



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE/B2/SH

Dear Mr Farias,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 1 September providing the Outermost Regions Advisory Council's (CCRUP) recommendation regarding the conservation and management of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) species. The recommendation has informed us in establishing an EU position for the 29th regular meeting of ICCAT that to be held from 17-24 November.

With regard to FAD fisheries and the closure period in the Atlantic, the reduced period is still in its first year of application. Nevertheless, in the context of the tropical tuna discussion, the European Commission will be guided by the best available scientific advice on this issue. On the issue of the exchange of quota, in particular for bigeye tuna, the European Commission has already strongly encouraged Member States to avail of this possibility and continues to do so.

Regarding the control of recreational fisheries, a number of specific applicable conservation measures have already been established under the common fisheries policy (CFP), in particular in Council regulations fixing fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks or groups of fish stocks. They include catch limits, bag limits, and prohibitions on fishing during certain periods, in certain areas or with certain gear. As mentioned in your letter, the last amendment to the control regulation has significantly strengthened control standards, with an electronic system for the recording and reporting of catches.

In any case, the authorities of each Member State have the possibility to impose stricter measures if they encounter situations in the waters under their sovereignty that they consider require stricter regulation. Member States also have the capacity to intensify the level of inspection of a certain fleet segment.

With regard to bluefin tuna, the EU has been at the forefront of the efforts made for the recovery of the stock, foregoing substantial fishing opportunities. We are happy to see these efforts have paid off as the stock is thriving, and we expect our fishers, who have contributed the most to this success story, to see concrete benefits of these developments.

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The EU's core position has been stated clearly in previous years: we will not accept any decrease of our fishing opportunities.

The European Commission also agrees with the importance of the work on the conservation and management of sharks including through the SCRS and will continue to strongly advocate for a fins naturally attached (FNA) policy in ICCAT as well as driving forward the blue shark MSE and improving measures on the South Atlantic shortfin mako.

Finally, I thank you for your joint advice along with LDAC, MEDAC and CCSUD which highlights important areas of convergence across Advisory Councils on important issues such as IUU fishing, regional observers, MSEs and cooperation with other RFMOs.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have 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,

Charlina VITCHEVA