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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.B.2/YB

**Subject: LDAC ADVICE ON ICCAT ANNUAL MEETING 2026**

Dear Mr Rodriguez,

Thank you for sending on 23 September 2026 the Long Distance Fleet Advisory Council (LDAC) advice in preparation of the International Commission on Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) 2026 plenary session. Let me congratulate and thank the LDAC for the well-coordinated work in preparation of the above-mentioned advice. The recommendations will help to inform us in establishing the EU position for this ICCAT meeting. We have taken good note of all your recommendations but would like to briefly highlight a number of them where we see particular convergence of views.

We welcome the alignment of our positions on the importance of the ratification of the Palma protocol. The ICCAT secretariat recently informed all contracting parties that as of October 2026 only 11 instruments relating to approval, ratification, accession or acceptance have been deposited with the FAO. ([1]) We will keep up our efforts to have the protocol entry into force by actively reaching out to other contracting parties and urging them to accede to the protocol as soon as possible. We also welcome many of the other recommendations you provide in relation to the fight against IUU fishing. For this year's annual meeting the Commission proposes to focus the efforts on the record of authorised vessels, the use of Electronic Monitoring Systems for bluefin tuna processing vessels - which should ensure a better control of transshipment at sea, and the Automatic Identification System requirements. Generally, the Commission would look favourably on proposals from other contracting parties, which aim to strengthen enforcement of and compliance with ICCAT rules.

([1]) ICCAT CIRCULAR # 08840 / 2026

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On your proposals relating to stock management we fully agree with your recommendation that a quota and an allocation table for yellowfin tuna should be set at this year's annual meeting, and our efforts are targeted towards that objective. On bigeye tuna there may be a room for a TAC increase. At the same time, we will continue to insist that good governance and proper control are vital for the management of any stock. Furthermore, in line with the best scientific advice the Commission proposes to further reduce the FAD closure period and to increase observer coverage for the long line fleet.

The European Commission also agrees with the importance of science-based approaches in the management of shark stocks and in the conservation of vulnerable species. This commitment can be witnessed in the support to the development of a management strategy evaluation for Atlantic blue shark. The EU has already tabled a joint proposal with the United States to adopt a full fins-naturally-attached policy in ICCAT as the most effective and efficient option to prevent finning.

Finally, the EU would be supportive of a third performance review focussed on governance issues, and we are pleased to see alignment also on this point.

Thank you once again for providing your advice in such a timely manner and I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have 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



Electronically signed on 05/11/2026 19:41 (UTC+01) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121