



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/B2/AM(2024)

Dear Mr López,

I thank the LDAC for its advice regarding the 28th Regular Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Although the advice was sent just before the start of the meeting, I take the opportunity to provide feedback on your main recommendations. In order to maximise the opportunity for the Commission to take into account the advisory council's recommendation, I would encourage you to provide such advice well in advance of RFMO meetings.

Regarding your overarching recommendation to base all decisions on the elements of sustainability, science and the creation of a level playing field, the EU is strongly in favour of such an approach. The EU has a longstanding practice in various RFMOs of taking these factors into account and will continue doing so in the IOTC.

On your recommendation for the fisheries closure, we agree with the necessity to exclude artisanal vessels under a certain size to mitigate the socio-economic impacts and avoid the closure to be disproportionate. The EU acknowledges the LDAC's position to strengthen the implementation of Resolution 21/01, however, due to the divergent views in this regard in the IOTC, we believe that a one-month fisheries closure is necessary as an additional measure to ensure the sustainability of the stocks.

I take good note of your recommendations on fish aggregating devices (FADs). We equally see the importance of having a transition to fully biodegradable FADs and hope to find consensus for this at this year's annual meeting. Regarding a FAD closure, the EU shares the opinion that a FAD closure is not effective. Instead, the EU proposes, inter alia, a one-month fisheries closure for all gears and a stricter FAD management to ensure a sustainable fishery.

Furthermore, we welcome your support for the EU's commitment to establish the 'fins naturally attached' policy in IOTC. The LDAC's recommendations for a conservation

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and management measure on sharks are also very relevant. Regarding monitoring and control, the EU's proposal on a regional observer scheme mirrors your recommendation to increase electronic monitoring while still demanding coverage by physical observers. We are also pleased to see that we concur when it comes to a high seas boarding and inspection scheme as well as amending Resolution 07/01 on promoting compliance. On IUU fishing activities, the EU works actively to combat these practices and we strive to have strong frameworks in place also at an international level.

Lastly, we also acknowledge your remarks relating to scientific research as it is at the core of the EU's opinion to take decisions that are based on science.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

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