



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 11 October 2013
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REV 1**

PECHE 428

NOTE

From: Permanent Representatives Committee
To: Council

Subject: ICCAT annual meeting (Cape Town, 18-25 November 2013)
- *Exchange of views*

1. *The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas* (ICCAT) is responsible for the conservation of tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas. The management competences of ICCAT thus cover, among others, such species as bluefin tuna, swordfish and tropical tunas. In addition ICCAT can adopt by-catch and preventive measures for sharks, sea turtles and sea birds. The organization was established in 1969 and has 42 Contracting Parties, including the EU, UK and FR (the latter two on behalf of their overseas territories).
2. In autumn 2008 and 2010, the Council adopted Decisions for the establishment of the Community position in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas¹. These Decisions were prolonged in 2013 for another year² and remain valid until the ICCAT meeting in 2014.

¹ Docs. 14863/08 PECHE 278 RESTREINT UE, 16466/1/10 REV 1 PECHE 292 RESTREINT UE.

² See note 11623/2/13 PECHE 281 REV 2.

3. In 2006 ICCAT adopted a 15-year recovery plan for Eastern bluefin tuna. This plan was subsequently modified in 2008, 2009 and 2010, and considerably revised in 2012. The latest revision concerned, in addition to control issues, the TAC for 2013 and thereafter, which was fixed at 13400 tonnes applying the established quota distribution key. A special additional allocation of 100 tonnes was reserved for Algeria in view of changes to the distribution key which occurred in 2010. The overall catches thus authorised were kept within the scientific advice and the European Commission's specific mandate received from Coreper³. Claims made by certain members concerning the allocation key, in particular Algeria and Egypt, will be revisited during the 2013 meeting. An update of the scientific stock assessment is only programmed for 2014. Some detailed questions to the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) should be addressed already in 2013. With regard to western bluefin tuna, a scientific working group is convened in Canada in June 2013 to work towards a stock assessment.
4. A more comprehensive recommendation on the protection of blue and white marlins was endorsed in 2012, in which the EU secured a quota for blue marlin of 480 out of 1985 tonnes (in addition to certain authorised landings by recreational fisheries). The EU conservation proposals for porbeagle and for shortfin mako were not adopted, nor was a ban on shark finning at sea.
5. On the control side, the 2012 meeting followed some proposals (obligatory electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document Programme (eBCD) in the Eastern bluefin tuna fisheries; transshipment programme; minimum standards for port inspection; process towards a catch certification scheme for tuna and tuna-like species), but not others (logbook for Fish Aggregating Devices in the bigeye and yellowfin tuna fisheries; increased frequency of position communication under the Vessel Monitoring System).

³ doc. 15884/12 EXT 1 CRS/CRP 38.

6. A Working Group for changes to the ICCAT Convention has started its work during an inter-sessional meeting in Japan in July 2013⁴. Of particular interest are an extension of the Convention's scope to cover shark conservation and management as well as procedural issues concerning inter-sessional voting, objections to measures adopted by the Commission, and dispute settlement. In May 2013, Council gave the Commission a mandate to negotiate Convention changes on behalf of the European Union.⁵
7. The first technical meeting between Member States' experts and the Commission services took place on 19 September 2013. A further meeting is planned for 17 and 18 October 2013.
8. The ICCAT's SCRS is expected to provide its scientific advice in the week of 7 October 2013.
9. The formal preparation of this year's annual ICCAT meeting in Cape Town (18-25 November 2013) will shortly begin at the level of the Working Party for External Fisheries Policy.
10. On 10 October 2013, delegations outlined their preliminary positions and expectations for the annual meeting.⁶
11. An exchange of views in the October Council between the Commission and Member States provides an opportunity at Council level to share views on the November annual ICCAT meeting.

⁴ docs. 11154/13 PECHE 269, 11069/13 PECHE 263, 13608/13 PECHE 373.

⁵ doc. 8670/13 PECHE 158.

⁶ The positions of delegations are outlined in the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party (doc. 14713/13 PECHE 449).