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EFCA deploys vessel in the Adriatic Sea to reinforce fisheries control

The European Fisheries Control Agency's (EFCA) chartered vessel AEGIS I is since the 1st December deployed in the Adriatic Sea within the joint deployment plan of the Mediterranean. For this patrol EFCA is collaborating with Greece, Italy and Croatia who have deployed inspectors on board EFCA's vessel for all or part of the period.

The main purpose of the patrol is to monitor and carry out inspections on fishing vessels that are engaged in fishing of small pelagic species, blue fin tuna and swordfish. In addition, the vessel will monitor fishing activity in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area where a new fisheries restricted area will come into force in 2018 as part of a General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean's (GFCM) recommendation.

This GFCM recommendation and the associated control regime are tangible results from the commitments made in the Malta Medfish4ever ministerial declaration. The Malta Declaration acknowledged that control and inspection are essential elements for the success of conservation and management measures in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the Declaration sought to further develop both fisheries restricted areas and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea. It is expected that the Declaration will ensure that effective protection will have been established for at least 10% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020, and this will be in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development goal 14.5 and Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, as well as implementing relevant actions under the Barcelona Convention on MPAs.

The AEGIS I was chartered by EFCA thanks to the cooperation with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in the framework of the Coastguard project. This cooperation includes information sharing, development of surveillance services, and capacity building and sharing. Previously, the AEGIS I was deployed in the Strait of Sicily implementing a pilot project for fisheries control as regards hake and deep water rose shrimp following 2016 GFCM's recommendation and has now moved to the Adriatic Sea.

"With this operation, EFCA wants to pave the way for an effective fisheries restricted area in this unique basin," said Pascal Savouret, EFCA Executive Director.