



Att.: Ms. Lena ANDERSON PENCH  
Director  
DG MARE - Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
JII99, B-1000 BRUSSELS

Madrid, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Subject: DG MARE clarification on participation in LDAC's meetings**

Dear Ms. Anderson Pench,

As we have already stressed in our letter of 11 October, we would like to re-emphasise how important it is for LDAC to provide its members with the means and opportunities to exchange views directly with the institutions, and above all with the services of the European Commission, to which it mainly provides advice.

I would like to more specifically refer to the last working group meetings we organized recently, from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October in Brussels. It was held very close to the DG MARE building precisely in order to facilitate exchange and easier participation by DG MARE's officials. Many members were surprised, disappointed and even annoyed to see that most of the expected participants – with the notable exception of some - from DG MARE did not attend our meetings in person (ie: NEAFC). In this regard, I would like to remind that the meetings of the LDAC have been held for years in Brussels instead of in Madrid precisely to facilitate the physical participation of the European Commission officials. Besides, for several agenda items, namely Brexit, ICCAT and WCPFC, we were told that all information had already been given through other fora (Inter AC, ICCAT and WCPFC stakeholder meetings) and that therefore there was no added value in DG MARE repeating the same presentations again.

I sincerely consider this is a serious breach of the beneficial collaboration we have built over the years of open meetings and exchanges between LDAC members, observers and the European Commission services. ACs have been set up precisely to allow exchanges with the European Commission on specific matters, and each AC is established to cover certain areas. If the European Commission services seriously consider the work, effort and time that the LDAC members put into developing common and joint work streams and advice valuable, perhaps they should re-consider the importance of participating in LDAC meetings.

I would like to highlight the importance of clarifying the terms of the consultation process from the beginning to assure proper stakeholder participation and preparation of AC's advice. The tendency from the European Commission to consider the Inter-AC as a proper consultative body, for instance for topics such as the implementing act of the Deep-sea Access Regulation, is incompatible with the CFP Regulation. The Inter-AC is not regulated by the CFP and cannot

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provide advice as such and therefore cannot be used as a body for stakeholder engagement or consultation. The different ACs must be duly informed and consulted in order to provide proper advice. Furthermore, the organization by the Commission of an Inter-AC meetings (e.g., 17 November 2022) during key dates for stakeholders, such as ICCAT and NEAFC annual meetings, works against stakeholder's engagement and the accomplishment of the mission entrusted to ACs.

In order to facilitate the working relationship in the near future, I am pleased to provide you with a suggested guideline to establish the terms of our collaboration more clearly (please, find attached as ANNEX).

Lastly, we would like to have the opportunity to meet you in Brussels to present you our main lines of work and discuss avenues of better coordination with MARE-AC team.

We remain at your disposal,  
Yours faithfully,

Iván López van der Veen  
Chair of the Long Distance Advisory Council



## **ANNEX: Common issues and specific scope of the LDAC**

### Inter AC

The LDAC acknowledges the need for strengthened coordination among the ACs and various fora have been set up to facilitate coordination and avoid duplication of work and request for the participation of the European Commission services. This is particularly the case of the Inter AC group on Brexit. However, due to the limited participation in the inter AC (in terms of number of participants and time of intervention), the LDAC considers it essential for the European Commission services to make a presentation available for the LDAC WG2 in a remote setting.

### ICCAT

Some reflection could also be done on Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species managed under ICCAT where four ACs are interested, namely the Outermost regions CCRUP, the SWWAC and the MedAC along with the LDAC. However, it should also be remembered that under the aegis of ICCAT, not all species are of interest to these 4 ACs, and that the management of tropical tunas, for example, is the sole responsibility of LDAC.

### CFP reform

#### Control regulation and IUU fishing

The LDAC understands that these two issues are in essence Common issues for all ACs, but also wishes to remind that international policy is its sole scope. In that respect, and considering all the work developed in these areas throughout the years, the LDAC thinks that direct exchanges with the European Commission services on these matters is essential and necessary for all parts.

### **Contacting the European Commission services for presentation or participation in LDAC's agenda items**

While the LDAC is setting its agenda for every new contracting period, the European Commission should share this information internally in order for the corresponding persons to be aware well in advance of the meetings where their participation is expected. In this respect, information on the role and importance of stakeholder participation for the proper functioning of the CFP should be highlighted internally within the different services of DG MARE.

As agreed in the last inter AC meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October, the LDAC could write to the MARE unit in charge of coordinating ACs, copying the head of unit responsible for the specific item.

### **European Commission confirming attendance to LDAC's meetings**

As the participation of the European Commission services often influences the decision of LDAC members to physically participate in meetings and to organise their time and travel accordingly, confirmation from the European Commission services should be sent one week in advance with the name of the person participating in the agenda item.

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