



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/B2/SH (2021)

Dear Mr. David Pavón González,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 18 August 2021, which had in annex the Conselho Consultivo para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas (CC RUP) recommendation on the allocation of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) fishing possibilities in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) convention area. I can assure you that my services gave your proposal careful consideration prior to both the ICCAT Panel 1 intersessional meeting and the ICCAT annual meeting. We preferred however, to reply to you after the ICCAT annual meeting also to report back to you on its outcome.

Giving priority to and defending the European Union (EU) quota while at the same time protecting the small-scale fishers' interest was and will remain our key goal for the topic you have raised.

In fact, this year the EU had tabled an ambitious proposal for the ICCAT annual meeting that, building on the progress achieved inter-seasonally, would have tackled some of the key outstanding issues, including giving special consideration to the specificities, needs and fishing opportunities of small-scale artisanal fishers in developed coastal States. Moreover, the proposal addressed a number of specific issues, such as the setting of the total allowable catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna reflecting the improvement of the stock; the reallocation of fishing opportunities to developing coastal States to secure a more equitable distribution of fishing opportunities; better management of fishing capacity, the management of fish aggregating devices (FADs) and also improvement of the monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures for the fishery.

Mr. David Pavón González,  
President of the Executive Committee of the CC RUP  
Conselho Consultivo para as Regiões UltraPeriféricas,  
Rua de São Paulo n.º 3,  
9760-540 Praia da Vitória,  
Açores,  
Portugal  
info@ccrup.eu

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111  
Office: J-99 05/014 - Tel. direct line +32 229-50483

charlina.vitcheva@ec.europa.eu

Unfortunately, despite the EU's best efforts, no agreement could be reached at this year's ICCAT annual meeting on a Recommendation with a new multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas. As you are aware, this has resulted in the rollover of the current temporary measure to 2022 with a last-minute compromise proposal containing a 72-day closure for purse seine vessels using FADs at the beginning of 2022 and a minor increase of the TAC to 62,000 tonnes. Much work will still be needed in ICCAT in 2022 in order to ensure that a robust and comprehensive measure can be adopted for 2023.

This is a very disappointing outcome and the EU will continue its efforts so that the future tropical tunas plan contains a more balanced and effective package of measures, including a better management of fishing activities on FADs and of other fleets, a TAC in line with scientific advice, which allows to address the allocation of the TACs for both bigeye and yellowfin tuna, together with capacity limits consistent with these allocations.

I would like to thank you again for approaching us regarding this important issue, and at the same time confirm the commitment of the EU to continue to work with the CC RUP and other relevant EU stakeholders towards the adoption of a robust measure for bigeye tuna in ICCAT in 2022.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further question on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: V. Veits, A.C. Jessen, A. Hurrelmann, S. Billiet, F. Biagi,  
L. Molledo, A. Malczewska, S. Howard, A. Peyronnet (DG MARE)  
Daniela Costa [dcosta@ccrup.eu](mailto:dcosta@ccrup.eu)