



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/B2/AM/Ares(2024)

Dear Mr. Rodríguez,

I thank you for the correspondence of 11 November transmitting the LDAC's advice with recommendations for the 21st. Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC21) taking place in Suva, Fiji, from 28th November to 3rd December 2024.

We have carefully examined the advice and recommendations therein and given it due consideration in the preparation of the EU position for this year's meeting. We have also had the pleasure of discussing these elements during the WCPFC stakeholder meeting on 18th October 2024.

Please allow me to come back to some of the most salient points for the WCPFC21.

On management of **tropical tunas**, we share your views on the importance of effective cooperation between relevant RFMOs, in particular WCPFC and IATTC. The EU will continue to support consistency between measures adopted by the two organisations on relevant topics. Regarding the LDAC recommendation to support the development of multispecies management procedures (MP) for tropical tunas in WCPFC, I would like to remind you that although dedicated exploratory scientific work is ongoing, WCPFC has made the choice to test first the implementation of a management procedure for skipjack, the species that is driving this multispecies/multigear fishery, before possibly moving towards a more complex and challenging multispecies MP. In this context, we fully agree on the value of pursuing the Science-Management Dialogues in WCPFC to guide future decisions on this important topic.

On **observer coverage**, we share your concerns about the discrepancy between the WCPFC requirements for regional observers' coverage on longliners (5%) compared to their coverage on purse-seiners (100%). The need to address this issue has been raised by the EU on several occasions and we will continue to bring this topic to the attention of the Commission. Related to that, the EU will continue to support the adoption of minimum

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standards for **electronic monitoring** that are consistent, to the extent possible, with the voluntary standards adopted by IATTC.

On **sharks**, this year's Commission meeting will focus on reviewing the alternative options for the implementation of the finning ban that are listed in paragraph 9 of WCPFC CMM 2022-04. Although it is clear that a difficult discussion will take place on this issue, we share your opinion that if any alternative options are to be maintained, there must be also conditions on greater transparency on their implementation. We also share the view that data reporting needs to be further improved for sharks to support both scientific and compliance processes.

On **monitoring of transshipments at sea**, we understand your concerns and have been continuously working towards the elimination of all transshipments at sea in WCPFC. To this end, the EU will continue to support the adoption of a more robust transshipment CMM by WCPFC21.

As far as **deep-sea mining** is concerned, we agree that caution is needed regarding any premature steps that could lead to cause irreversible harm to marine biodiversity and long-term disruptions to marine ecosystems.

Finally, we also agree that stronger **coordination between WCPFC and other relevant international instruments** is becoming a topic of particular interest in view of many new international developments which may overlap with the core work of RFMOs. While many uncertainties remain in terms of how the new international agreements will be implemented, we welcome the discussion at the WCPFC21.

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,

Charlina VITCHEVA