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ANNEX I

The position to be taken on the Union's behalf in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

1. PRINCIPLES

In the framework of the GFCM, the Union shall:

- a) act in accordance with the objectives and principles pursued by the Union within the common fisheries policy (CFP), notably through the precautionary approach and the aims related to the maximum sustainable yield as laid down in Article 2(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, to promote the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, to avoid and reduce, as far as possible, unwanted catches, and gradually eliminate discards, and to minimise the impact of fishing activities on marine ecosystems and their habitats, as well as, through the promotion of economically viable and competitive Union fisheries, to provide a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities and take account of the interests of consumers;
- b) work towards an appropriate involvement of stakeholders in the preparation phase for GFCM measures and ensure that measures adopted within the GFCM are in accordance with the GFCM Agreement;
- c) ensure that measures adopted within the GFCM are consistent with international law, and in particular with the provisions of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 1995 UN Agreement relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the 1993 Agreement to promote compliance with international conservation and management measures by fishing vessels on the high seas, and the 2009 Food and Agriculture Organization Port State Measures Agreement;
- d) aim to implement the actions and commitments set forth in the MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration signed in Malta on 30 March 2017 and in the Sofia Ministerial Declaration signed on 7 June 2018, which are intended in particular to enhance data collection and scientific evaluation, establish an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, develop a culture of compliance and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, support sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and ensure greater solidarity and coordination in the Mediterranean;
- e) promote positions consistent with the best practices of regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) in the same area;
- f) seek consistency and synergy with the policy that the Union is pursuing as part of its bilateral fisheries relations with third countries, and ensure coherence with its other policies, notably in the field of external relations, employment, environment, trade, development, research and innovation;
- g) ensure that the Union's international commitments are respected;
- h) be in line with the Council Conclusions of 19 March 2012 on the Commission Communication on the external dimension of the CFP⁽¹⁾;
- i) aim to create a level playing field for the Union fleet within the GFCM Agreement area based on the same principles and standards as those applicable under Union law, and to promote the uniform implementation of those principles and standards;

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- j) be in line with the Council conclusions⁽²⁾ on the Joint communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission on *International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of oceans*⁽³⁾ and promote measures to support and enhance the effectiveness of the GFCM and, where relevant, improve its governance and performance (in particular as regards on science, compliance, transparency and decision-making) as a contribution to the sustainable management of oceans in all its dimensions;
- k) promote coordination between RFMOs and regional sea conventions (RSCs) and cooperation with global organisations, as applicable, within their mandates, where appropriate;
- l) promote cooperation mechanisms amongst non-tuna RFMOs similar to the so-called Kobe process for tuna RFMOs.

2. ORIENTATIONS

The Union shall, where appropriate, endeavour to support the adoption of the following actions by the GFCM:

- a) conservation and management measures for fisheries resources in the GFCM Agreement area based on the best scientific advice available, including spatio-temporal closures, selectivity measures or fishing opportunities for living marine biological resources regulated by the GFCM, which would bring or maintain the achievement of the maximum sustainable yield exploitation rate at the latest by 2020. Where necessary, those conservation and management measures shall include specific measures for stocks, which suffer from overfishing to keep the fishing effort in line with available fishing opportunities; in the light of Article 29 of the CFP, in the event that multi-annual plans for some stock or group of stocks in the Mediterranean have been adopted at EU level, they should be taken into account where they relate to the implementation of the objective of reaching maximum sustainable yield as laid down in Article 2(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
- b) measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the GFCM Agreement area, including IUU vessel listing;
- c) measures to reinforce fisheries' scientific data collection and promote better cooperation between the industry and scientists;
- d) monitoring, control and surveillance measures in the GFCM Agreement area in order to ensure efficiency of control and compliance with measures adopted within the GFCM;
- e) measures to minimise the negative impact of fishing activities and aquaculture on marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems and their habitats, including measures to reduce marine pollution and prevent the discharge of plastics at sea and reduce the impact on marine biodiversity and ecosystems of plastics present at sea, protective measures for vulnerable marine ecosystems in the GFCM Agreement area in line with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, measures to avoid and reduce as far as possible unwanted catches, including in particular vulnerable marine species, and to gradually eliminate discards;
- f) measures to reduce the impact of Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the ocean and to facilitate the identification and recovery of such gear;

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- g) actions that promote the development of sustainable aquaculture in line with relevant Union law;
- h) common approaches with other RFMOs, where appropriate, in particular those involved in fisheries management in the same area;
- i) additional technical measures based on advice from the bodies and working groups of the GFCM;
- j) recommendations, where appropriate and to the extent permitted under the relevant constituent documents, encouraging the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention of the International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- k) measures in accordance with the commitments of the MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and the Sofia Ministerial Declaration.

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- (1) 7087/12 REV 1 ADD 1 COR 1.
- (2) 7348/1/17 REV 1 of 24.3.2017.
- (3) JOIN(2016) 49 final of 10.11.2016.

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- Decision revoked by [2023 c. 28 Sch. 1 Pt. 2](#)