



Ref. R-06-Ej.19 (2025-2026)/WG1-WG2

Madrid, 7th of October 2025

Att. Mr. Fernando Andresen Guimarães

Director, Directorate B – International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)

European Commission

1049 Brussels, Belgium

Subject: Request for Clarification on DG MARE participation to LDAC Working Group Meetings linked to preparation of Annual Meetings of RFMOs

Dear Director Guimarães,

In reference to our letter of 10th of February 2025 regarding the DG MARE's participation in LDAC meetings (which remains unanswered) and further to the absence of DG MARE representatives at recent meetings of LDAC Working Groups 1 on Tuna RFMOs (for IOTC) and Working Group 2 on Atlantic and Pacific RFMOs and Access Arrangements (for Pacific RFMOs) held on March, we would like to seek your guidance and clarification on how best to ensure constructive exchanges between DG MARE and the LDAC in the future on this subject.

We very much value the importance that the Commission attaches to the contribution of the LDAC towards achieving the objectives of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, including the development of EU positions at Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). To achieve this, we rely on timely and structured information from the European Commission on the state of play of relevant negotiations. In the last two years, efforts have been made to adapt to your internal calendar and meet your advisory needs before closing your mandate, for RFMOs such as ICCAT, WCPFC and NEAFC. We would greatly appreciate exploring ways to improve the feedback/information from the Commission so that our advice can be reflected more effectively in the period between our submissions and the RFMO Annual Meetings.

We also note that the timing of the EC stakeholder preparatory meetings organised by the Commission does not often align with the LDAC's own advisory calendar and consultation timing, limiting our capacity to provide coordinated and timely advice in that format. The format of the stakeholders meeting is broader than the LDAC meeting and does not allow interactive dialogue. We therefore see considerable added value in maintaining direct exchanges between the LDAC members and the Commission services in developing common work streams and delivering meaningful advice.



In this context, we respectfully request clarification on the reasons for DG MARE's non-attendance. Our objective is to understand how to better synchronise our respective processes and calendars, so that LDAC input can be considered in a timely and meaningful way in the EU negotiation strategy. In the absence of such exchanges, our ability to issue relevant and informed advice is significantly impaired. Strengthening our exchange with the Commission would also send a positive signal to our members that their contributions are duly acknowledged and taken into account.

In view of the above, we suggest that all invited DG MARE representatives to cover the RFMOs attend all the LDAC WG1 and WG2 meetings which take place usually in October and March, i.e. approximately one month before each relevant tuna RFMO Annual Meeting (and NEAFC and NPFC in case of WG2).

The aim of this participation would be that your services provide an update on the EU position and gather feedback on our advice as well as exchange views on the EC negotiating mandate approved by the Council before the Annual Meetings take place. We believe that this would promote a participatory and transparent dialogue in support of the EU negotiating mandate.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response on how best to strengthen our collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

Iván López van der Veen
LDAC Chair (GA/EXCOM)

Cc:

- Stijn Billiet – Head of Unit DG MARE B2 on RFMOs
- Anne France Mattlet and Ignacio Fresco
Chair and Vice Chair of LDAC WG1 (Tuna RFMOs)
- Emil Remisz and Tim Heddema
Chair and Vice Chair of LDAC WG2 (North Atlantic and Pacific RFMOs)
- LDAC Secretariat
- MARE-AC team