

Recommendation n° 30:

**Possible studies on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems  
in all the Outermost Regions**

Considering the report of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), regarding the *request by the European Union (EU) for a technical service to provide the results of the ICES 2021 advisory data, on access to the deep seabed (ref (EU)2016/2336) coordinates for the EU waters area only*, in the Northeast Atlantic (i.e. areas between 400m and 800m in the Exclusive Economic Zones (ZEEs) of France, Spain, Portugal and Ireland).

Considering point 4 of article 9 of regulation 2016/2336<sup>1</sup>, which establishes specific requirements for the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs): *Member States shall use the best available scientific and technical information, including biogeographical information and the information referred to in paragraph 3, to identify where VMEs are known to occur or are likely to occur. In addition, a competent scientific advisory body shall be requested by the Commission to carry out an annual assessment of areas where VMEs are known to occur or are likely to occur.*

Considering the *EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030*<sup>2</sup> which advocates the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), *based on ecological criteria objectives* and for that, scientific studies are needed to justify these criteria, in the definition of these MPAs.

Considering also, that about 15% of the ZEE of the Outermost Regions (ORs) already have some level of protection<sup>3</sup>.

The Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRUP) recommends that the **European Commission requests a technical service from ICES to study the VMEs in coastal zones, depth zones and above 400m, in all the ORs.**

The President of the Executive Committee of the CC RUP,

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(David Pavón González)

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<sup>1</sup>REGULATION (EU) 2016/2336 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 December 2016 establishing specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks in the north-east Atlantic and provisions for fishing in international waters of the north-east Atlantic and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002

<sup>2</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0011.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0011.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ccrup.eu/ccrup-projetos-trabalhos/>