



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.B.2/MV

**Subject: Follow-up on CCRUP Recommendation No. 79 – Outcomes of the 2026
IOTC Annual Session**

Dear Mr Farias,

The European Commission would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) for its valuable advice as outlined in Recommendation No. 79 on the Conservation and Management of Tropical Tunas in the Indian Ocean. Your detailed recommendations have played a key role in shaping the EU's position ahead of the recent annual session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), and we are pleased to report that many of the priorities you highlighted have been successfully addressed.

We are particularly satisfied with the progress achieved during the session, where the EU delegation worked diligently to secure ambitious and balanced outcomes in line with sustainability, equity, and the precautionary approach. Below, we highlight some of the most significant advancements, many of which directly reflect your recommendations:

1. **Swordfish:** On the basis of a proposal co-sponsored by the EU, the Commission adopted binding catch limits fully implementing the Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) under the management procedure adopted in 2024, as urged in your recommendation. This decision ensures the long-term sustainability of swordfish stocks, a fishery of critical importance for the EU longline fleet, particularly for vessels operating from our outermost regions of La Réunion and Mayotte.
2. **Yellowfin Tuna:** As suggested in your advice, the IOTC successfully transitioned from a recovery plan to a management plan, adopted with broad support among delegations and thanks to the direct involvement of the EU delegation in the different phases of this difficult negotiation. This new plan includes a safeguard clause addressing objections, and we are confident that the wide support received

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by the text will improve compliance and reduce the risk of selective implementation.

3. **Skipjack Tuna:** The EU secured an interpretation of the catch reduction measures in line with the conclusions of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM), allowing for a gradual reduction in catch limits. This approach mitigates socio-economic impacts while ensuring the respect of the scientific advice and equitable conditions for all Contracting Parties.
4. **Transshipment:** A significant improvement was achieved in this area, by restricting transshipment activities exclusively to CPCs and CNCPs, thereby strengthening the potential for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures - a priority you rightly emphasised.
5. **Safe Handling of Mobulid Rays:** Through the adoption of a proposal jointly prepared by the EU and the Maldives, the IOTC updated its guidelines on the safe handling and release of mobulid rays, incorporating the latest scientific advice to minimise post-release mortality, as recommended.

I would also like to reflect on **shark conservation**. Following the adoption, last year, of a comprehensive resolution on sharks (IOTC Resolution 25/08), it was not possible this year to promote additional conservation measures. It is however important to stress that the EU delegation played a pivotal role in rejecting any attempts to weaken the current framework. Specifically, the EU repeatedly defended the necessity for the IOTC to address the status of the most vulnerable species in its conservation efforts. Our approach was very much aligned with your emphasis on the need for rigorous management of these species.

While we have made substantial progress on most fronts, ensuring that the IOTC is the first RFMOs with catch limits covering all major species, we recognise that there are still challenges to be addressed, including bycatch mitigation, improved data reporting, and the full implementation of management procedures for all commercially exploited stocks. In this framework, the European Commission remains fully committed to advancing these objectives in future IOTC sessions and continue promoting the steady progress of the organisation. In this endeavour, the continued collaboration with stakeholders such as CCRUP remains essential.

Once again, we deeply appreciate the constructive engagement and expertise provided by CCRUP. Your insights have been important in shaping EU priorities, and we look forward to continuing this fruitful cooperation as we work together towards sustainable management of fisheries in the Indian Ocean.

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,

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