

EN

E-001726/2024

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.10.2024)

The EU works with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on the issue of the spread of Non-Indigenous Species (NIS). The GFCM 2030 Strategy recognises its importance and makes its work on NIS a priority¹. Several pilot projects and research programs, in which Member States take part, have been developed advancing data collection, information sharing and establishing comprehensive mitigation measures. These include a pilot study on NIS in the eastern Mediterranean and the creation of a NIS observatory. While initially focused on the east, the aim is for the observatory to eventually be expanded to the entire region.

Regarding the compensation available to fishers, the EU provides for the funding of national initiatives under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). Several Mediterranean Member States have identified the threat posed by NIS and put in place measures and solutions to combat them. In Cyprus, a scheme has been put in place to compensate fishers for their pufferfish catches². Other Member States, such as Greece, have funded innovative projects which help turn this threat into an economic opportunity³.

Our Mediterranean neighbours have also been developing mitigation and adaptation measures, expanding their research on pufferfish species. At the 2024 GFCM Fish Forum, Tunisia and Türkiye presented pufferfish-focused research with the latter having developed the production of pufferfish leather⁴.

The EU has been financially supporting the GFCM's capacity building work under the MedSea4Fish programme which has also focused on providing GFCM parties with support in their research and data collection on NIS, ensuring a uniform ability to combat invasion.

¹ GFCM 2030 Strategy Action Plan(<https://www.fao.org/gfcm/2030strategy>): Target 1.4 on the need to prevent and mitigate 'threats to fisheries and the marine environment, including plastic pollution, climate change and the expansion of non-indigenous species'

² www.moa.gov.cy/emfaf

³ The Greek example of turning pufferfish into fishmeal is particularly relevant [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/turning-toxic-pufferfish-invader-aquaculture-feed-2023-12-22_en](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/turning-toxic-pufferfish-invader-aquaculture-feed-2023-12-22_en#:~:text=The%20pufferfish%2C%20originating%20from%20the,to%20have%20no%20commercial%20value)
https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/turning-toxic-pufferfish-invader-aquaculture-feed-2023-12-22_en

⁴ <https://pufferfishleather.com/>