



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

DIRECTOR GENERAL

Brussels,  
MARE D3 ARES(2017)

Mr. Ivan López  
Chairman Long Distance Advisory  
Council  
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E- 28036 Madrid  
SPAIN

**Subject: LDAC Recommendations in relation to the 2017 ICCAT annual meeting**

*Your ref. R-06-17/WG1 of 10 November 2017*

Dear Mr López,

Thank you for providing the LDAC position ahead of the 2017 ICCAT Annual Meeting.

The Commission attaches great importance to the views of the various stakeholders and to their interest in the work of ICCAT. Like in previous years, the preparation of the position of the European Union in ICCAT in 2017 took into account the views of the Member States, but also of various and important parts of civil society. In line with the Common Fisheries Policy, the advice of the relevant Advisory Councils is of particular importance for the work of the Commission. Your advice has therefore been very valuable for our preparation and we would like to thank you for this and encourage you to continue to actively engage with us on these issues.

With regard to both the Northern and Southern stocks of Atlantic Swordfish, the Commission considered that it was important to follow the scientific advice and to reduce the overall TACs for each stock. This was a position shared by the other ICCAT Contracting Parties. However, the Commission was also conscious of your input regarding the nearly full exploitation of these TACs by one EU Member State in particular, and in the end it was possible to agree that while the total TACs could be reduced in line with the scientific advice, the specific allocations to the Contracting Parties should remain in place until future discussions take place on the allocation key. It is increasingly evident that further work is needed to cement the relatively good status of both stocks, and that this should involve an alignment of the CPCs fishing opportunities with the overall TACs.

Regarding Northern Albacore, the Commission is very pleased that the EU proposal was in the end endorsed in ICCAT, securing the introduction of Harvest Control Rules in 2018, and the increase of the TAC by 20 %. This is an important achievement for the EU that has been driving this process from the start, with a very significant involvement

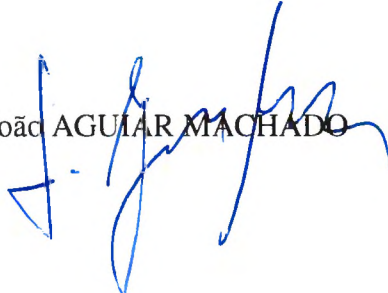
of the EU scientists and operators, and also with a significant financial support. The Commission is now looking forward to the wider adoption of HCRs for other important stocks in ICCAT in the near future.

In terms of Tropical tunas, the Commission shares the views of the LDAC regarding the importance to progress on the MSE process, and the EU has committed substantial financial support for this in ICCAT. We also share your views regarding the need to pay particular attention to the enforcement of the existing rules and to the adoption of fitting MCS measures in these fisheries. It is obvious that significant work is required to establish effective management measures addressing the various issues which have been identified for tropical tuna fisheries. The Commission is therefore looking forward to important milestones in 2018, such as the adoption of definitions for the management of FADs, the process of preparing and adopting clear management objectives, and also the results of the 2018 stock assessment for bigeye tuna. We are hopeful that these important steps will help the ICCAT Parties to make progress during both the intersessional meeting of Panel 1 and the next ICCAT Annual Meeting.

Finally, concerning Sharks, while it is disappointing that the amendment of the Convention has once again been postponed, and also that the proposal on fins attached was once more rejected by Asian Contracting Parties, it was nevertheless encouraging to see the adoption of measures for the northern stock of shortfin mako. On this point, the Chair of the ICCAT Scientific Committee has dismissed the concerns regarding potential shortcomings of the data used in the assessment. Throughout our negotiations with the other Parties, and while the EU advocated the adoption of measures aiming to end overfishing, we have nevertheless taken into account your concerns for the fleets. We believe that the package of measures adopted will allow for gradually phasing out overfishing while providing an opportunity for scientists to deliver a more precise advice in terms of rebuilding the stock without closing the fishery.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you once again for your important input regarding ICCAT related issues, and I would like to encourage you to continue to be closely involved with my services in order to prepare effectively the various challenges which lay ahead for the European Union in 2018. I invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273), should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

  
João AGUIAR MACHADO