

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/11
on the regional marking of fishing gear

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, adopted by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at its thirty-first session (FAO headquarters, June 2014);

RECALLING the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement) of 4 August 1995, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement);

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONCERNED by the continuation of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of GFCM conservation and management measures;

NOTING that the requirements for action on the marking of fishing gear are global in scope and also apply to subregional, regional and global organizations concerned with the conservation of fishery resources and with the management and development of fisheries;

RECOGNIZING that the identification of a fishing gear greatly facilitates monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities in combating IUU fishing activities, and that there is a need to develop and implement such measures in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I
Marking of fishing gear

1. Each flag CPC shall ensure that passive fishing gear, such as set nets, pots, lines and longlines, used by fishing vessels larger than 15 metres in length overall and authorized to fish for species managed by the GFCM in its area of application, is marked in such a way that it can be readily identified, in accordance with national law and with generally accepted standards such as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

2. The Working Group on Fishing Technology (WGFiT) is invited to include among its activities the possibility to facilitate the exchange of experience among countries in relation to the marking of fishing gear.
3. Each flag CPC shall increase awareness amongst its fishing vessels and fishers about the importance of marking fishing gear for fighting against IUU fishing, abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear.

PART II

Special requirements of CPC developing states

4. CPCs are aware that the full application of this recommendation requires technical competence by all CPCs and the GFCM Secretariat. To this end, the capacity of CPC developing states to implement this recommendation shall be taken into account in accordance with Article 17 of the GFCM Agreement, in particular by way of technical assistance.

PART III

Final provisions

5. The application of this recommendation shall not prejudice the adoption by CPCs of any other provision or regulation that could imply stricter requirements and obligations in relation to the marking of fishing gear.
6. This recommendation shall enter into force at the latest on 1 January 2022.