



EU FISHERIES COUNCIL: MEDREACT URGES ITALY, SPAIN AND FRANCE TO END OVERFISHING, PROTECT DEEP-SEA ECOSYSTEMS, AND REQUALIFY THE FISHING SECTOR

Brussels, 11 December 2025 - The Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AgriFish) will meet in Brussels today and tomorrow to define the Mediterranean fishing opportunities for 2026 and to discuss the European Commission's proposal for new measures to rebuild fish stocks in the region.

Domitilla Senni, MedReAct Director, said: *"MedReAct believes that the European Commission's proposal can improve the health of fish stocks and should be supported by Member States, in particular Italy, Spain and France. Only by protecting vulnerable ecosystems, combating overfishing, and reconvertng the sector toward less destructive fishing techniques can we offer a future to our sea and the communities that depend on it"*

The latest [report](#) from the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean confirmed that the measures adopted in recent years to combat overfishing are bearing fruit. [Overfishing has dropped](#) from 87% in 2013 to 52% in 2024.

Yet, 11 stocks in the western Mediterranean remain in critical state, some of which, such as Norway lobster and hake, are very close to or have exceeded critical levels, below which the probability of reproduction is dangerously compromised.

For example, in the northern Spanish waters, the biomass of Norway lobster spawners reached in 2024 the lowest levels ever recorded, while fishing mortality on the stock has increased over the last four years. The same is happening in the waters around Sardinia, where Norway lobster is almost depleted and fishing impact continues to increase.

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MedReAct: Mediterranean Recovery Action | Our mission, our name: taking action to protect the Mediterranean.

MedReAct is an independent organisation launched in 2014 by a group of activists and organisations committed to fighting biodiversity loss in the Mediterranean Sea.

We believe in actions that lead to concrete, proven results. Actions like our campaign to protect the Jabuka/Pomo Pit, which has now been turned into the largest marine reserve in the Adriatic, producing not only extraordinary results for the recovery of fish stocks but also for marine biodiversity.

While the status of hake in the Adriatic Sea continues to improve, thanks to the reduction of fishing effort and the introduction of Fisheries Restricted Areas closed to trawling, in French and Spanish waters hake is considered depleted.

Based on the latest advice by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STEF), the European Commission has proposed to AgriFish a balanced mix of actions that will allow France, Italy and Spain to apply in the western Mediterranean corrective measures to reduce overfishing and a compensation mechanism to encourage trawlers to use more selective gear and to avoid fishing in areas where juveniles and spawners aggregates.

In particular, Member States are offered the option of closing shrimp fishing beyond 600 metres, or closing scampi fishing in at least 10% of the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Ligurian Sea, and northern Spanish waters between 300 and 600 metres deep, in exchange for compensatory measures.

The European Commission has also proposed a ban on trawling with twin nets in the Western Mediterranean, a practice that increases the destructive impact of this fishing gear, the use of which has already been opposed by the Tyrrhenian fishermen and more recently by those of [Ancona](#).

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