



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
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Mr Ivan Lopez van der Veen
LDAC Chair
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2º derecha
28036 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: LDAC Recommendation in relation to some Atlantic Tuna and Tuna-like Stocks. ICCAT Annual Meeting- Vilamoura (Portugal), 14-21 November 2016.

Your ref: R-09-16/WG1 of 11th November 2016

Dear Mr Lopez,

Thank you for sharing the Long Distance Advisory Council's (LDAC) advice with us prior to the ICCAT Annual Meeting 2016 which took place on 14-21 November in Vilamoura, Portugal. The LDAC advice, coupled with the technical discussions held with the Member States and with stakeholders prior to the ICCAT meeting are important elements for the process of defining the EU position.

The overall result of the meeting can be considered extremely satisfactory, with the EU reaching most of its numerous and ambitious objectives and being as usual the major driving-force, tabling the majority of the proposals that were finally adopted.

On Tropical Tunas, we managed to strictly limit the amendments and successfully dismissed the repeated requests from South Africa and Mexico to review the FAD limitation in the absence of scientific advice. The introduced changes refer to a review clause for the observers' coverage, based on new scientific advice to be delivered in 2017 and to the incorporation of the recommendations of the 2016 FAD Working Group. In addition, the EU proposal on the revised Terms of Reference for this Working Group was adopted and a new meeting will take place in 2017. This will be complemented by a joint inter tuna-RFMO WG funded by the EU and promoted by ICCAT.

On North Atlantic Albacore, we managed to leave the door open to a possible TAC increase in 2018 (from 28.000 t to 30.000 t), as envisaged in our mandate, thus avoiding that the current TAC would stay in place until the next stock assessment in 2020. We also succeeded in streamlining the existing measures by combining four ICCAT measures in one and in promoting the continuation of scientific work on Harvest Control Rules (HCRs), with a view to adopt them in 2017 or 2018.

An important achievement on Sharks was the adoption of a conservation measure setting a catch limit for North Atlantic Blue Shark, a stock exploited by Spain, Portugal and Japan. It is the first time that a tuna-RFMO sets a catch limit for a shark stock, clearly recognising the directed nature of shark fisheries and anticipating the agreement on the new ICCAT Convention, which will fully include sharks among the stocks under the purview of ICCAT.

Unfortunately, as expected, our proposal to set similar catch limits for the Southern stock could not find consensus, mainly because of the opposition by Brazil, who claimed that there was no scientific basis allowing the setting of reference limits. Furthermore, no consensus could be found on a fins-attached policy, because of the opposition from the Asian fleets, but we will continue rallying for additional support for the next meeting.

ICCAT also adopted a roll-over of the TACs of North Atlantic and South Atlantic Swordfish, given that the existing provisions on TAC expired this year and that the new assessment for both stocks will take place in 2017. ICCAT also adopted new control measures establishing ICCAT lists of authorised vessels to fish for the Atlantic swordfish.

Thank you again for your continued interest and constructive input. If you have any questions on this reply, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43) or Ms. Ramune Genzbigelyte-Venturi (Ramune.genzbigelyte-venturi@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 85043).

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO

