



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director-General

Brussels,
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Mr Antonio Cabral
President
Long Distance Regional Advisory
Council
C/Velázquez 41 / 4º
28001 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: LDRAC Recommendation on the Strategy and Priorities in the Tuna and Tuna-like Species RFMOs

Yr reference: R-09-13/WG1

Dear Mr Cabral,

Thank you for the LDRAC recommendations on the strategy and priorities in the tuna and tuna-like species RFMOs, which set out the main aspects to work on for the future.

You will find below our response, with the follow-up that the Commission intends to give to the points raised. For sake of clarity, we will follow the structure of your letter.

FAD management plans

FAD management in tuna RFMOs remains a priority for DG MARE, and based on our proposal the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) has adopted Rec 13-01 in Cape Town last year. Unfortunately this was unsuccessful in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). We will work with other parties and strive for a more successful outcome in 2014.

Capacity Management

This is also a key issue in tuna RFMOs and a priority in line with the external communication. In 2014, the Commission will organise, under the auspices of Greek Presidency, an international conference on capacity management¹. This conference is

¹ "Global Fishing Capacity – Less is more", 13-14 March 2014, Thessaloniki, Greece.

held against the backdrop of the new external dimension of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy which strengthens the EU's commitment towards sustainable fisheries management internationally and aims at addressing overcapacity at the global level. LDRAC will have the opportunity to attend this event.

Transparency on Fisheries Agreements

We fully concur with the need to increase transparency on fisheries agreement in all relevant RFMOs. ICCAT already adopted Rec 11-16 on this issue. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) adopted the Resolution 13/07 further developing the provisions ensuring transparency in on Fisheries Agreements. The EU submitted a proposal on this issues in WCPFC, which was unfortunately not supported. Based on the proposal put forward by the LDRAC, the EU has managed to insert language in the 2013 UNGA Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries encouraging other RFMOs to adopt similar measures to those adopted by ICCAT and IOTC. We intend to pursue the matter in the coming months.

Referring back to ICCAT, we are concerned about the opposition of Ghana to an EU proposal to modify the ICCAT Rec 11-16 by introducing the compulsory designation by contracting Parties of the national authority in charge of access to national waters, and we intend to further discuss this matter with other ICCAT contracting parties.

Chartering/access transparency

The EU has successfully advocated 2013 UNGA Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries to recognise the need for rules for chartering arrangements and practices to ensure compliance with and enforcement of relevant conservation and management measures. ICCAT adopted Rec 13-14 in replacement of Rec 02-21, based on an EU proposal, to clarify the rules for catch reporting under chartering arrangements.

Observer coverage

The EU agrees that observers are a key element to control and monitor fishing activities, and is engaged in developing observer programmes in RFMOs, where necessary. ICCAT has adopted such programmes to enhance compliance on specific fisheries such as bluefin tuna and tropical tuna. Both the ICCAT Secretariat and vessels experienced difficulties for the implementation of the programme, and actions will be taken in 2014 to resolve practical constraints, on the basis of experience and initiatives developed by the EU vessels owners in the recent past.

Transshipment at sea

The EU agrees in principle that a ban on transshipment at sea is the best way to avoid problems. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to secure consensus. ICCAT has banned transshipment at sea except for large longliners under strict conditions in 2006. The relevant rules have been clarified in 2012 with Rec 12-06.

Improve compliance at all levels

This approach is fully in line with our action and the external communication. In all RFMOs, we are encouraging better compliance assessments, Port State Measures and other measures aimed at combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in line with the Food and Agriculture Organization plan of Action.

We welcome the undertaking of the second country-by-country assessment in Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). We look forward to a proper follow up of the specific recommendations in the upcoming Annual Meeting.

With regard to IOTC, this RFMO continues to carry out its country based compliance exercise, which is contributing to a global improvement of compliance within IOTC. Despite this positive trend, compliance remains one of the major concerns in Indian Ocean.

Management of shark fisheries

In line with the EU's Plan of Action on Sharks, the protection of sharks figures high on our agenda, as can be seen from our dynamic actions in many RFMOs. However, it is sometimes difficult to secure support, especially in a situation where the scope of the Convention remains unclear, like in ICCAT.

I thank you for your continued interest and constructive input. If you have any further question, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Regional 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', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lowri Evans