

Recommendation No. 77

(29.02.2026)

Pilot project for fattening Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) in Canary Islands waters

Considering the presentation at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), held in Seville in November 2025, of the draft recommendation contained in document [PA2_609_SPA_20251029140638](#) on a pilot project to assess the conditions for catching and fattening Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) in the Atlantic Ocean, specifically in FAO area 34.1 (waters of the Canary Islands), with a view to informing any future development of this type of activity. The Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) became aware of this initiative exclusively through the documentation made available for the aforementioned ICCAT meeting, and it was not possible to identify the existence of a prior information or consultation process involving the CCRUP or the professional fishing sector.

The CCRUP recalls that the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is based on principles of good governance, transparency, and structured stakeholder participation/consultation, explicitly recognising the role of Advisory Councils in formulating and monitoring measures that affect the management of fisheries resources, marine ecosystems and fisheries-dependent economies. In this context, it is considered essential to ensure that initiatives of this nature are accompanied by adequate information and consultation processes, guaranteeing levels of transparency compatible with the principles of good administration in the European Union, and allowing the CCRUP to contribute constructively to the drafting of more appropriate and balanced measures, regulations and management plans affecting the waters of our Regions.

We emphasise that this pilot project could entail environmental and socio-economic risks for a sensitive ecosystem such as the Canary Islands, where there is a recent history of impacts associated with industrial aquaculture¹. The CCRUP is unaware of the existence of a prior environmental assessment, a socio-economic analysis, and a public advice by the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), which makes it difficult to assess the necessity, proportionality, and appropriateness of this initiative.

It should also be noted that the recovery of the bluefin tuna stock in the eastern Atlantic has been recognised within ICCAT. In addition, several operators in the gastronomic sector have expressed reservations about products from farmed fattening systems, particularly due to differences in their organoleptic characteristics, an aspect that should be considered in any socio-economic analysis associated with projects of this nature.²

¹ [Five beaches in Telde closed to bathing due to pollution, 4 December 2025. *Radio Televisión Canaria*.](#)

² [Differences between wild and farmed tuna, *La Vanguardia*, 20 February 2018.](#)

The Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) therefore **recommends to the European Commission:**

- 1. Precautionary suspension of any progress on the current pilot project** until a formal information and consultation process involving the Canary Islands' professional fishing sector has been carried out;
- 2. Sharing the administrative, technical and scientific documentation** that supports the European Union's presentation of the project at the annual ICCAT meeting.
- 3. Promoting the creation of a tripartite technical group**, involving the European Commission, the Spanish Member State and Canary Islands fishermen, with a view to analysing the project and assessing its potential impacts, and then reporting to the CCRUP;
- 4. Ensuring that any future initiative related to species regulated by ICCAT** fully complies with the procedures for prior information and structured consultation with the relevant advisory bodies, resorting, for this purpose, to the existing national and European coordination mechanisms within the ICCAT framework, notably the prior preparatory meetings.

We also recommend **that the Spanish Member State:**

- 1. Provision of substantiated clarifications on the framework and procedure** that led to the submission of the pilot project under ICCAT;
- 2. Suspension of any progress on the pilot project in question** until appropriate environmental and socio-economic assessments that affect the fishing sector have been carried out, as well as a formal information and consultation process with the relevant authorities and stakeholders;
- 3. Sharing the administrative, technical, and scientific documentation** that supports the mandate to the European Union within the framework of the annual meeting of ICCAT;
- 4. Stepping up efforts to ensure that the establishment of aquaculture farms** does not adversely affect artisanal fishing or the proper conservation of the marine environment and fish stocks, particularly within the marine protected areas of the Natura 2000 network in the Canary Islands
- 5. Ensuring that any progress in pilot projects or other initiatives for the development of fisheries management in the waters of the Canary Islands** is preceded by a favourable opinion from the fishing sector currently operating in the respective fishing zone.

Opinion of the Federación Regional de Cofradías de Pescadores de Canarias

This organization expressed its disagreement with the creation of a tripartite technical group, involving the European Commission, the Spanish Member State and the fishermen of the Canary Islands, as foreseen in the third point of the recommendations addressed to the European Commission.

In its view, there are already consolidated forums and mechanisms for coordination and participation of the fishing sector, both at the national and European levels, within the framework of the preparation and monitoring of positions within the ICCAT. In particular, the ICCAT coordination meetings, in which the sector participates through its representative organizations, constitute the appropriate, recognized and operational space to:

- analyse initiatives relating to species regulated by ICCAT;
- assess their potential impacts from a technical, scientific, socio-economic and management perspective;
- define common and transparent positions with a view to international meetings.

According to this organization, the creation of a new specific technical group would represent an unnecessary duplication of existing structures, with the consequent risk of fragmenting dialogue, diluting responsibilities and generating dysfunctions in decision-making processes.

Consequently, they consider more appropriate that this type of project and initiative should be presented clearly, promptly and completely within the framework of the ICCAT preparatory coordination meetings, reinforcing, whenever necessary, the information and documentation made available to the sector in these forums.