



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director-General

Brussels,
A2/EG D(2015)

Mr Antonio Cabral
President
Long Distance Advisory Council
C/del Doctor Fleming 7 / 2º derecha
28036 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: LDAC recommendation about shark finning

Yr reference: R-06-14/WG1

Dear Mr Cabral,

Thank you for the LDAC recommendation about shark finning. Before proposing Regulation (EU) 605/2013, the Commission conducted a comprehensive impact assessment and stakeholder consultation. In response to concerns of the fishery sector, which you also list in your letter, the Regulation allows slicing partly through each fin and folding it against the carcass to facilitate handling and storage.

In line with Article 6.1 of the Regulation, in 2016, the European Commission is due to report to the European Parliament and to the Council on its implementation and on related international developments. Ensuring compliance and enforcement of the applicable rules is an obligation of Member States; for vessels flying the flag of or registered in a Member State, this obligation also extends to the activities of the fishing vessels outside EU waters.

Over the past years the EU has been promoting the fins attached policy in RFMOs and at the United Nations as the only efficient measure for eradicating shark finning practices. The aim of the Commission for doing so is threefold: to improve the conservation of sharks, ensure the sustainable exploitation of commercial shark species, and create a level playing field for the EU fleet. Our continuous efforts at bilateral level have contributed to the adoption of fins attached policies by an increasing number of States worldwide during the last years. In addition, the EU works actively with contracting parties to RFMOs, other states and stakeholders to eliminate the practice of shark finning through the adoption of measures establishing the fins attached policy.

A significant and concrete step towards this objective and a first success in the frame of a multilateral body, is the recent adoption by NEAFC of Recommendation 10:2015, prohibiting the removal of shark fins at sea and the retention on board, transshipment and landing of shark fins. We were also pleased by an increased number of co-sponsors to the fins attached proposal at the last ICCAT Annual Meeting. I would like to ensure you that we will continue our endeavours in promoting similar conservation and management measures in RFMOs and other relevant international fora.

Thank you for your continued interest and constructive input. If you have any further questions, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lowri Evans', written in a cursive style.

Lowri Evans