



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

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

Dear Mr. López,

I thank you for your correspondence of 13 September transmitting the LDAC's advice for the 24<sup>th</sup> special meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). 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 many of these elements during the ICCAT stakeholder meeting on 7 October. Please allow me to come back to some of the most salient points for this year's ICCAT annual meeting.

On panel 1, **tropical tunas**, we share your concern on these difficult negotiations. The EU will do its utmost to drive discussions forward, taking into account the latest scientific advice. On the bigeye and yellowfin total allowable catch (TAC), the EU will support the setting of TACs which are in line with the scientific advice for a sustainable long-term exploitation of the stocks. On the bigeye allocation table, it is of the utmost importance to the EU that there is good governance in general, and more specifically within the collective small harvester group. On **FADs**, the EU has special consideration to ensure a level playing-field. Moreover, the EU will continue to explore options to reduce the FAD closure period, accompanied by a stronger management framework for FADs. The EU has also tabled a robust proposal for management objectives for the **tropical tuna management strategy evaluation** (MSE). Finally, in this panel, we also hope to see the adoption of a management procedure for the western skipjack this year.

On panel 4, for **North Atlantic swordfish**, the EU will be seeking to adopt a management procedure which gives our fleets, and the EU as a whole, the best possible outcome. On **sharks**, we are very pleased to inform you that the EU is tabling a proposal on shark consolidation, bringing together the various ICCAT provision on sharks and going a step further by adding a provision on fins naturally attached as well as a request to the SCRS to examine how we can further protect certain shark species in ICCAT. The

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EU will also be requesting that the blue shark MSE be prioritised in the ICCAT MSE roadmap.

On **compliance and control**, and a level playing field, which are common themes throughout the LDAC advice, I can assure that the EU is fully aligned with the LDAC position on these points. As always, the EU will be vocal in the compliance committee, championing adherence to the ICAT rules as well as calling for improved reporting and data from all contracting parties. Moreover, the EU will be putting forward a proposal for the rollout of electronic monitoring systems on bluefin tuna processing vessels, as well as driving forward new technologies, such as stereoscopic cameras and AI to improve compliance across the board. Finally, the EU will actively work with the GFCM to improve the current framework on driftnets.

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](mailto:MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA