EC PROPOSES FISHING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BLACK SEA FOR 2018 FOR BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

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The European Commission tabled its proposal on November 21 on catch limits and quotas for the Black Sea ahead of the December Fisheries Council, where EU countries will agree fishing quotas for 2018.

The proposal, which concerns Bulgaria and Romania, takes into account the best available scientific advice and is the outcome of this year's General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Annual Session, which approved the first-ever multi-annual management plan for the Black Sea.

For sprat, the Commission proposes to maintain a catch limit of 11 475 tons; 70 per cent is allocated to Bulgaria and 30 per cent to Romania.

For turbot, the Commission transposes in its proposal the quotas adopted in the GFCM management plan for turbot (114 tons for 2018 and 2019, 50 per cent assigned to Bulgaria and 50 per cent to Romania), including a two-month closed period (April 15 - June 15) and limitation of fishing efforts to 180 days at sea per year.

Following the recent successful GFCM plenary, for the first time, the new management and control measures for two iconic Black Sea species will be implemented by all riparian countries, the EC said.

"This marks remarkable progress in shifting towards an equal level playing-field in the region, and will also help to incentivise joint efforts to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing," the Commission said.

Collectively, the Commission expects these measures to have a positive impact on stock recovery.

The Commission's proposal will be submitted for discussion and pronouncement by the member states at the next Fisheries Council, to be held on December 11 and 12 in Brussels, to be applied as from January 1 2018.

By Clive Leviev-Sawyer

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