



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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PECHE 282

COVER NOTE

from : Commission

to : Council

Subject : ICCAT Annual meeting (Recife, Brazil, 6-15 November 2009)
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Commission, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 19-20 October 2009.

Information note
Preparation of the 2009 ICCAT Annual Meeting for bluefin tuna

Over the last years, the European Community has made substantial efforts to address the failures of the Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery. However, there are still serious concerns about the state of the stock and about the adoption and implementation of the right measures. The preparation of the 15th Conference of Parties to CITES (Doha, 13-25 March 2010) bears witness to these concerns.

In this context, the European Community must display leadership to ensure that these issues are addressed comprehensively and effectively at the upcoming ICCAT Annual Meeting (Recife, 7-15 November 2009).

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The recovery plan should be revised, in particular with regard to the total allowable catch levels, so as to ensure that the latest recommendations from the ICCAT Scientific Committee are fully respected. Total allowable catches from 2010 onwards must therefore be reduced to be brought in line with scientific advice.

Furthermore, overcapacity, as a key driver of overfishing, needs to be cut. The Marrakesh recovery plan includes stringent measures that call for strict implementation, in particular the examination by ICCAT of management plans for capacity at the upcoming Annual Meeting. Significant progress in this area is of paramount importance.

The European Community has submitted overall substantial reduction plans and should demand equivalent efforts from partner countries. Not only is it crucial for the conservation of bluefin tuna, but it is also a requirement of fairness to the European sector. From the EC standpoint, the assessment of the plans for fishing capacity should be based at least on the catch rates per vessel category estimated by the ICCAT Scientific Committee and on the quotas resulting from the revised total allowable catches to be adopted at the upcoming Annual Meeting. Management plans for capacity that are not fully satisfactory under these conditions should not be approved by ICCAT.

Besides, compliance was identified as a key weakness in ICCAT by the Performance Review and matters particularly in the bluefin tuna fishery. The intersessional meeting of the Compliance Committee (Barcelona, 24-27 March) was thorough and identified areas of non-compliance for certain ICCAT Contracting Parties. In case these are not remedied, action should be taken at the upcoming Annual Meeting, including possible quota reductions.

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The stakes will be high at the upcoming ICCAT Annual Meeting, not only for bluefin tuna and ICCAT, but also more widely for the international governance of fisheries based on Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. A strong consensus within the Community is needed to foster decisive action and be up to the challenge.
