



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Director-General

Brussels,
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Mr Antonio Cabral
Chair
Long Distance Advisory Council
C/ Doctor Fleming 7, 2º derecha
28036 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: Improved transparency in the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) model application regarding tropical tuna fisheries management in the Western Pacific Ocean and its potential extension to other areas

Yr reference: Letter from A. Cabral dated 24 March 2015

Dear Mr Cabral,

Thank you for your letter dated 24 March 2015 in which you raised a number of issues regarding the management of tropical tuna fisheries in the Western Pacific Ocean.

We share your concerns about the negative effects of the lack of transparency of the Vessels Day Scheme (VDS) on the sustainability of the tuna stocks in the region. We are committed to the improvement of the VDS. In the context of the implementation of the IUU Regulation, the Commission is addressing the transparency of the VDS with both coastal and flag States. Our main request is that Parties of Nauru Agreement (PNA) cooperate with flag States by providing them information about the use of the fishing days by their fleets.

Further to this demarche, flag States are increasing the pressure on PNA countries to obtain real time information. At the same time, the constructive dialogue on IUU held bilaterally with most of the PNA members should trigger positive movements within the coming weeks. Countries such as Papua New-Guinea and Solomon Islands are now aware of the importance of reforming the system and may lead the other members to act collectively in a reform for a more transparent VDS.

We also share your concerns about the state of the Bigeye tuna (BET) stock(s) in the Pacific Ocean and in particular in the Western and Central Pacific region. Both purse seiners (particularly those fishing on FADs) and longliners contribute to this situation. Therefore conservation and management measures and efforts should be appropriately shared and cover all the components of the fisheries concerned. Although it will require some time for the effects of the measures adopted end 2013 to be assessed by the scientists, we are concerned by the lack of specific initiatives aiming at addressing the capacity in the region, including a collateral capacity creep.

My services are supporting dedicated research actions in the WCPFC, focusing both on the assessment of the status of BET in the Pacific and the reduction of BET by-catch by purse seiners fishing on FADs. In addition, we would like to remind you that, according to the conservation and management measures in place (CMM 2014-01), fishing on FADs in the High Seas in the WCPFC will not be possible after 2017, unless contracting parties concerned demonstrate that a very significant reduction in BET by-catch has been achieved by their fleet.

Let me assure you that we will continue our efforts with a view to improving the functioning of the VDS and the general management of marine resources in the Pacific and thank you once again for your cooperation and support to our action with regards to the VDS. We hope that this positive exchange will soon result in a more transparent and sustainable management of fisheries in the Western Pacific Ocean.

If you have any further questions, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,



Lowri Evans

C.C.: V. Laine, S. Mitolidis, G. Herrera, V. Veits, E. Bianchi, E. Georgitsi
(DG MARE)