

MEDAC Advice – Energy Transition in the Fisheries Sector

The Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC) after debated the topic in the last WG3 “Green Deal” meetings and being a member of the Energy Transition Partnership (ETP), the collaborative platform designed to accelerate the energy transition in the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector launched by the European Commission, supports the ambitious goal to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, while urging the adoption of an holistic approach that balances social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

As already stated in the MEDAC advice (Ref. 111_2024), policies related to the Energy Transition must consider that the Mediterranean region's fishing communities and economy have deep cultural and social roots that span throughout generations, so it's crucial to ensure also that their traditions, knowledge, and social fabric are preserved.

MEDAC supports the main challenges and needs identified during the ETP workshops organised by the ETP Support Group, in particular:

Challenges:

- *Demographic and social issues:* Mediterranean fleets suffer from a lack of generational renewal and with the aging workforce, the survival of local fisheries is at stake;
- *Fleet ageing:* many fishing vessels are several decades old and equipped with engines that do not correspond to the latest state of technology in terms of energy efficiency and CO2 emissions. In particular, innovation involving hydrogen, methanol, and similar measures is not feasible for small-scale vessels due to space constraints and high costs;
- *Economic and legislative barriers:* the current funding envelope (EMFAF) is insufficient for significant fleet renewal and fleet retrofitting and does not enable a sustainable and profitable sector development;
- *Insufficient infrastructures and current uncertainty of green technologies.*

Needs:

- *Fleet renewal:* the construction of new fishing vessels, and the replacement or modernisation of the engines to allow an increase in safety, working conditions and energy

Disclaimer - This advice reflects only the MEDAC's view and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information that it contains

efficiency, while ensuring the sustainability of the fisheries resources and without promoting overcapacity;

- *Energy savings:* Achieve immediate energy savings by focusing on quick, impactful solutions in existing fleets such as antifouling treatments, propeller replacement, and fishing pattern optimization while providing training and education on energy-efficient practices to fishers;
- *Flexible funding and incentives for alternative technologies:* ensure that capital and operational expenditures for new technologies are financially viable and address the distinct needs of the SSCF and LSF on developing emission-free vessels for both types of fisheries;
- *Implement regulatory adjustments:* enable a sustainable profitable sector and the acquisition and design of new vessels, while ensuring sustainable fish stocks and resilient fishing practices;
- *Strengthen collaboration between stakeholders:* promote fishers, shipbuilders, and energy suppliers project involvement and foster fishers' community engagement;
- *Sustainable shore power infrastructures:* develop essential port infrastructure for sustainable shore power, including electricity and water in small ports and harbours while creating synergies with offshore wind farms and energy islands for recharging at sea.

The MEDAC believes that environmental sustainability must be at the heart of the ecological transition, promoting practices that protect and restore marine biodiversity, reduce pollution, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, and urge a robust data collection framework to monitor energy consumption and emissions for all the sectors involved out at sea, beyond fisheries and aquaculture sector, such as mineral extraction, marine renewable energy, transport, telecommunication, tourism and recreation, enabling informed decision-making and promoting coherence between European and international policies.