



## **MedReAct and FishSec statement at the Subregional Committee for the Western Mediterranean (Malaga, 19-21 May 2026) on Spanish glass eel fisheries**

Distinguished experts,

Since 2018, the Mediterranean region has been moving ahead on the management of the European eel, adopting some of the most progressive measures to support the recovery of this critically endangered species. However, the status of European eel remains extremely worrisome.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) reports that **recruitment remains at historically low levels** and that the species requires **urgent conservation action, including zero catch**. European eel is already listed under Appendix II of CITES to curb illegal trade. More recently, the Convention on the Conservation Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) adopted a Resolution on European eel together with a Single Species Action Plan, calling on Contracting Parties to “ensure fisheries mortality is in line with scientific advice, for all life stages”. Considering that scientific advice in place since 2021 is zero catches of all life stages in all habitats and for all purposes, this is not ensured today.

In this context, Spanish glass eel fishing is of particular concern. The fact that reported landings of glass eels in Catalonia almost doubled from 2024 to 2025, raises questions on the effectiveness of the current efforts to protect eel recruitment in the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, according to a recent report, glass eel fisheries in Spain seem to hold **limited economic profitability**, compared with other fisheries, which makes it **increasingly difficult to justify**, even though the 2024 GFCM Recommendation allows fishing for glass eels for up to two months per year.

To conclude, we call on Spain to **demonstrate leadership by closing the glass eel fishery and on the GFCM to adopt a full moratorium on glass eel fishing**.