



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 5 November 2012

15740/12

PECHE 448

REPORT

from: Working Party on Internal and External Fisheries Policy
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)
Subject: ICCAT annual meeting (Agadir, 12 - 19 November 2012)
- *Preparation of the meeting*

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.
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 which are valid until the ICCAT meeting in 2013. The 2010 amendment of the mandate concerned the position as regards Eastern bluefin tuna.

¹ Docs. 14863/08 PECHE 278 RESTREINT UE, and 16466/2/10 REV 2 PECHE 292

3. The ICCAT Commission will hold its annual meeting in Agadir from 12 to 20 November 2012. One of its tasks this year is the review of the multi-annual recovery plan for the Eastern bluefin tuna, adopted in 2006 and subsequently modified, the most recent modification being in 2010.
4. In preparation of this annual meeting, the Agriculture and Fisheries Council had a general exchange of views on 23 October 2012² where the first signs of the on-going recovery of the Eastern bluefin tuna stock were welcomed by all.
5. The Commission has submitted a non-paper³ suggesting the EU position during the annual 2012 ICCAT meeting. In addition to this non-paper, the Commission also submitted three proposals for draft ICCAT recommendation with a view to tabling these proposals at the ICCAT meeting⁴. These proposals concern shortfin mako shark, porbeagle, and amendments to the multi-annual recovery plan for Eastern bluefin tuna.
6. The Working Party on Internal and External Fisheries Policy discussed initially the non-paper on 26 October 2012⁵. A second discussion of the non-paper and the three proposals took place on 31 October 2012.
7. The Working Party on Internal and External Fisheries Policy agreed to the contents of the non-paper with addition of a new *litra d* in the non-paper's point 1.1.2⁶, leaving open only one issue only, namely the EU position with regard to the future TAC level of Eastern Bluefin tuna.
8. The Working Party on Internal and External Fisheries Policy also reached an agreement on the proposals relating to shortfin mako shark and porbeagle, while agreeing to continue work in situ on the amendments to the multi-annual recovery plan for Eastern bluefin tuna.

² Doc. 14549/1/12 REV 1 PECHE 391.

³ Doc. 15381/12 PECHE 421

⁴ Doc. 15401/1/12 REV 1 PECHE 423

⁵ Doc. 15504/12 PECHE 430.

⁶ The new *litra "d"* reads: "Fishing period for purse seiners: the EU should endeavour to postpone the start of the fishing period in view of ensuring that CPCs have the full use of available quotas". The fishing period for bait boats will be further discussed on the spot.

9. With regard to the issue of the TAC level for bluefin tuna, the Commission proposes in its non-paper that the TAC level be kept at its current level of 12900 tonnes in the light of the uncertainties regarding the speed and magnitude of the upward trend. The Danish, German, Netherlands, Swedish and United Kingdom delegations supported such a roll-over.
10. On the other hand, the Cyprus, Greek, Spanish, Maltese⁷ and Portuguese delegations supported an increase to the upper range of the TAC as set out in the scientific advice, namely 13 500t (which was the level of the 2010 TAC). These delegations take the view that since the scientific advice clearly states that the recovery plan would fulfil its goal with a TAC of 13 500t, it is the opportunity to send a strong signal to fishermen that conservation measures lead to benefits. The French and Italian delegations agree on the need for stability, but could accept a TAC increase to 13 500t.
11. All delegations agree that any potential increase of the TAC should not be to the detriment of the EU quota.
12. COREPER is invited to examine the issue of the TAC for Eastern bluefin tuna in order to establish the EU's position on this issue during the 2012 annual ICCAT meeting.

⁷ Malta has presented detailed written comments on the issue set out in doc. 15676/12 PECHE 442.