



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
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Mr Alexandre Rodriguez
LDAC
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28036 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: LDAC Advice on ICCAT management measures to restore the status of the bigeye tuna stock in the Atlantic

Your ref: R-04-15/WG1

Dear Mr Rodriguez,

Thank you for sharing the Long Distance Advisory Council's (LDAC) advice with us prior to the ICCAT Annual Meeting 2015 which took place from 10 to 17 November in St. Julians, Malta. 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 results of this year's ICCAT Annual Meeting concerning bigeye tuna are overall very positive from a European Union perspective, notably in view of the difficult negotiation situation with many parties pushing primarily for measures to reduce juvenile mortality. We hope that LDAC and its members share this view. The EU managed to get a comprehensive package of conservation and management measures for bigeye tuna, which address most of the issues covered by the LDAC advice. This package includes a TAC reduction from 85.000 t to 65.000 t for the next three years, as well as measures (extended area closure for FADs in the Gulf of Guinea¹ for the first two months of each year and provisional FAD limitation to be reviewed in 2016) to reduce the mortality of juvenile bigeye tuna as recommended by the scientific advice. Upon the EU's insistence and hard negotiations, the proposal also paves the way for discussions in 2016 on the coverage by scientific observers and on the at sea transshipment programme. We also

¹ Dimension of the 98/99 FAD closure.

successfully managed to agree on the principle of mutual recognition of scientific observers across different EEZ, a big step forward that will be of great benefit in the context of our Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements in Western Africa.

Unfortunately, one of the key elements of the original EU proposal, the capacity freeze, to avoid an increase in capacity notably due to capacity transfers from other oceans, could not be retained as it was opposed by a majority of countries, and in particular by the developing ones. Since we have a stock assessment of yellow fin tuna in 2016, we may have another opportunity next year to come back on capacity measures for tropical tunas. But to be successful an earlier input from your side would be welcome.

In this context it is also important to note that ICCAT could agree on the EU proposal to adjust the scope of the ICCAT Working Group on FADs and to foresee a joint meeting with FAD Working Groups of other tuna-RFMOs in 2016. This Working Group will meet on 14-16 March 2016 and we count on your constructive contribution to the discussions with the scientists and managers.

Thank you again for your continued interest and constructive input. If you have any question on this reply, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,



for João AGUIAR MACHADO *about*
S. DE PYPERE