

Brussels, 08/12/2014
DG MARE/ARES(2014)

Mr Jean- Marie Robert
CC SUD (SWW AC)
6, rue Alphonse Rio
56100 Lorient
France

Subject: Fishing opportunities for bluefin tuna in the North East Atlantic

Ref.: Opinion 92 of the SWW AC of 10 November 2014

Dear Mr Robert,

I would like to thank you for the SWW AC contribution to the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which took place in Genoa (Italy) from the 10th to the 17th November 2014.

Regarding your proposal to increase fishing opportunities gradually for the bluefin tuna in 2015 and 2016, the ICCAT has decided that the TAC for the bluefin tuna could be increased moderately and gradually (20 % annually) for the three years to come, which would allow a capture rate in line with the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in 2017. This is in accordance with the position agreed within the European Union on the basis of the scientific opinion and objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy reform.

At its meeting in September 2014, the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) confirmed the signs of recovery of bluefin tuna stocks. At the same time, the Committee concluded that maintaining a TAC at its recent level or a moderate and gradual increase in the TAC would not put the success of the recovery plan in danger and would be in alignment with the objective of reaching biomass and fishing mortality levels in line with the MSY with a probability of at least 60% in 2022.

Nevertheless we must not imperil all the efforts undertaken by the sector over recent years by ignoring a prudent approach in the management of this symbolic species. Higher increases would have represented significant fluctuations in the TAC with the risk of compromising the results achieved and thus undermine the efforts made. The next evaluation of this stock is planned

for 2016 and it will take into account the most recent information available, including that compiled in the framework of the ICCAT research programme on the bluefin tuna ("GBYP" programme). If this evaluation confirms the continuation of the current trend, we will then be able to envisage moving from a recovery plan to a long term management plan.

I would like to thank you for this constructive contribution. If you have any additional questions I invite you to contact Mrs Evangelia Georgitsi, the coordinator of Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lowri Evans', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lowri EVANS