

Oceana statement:
withdrawal of Mediterranean Advisory Council membership

29 March 2019

Oceana, the international marine conservation organisation, has been and is strongly committed to the work of the European Union Advisory Councils (ACs) and the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), as proven by our decade long active involvement in them. We recognise the importance of dialogue and involvement of all stakeholders in order to ensure good governance and achieve sustainable fishing when this dialogue is transparent and guided by sound rules of procedure.

However recent events in the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MedAC) have made it clear to Oceana that **efforts to improve Mediterranean governance and ensure the implementation of the CFP through this body have proven futile**. Unfortunately, there are no indications that the situation could improve in the near future either.

As a consequence, it is with regret we must announce that, as from today, **Oceana will cease all involvement in the Mediterranean Advisory Council and will withdraw its Membership. This decision is based on the following issues:**

- Repeated disregard for the Rules of Procedure to which all the members are bound.
- A lack of external scrutiny on performance and mechanisms to prevent and deter any wrongdoing by any of the elected positions or by the Secretariat;
- A disregard for the legally binding principles outlined in the Common Fisheries Policy which constitute the cornerstone of every advice;
- Failures to adequately reflect the Other Interest Groups (OIG) minority statements in adopted advice;
- Misuse of publicly financed Secretariat for supporting industry representatives (who constitute 60% of the Advisory Council) against the adoption of the EU Western Mediterranean Multiannual Plan (MAP), and hence implicitly against the implementation of the CFP itself in the Mediterranean.

Oceana has been an active and dedicated member of this Advisory Council since 2011 and has sat on the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, various Working Groups and held the Vice-presidency seat twice.

The withdrawal of Oceana's membership from MedAC will not reduce our commitment and engagement in other Advisory Councils that Oceana participates in. These include South Western Waters (SWWAC) and the Baltic Sea (BSAC) where we are Vice-president from the 40% group; Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) where we Chair the WG-5; and members of the Executive Committee in Markets (MAC), North Western Waters (NWWAC) and North Sea (NSAC).

Despite our resignation, Oceana remains committed to Advisory Councils in principle and will consider re-engaging with MEDAC when the rules of procedures are respected and implemented, and the existing CFP objectives are used as a basis of the Advisory Council's work.