



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/B2/AM(2024)

Dear Mr Pavón,

I thank the CC RUP for its advice regarding the conservation and management of tropical tuna in the Indian Ocean. Even though the advice was sent after the start of the 28th Regular Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, I nonetheless want to take the opportunity to provide some feedback on your main recommendations. In order to maximise the opportunity for the Commission to take into account the advisory council's recommendation, I would encourage you to provide such advice well in advance of RFMO meetings.

At this year's IOTC Annual Meeting, the EU advocated multiple times in line with your recommendations. To address the referenced urgent situation of yellowfin tuna, the EU proposed a one-month fisheries closure for all gears. As also suggested by CC RUP, we included an exception for artisanal vessels under a certain size to mitigate the socio-economic impacts and to avoid the closure to be disproportionate. As we agree with your assessment on the creation of a level playing field and that CPCs need to find common solutions to ensure effectiveness, this proposal was meant to apply only on the condition that it would not be objected by CPCs corresponding to a certain percentage of catches. The EU also supported proposals for stricter rules on transshipment at sea as well as it criticized every weakening of corresponding regulations already in place. The EU itself proposed a high sea boarding and inspection scheme and tried to improve the resolution on regional observers. Furthermore, we welcome your support for the protection of sharks as we demanded the fins naturally attached policy in IOTC and merged our proposal with a comprehensive protection measure on sharks. To ensure a sustainable fishery, the EU also proposed a management procedure for skipjack tuna. Lastly, the EU concurred with your recommendations when it advocated for the transition to fully biodegradable FADs.

Although the EU worked hard to find consensus on a fisheries closure, a high sea boarding and inspections scheme and on shark protection measures, due to the divergent views in the IOTC it was not possible to adopt corresponding resolutions. However, as

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regards to your other recommendations, the EU succeeded with its support for stricter rules for transshipment at sea. Furthermore, the EU's proposal for a regional observer scheme was adopted. Addressing the longstanding challenge of FAD management, the CPCs succeeded in finding a solution, inter alia determining the transition to fully biodegradable FADs. Besides the management procedure for swordfish, also the EU's proposal for a management procedure for skipjack tuna was adopted which paves the way to future catch limits and distribution and puts the IOTC at the forefront of modern fishery management.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

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