/D1/D(2019)

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

Subject: 2019 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 the Community Data Collection programmes and adopted Work Plan (- Regulation (EC) N° 1004/2017², Commission Decisions 1251/2016³, Commission

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](#)).

² REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008

Decisions 1701/2016⁴), as well as other suitable scientific information collected through national and community funded studies and research projects, as well as regional projects such as CopeMed, MedSudMed, Adriamed or EastMed.

Since the launching of the STECF activities in 2008, more than thirty 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 2019, the 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 1, 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**:

- **24th June 2019 (midday)**, fisheries and surveys (MEDITS) data in support of the forthcoming STECF EWG 19-10⁵ and EWG 19-16⁶ on Mediterranean stock assessments (parts I and II). 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 1 and for the **year 2018**;
 - **Biological data** (Maturity ogives at Length, Maturity ogives at Age, Growth parameters, Sex ratio at length, Sex ratio at age, Age length key) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 3 of ANNEX 1 and for the **full time series** ;
 - **MEDITS scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.1 of ANNEX 1 and for the **year 2018**;
 - **MEDIAS and SoleMon scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 1 and for the **full time series**

- **20th August 2019 (midday)**, fisheries and survey data. This request shall only apply to Bulgaria and Romania. Requested data are in detail:

³ Commission Decision of [12 July 2016 \(2016/1251/EU\)](#): Adopting a multiannual Union programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the period 2017-2019 (notified under document C(2016) 4329).

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision of 19 August 2016 (2016/1701/EU): Laying down rules on the format for the submission of work plans for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (notified under document C(2016) 5304).

⁵ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1910>

⁶ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1916>

- **Fisheries data** (catches, landings, discards, and fishing effort) shall be submitted in accordance to Appendix 1 and 2 of ANNEX 1 and for the **year 2018**;
 - **Biological data** (Maturity ogives at Length, Maturity ogives at Age, Growth parameters, Sex ratio at length, Sex ratio at age, Age length key) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 3 of ANNEX 1 and for the **full time series**;
 - **Scientific survey data** shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 1 and for the **year 2018**
- **3rd April 2020 (midday)**, acoustic surveys data (MEDIAS) collected in 2019. 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 1 and for the **year 2019**

The JRC Data Upload portlet will officially open for submissions on the **27th May 2019 for the Mediterranean call and 22nd July 2019 for the Black Sea one.**

According to Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups an **operational deadline will be set on the 9th of August for Mediterranean data call and 30th of August for the Black Sea one.**

Detailed information on the working procedures in respect to the deadlines can be traced in ANNEX 2 (*Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups*)

To comply with the outcome of the EWG 18-11⁷ the codes reported in ANNEX 1 (Appendix 1-9) were revised. Specifically: country code for Romania and Bulgaria, fisheries codes, gear code.

If MS decide to revise and resubmit the data time series, a justification must be requested to DGMARE and the 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 will be 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 3.

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.

⁷ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of Work Plans & Data Transmission failures (STECF-18-18). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2018, ISBN 978-92-79-79401-8, doi:10.2760/031311, JRC114724

The European Commission reminds Member States that according to Article 17 of Regulation (EC) No 1004/2017, 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 **Data Validation Tool** (provided by DG JRC and available from <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/DCF/DVT/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)

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

Cecilia Pinto (cecilia.pinto@ec.europa.eu)

Member States are requested to provide information collected under Regulation (EC) No 1004/2017, and Commission Decision 2016/1251/EC and 2016/1701/EU. 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 use of all data collected through the research projects and studies funded by the European Community.

We look forward to your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Veronika VEITS
Director

Encl.: Annex 1: Data Call - Specifications; Annex 2: Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups; Annex 3: 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., Veits V., Roller E., Belekou P., Perez Perera A., Messrs, Kloppenborg B., Paardekooper J., Mitolidis S., Maravelias C., Osio G.-C.

JRC: Messrs Martinsohn J., Doerner H., Mannini A., Pinto C.