



Association des
Organisations Nationales
d'Entreprises de Pêche de l'UE



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Press release

EU/FISHERIES : European fishing fleet owners oppose the introduction of bluefin tuna into CITES

In a letter sent today to the President of the European Commission, Commissioners Damanaki and Potočnik, the President of the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee as well as Environment and Fisheries ministers from EU Member States, an immediate request from Europêche President, Javier Garat and the chairman of the Cogeca Fisheries section, Giampaolo Buonfiglio was made, **calling on the Commission and Member States "not to submit to pressure from environmentalists to decide in favour of introducing bluefin tuna into any one of the CITES annexes"**.

Indeed, the latest conclusions from independent scientists in December 2009 meeting under the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (**FAO**) did not suggest *introducing Atlantic bluefin tuna into annex I of CITES*.

Furthermore, the European Union's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (**STECF**) concluded in a 13-page report on 13th November 2009, that bluefin tuna stocks were not under threat of exhaustion : *"Given that the stock has the potential to rebuild if ICCAT Rec. 08-04 is implemented and rigorously enforced. STECF concludes that the Western Atlantic bluefin stock is not threatened with extinction"*.

This view is shared by scientists from the International Committee for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (**ICCAT**) who have noted positive recruitment, a sign that the number of juveniles is increasing. Both the President and Chairman highlight the fact that a comprehensive survey of bluefin tuna stocks will be conducted this year and in order for implicated European undertakings to manage and plan their activities, it is illogical and unreasonable to be considering the introduction of the species into CITES, before the results of the survey are known.

Such a decision would be hugely discrediting, condemning to failure every international organisation responsible for the management of bluefin tuna (FAO, ICCAT). This also applies to the European institutions and instruments (STECF, the European Commission) as well as all Member States that transposed the bluefin tuna recovery plan into their national legislation in 2006, strengthening it in subsequent years.

In conclusion President Garat and Chairman Buonfiglio call for the following to be considered immediately :

- The adoption of a coherent and responsible position, which takes into account decisions that have been made at European level in recent years in order to improve bluefin tuna stocks.

- To wait for the results of new, scientific studies on the stocks situation to be published, due to take place in autumn 2010 and summer 2011, before taking any hasty, emotional, political or unfounded decisions.
- To ensure that the market is regulated in a way which does not license any form of poaching or illegal fishing.
- Further insistence that ICCAT contracting parties also respect plans to reduce their fishing fleet for bluefin tuna, following the efforts already made by European fleets.
- In line with its declaration at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council from 14th to 16th December 2009, it should be made certain that the Commission undertakes an urgent evaluation of the best and most targeted use of financial instruments to help businesses confront the socio-economic consequences of high reductions. They have accepted such reductions for many years, but policy makers seem never to take this into account.

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