



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/B2-D3/AP-PCO/Ares (2020)

Mr. David Pavon
President of the Executive Committee of
CC RUP
Rua de São Paulo, 3
9760-540 Praia da Vitória
Açores
Portugal

Subject: Quota allocations and the responsible management of tropical tunas

Dear Mr Pavon,

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2020 on the responsible management of tropical tunas and your proposal to adopt multi-annual quotas. Multi-annual quotas can be an important component of the multi-annual plans promoted by the common fisheries policy (CFP). They can provide stability to the management framework, and the necessary predictability for fishing operators to plan their activities. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to adopt multi-annual quotas, in particular for stocks managed at the international level by regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) like ICCAT. In this case, the multi-annual quota must first be adopted by the relevant RFMO.

Concerning the implementation of Article 17 of the CFP Regulation, and the allocation of fishing opportunities, this remains the prerogative of the Member States. When allocating those fishing opportunities, they have to use transparent and objective criteria and endeavour to provide incentives to fishing vessels using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact. However, the Commission is committed to promoting the adequate allocation of fishing opportunities for small scale and artisanal fisheries as shown by the examples of the Eastern bluefin tuna fishery or, more recently, Atlantic tropical tunas, although further efforts are required.

I take good note of the importance of the ICCAT fisheries for the Outermost Regions. Regarding northern albacore, you will be pleased to learn that the Commission proposed an increase of the TAC in line with the scientific advice. This was done during our bilateral exchanges with Japan and resulted in a proposal from the Chair of Panel 2. This proposal, and the increase of the TAC to 37801t, should be approved at the end of the current ICCAT decision making process and implemented already in 2021.

With regard to tropical tunas, I share most of your concerns and priorities. This is also reflected in the EU position in ICCAT and IOTC for several years now, where we continue to highlight the need to urgently revisit the current measures to ensure the

respect of the catch limits for both bigeye and yellowfin tuna, and better monitor the FADs fishery.

In fact, we suggested including these items as priorities for the work of ICCAT Panel 1 in 2021. We would like however to point out that, although it will be beneficial to assess the effectiveness of the closure period for FADs, this evaluation cannot be immediately conducted. Instead, the ICCAT scientists will require several years of implementation of the new closure period/area to evaluate its usefulness to protect juvenile tropical tunas.

It is also worth mentioning that in February 2020, the European Commission launched the negotiations for the renewal of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of the Seychelles on access for fishing vessels flying the flag of the Seychelles to waters and marine biological resources of Mayotte, under the jurisdiction of the European Union, with the first round held in Mayotte.

During the first round of negotiations, the parties preliminarily reviewed the limits of the fishing area to take into account as far as possible the interest of the local fleet of Mayotte as well as the extension of Mayotte's marine protection area. Furthermore, discussions were also initiated as regard the introduction of provisions on FADs. These elements will be further discussed at the second round of negotiations, to be scheduled next year since due to the Covid pandemic, negotiations were kept on hold.

Let me thank you for your commitment and effort to provide valid recommendations despite your recent start. I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further question on this reply, I invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson (Pascale.Colson@ec.europa.eu; + 32 2 29 56273), coordinator of the Advisory Councils.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA